

ISSUE 85



Est. 2007

NZ HUNTER

M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2021

WHITEWATER WAPITI

Mitch Thorn and his party
recount their adventures from
the famed Whitewater River

ALPINE HUNTING GEAR

Greig Caigou on gear for
hunters looking to embrace
the lightweight alpine ethos



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DISTRIBUTION

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www.ovato.co.nz - ph 09 928 4200

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COVER PHOTO

An early Spring bull in the tussock captured by
Steve Couper

NZ Hunter welcomes articles submitted
saved on USB or emailed as a word document and
include photographs. Contributors will be paid in
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ISSN 1178 - 007X

www.nzhunter.co.nz

Oct / Nov 2021 ~ NZ HUNTER MAGAZINE

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



of the meetings of, the respective group in person. Raising legitimate concerns in a forum where they can be taken seriously and dealt with constructively is much

We've just come out of lockdown as I write this, and the poor old Aucklanders are still in level 4, so there hasn't been much hunting done lately! All our mid-winter trips had to be canned and now the Red stags have cast their antlers, but we're hoping to squeeze in a Fallow hunt before they too drop in October.

I had thought that most people who are endangering the future of hunting in New Zealand are outside of the hunting sector but unfortunately, that is not the case. I have been absolutely flabbergasted by some of the vitriolic stuff we've seen and heard recently that has come from within a small minority in the hunting sector aimed at the dedicated groups of volunteers that give freely of their time to try and make hunting better for all of us. Normally I would not bother to give this sort of stuff any further airtime but some of it crosses way over the line of just opposing views and healthy debate.

To give you some examples of the sort of damaging rubbish that has come to my attention in the last few months:

- **Threats made against the FWF and even their family members that ended up with the police having to get involved.**
- **Continual accusations of ballot rigging and impropriety by FWF members, some by people who were pretty good at bending the rules themselves.**
- **Baseless accusations regarding the real science being used to further game animal management, including Cam Speedy's excellent common sense work for both the Wapiti and Sika Foundations.**

Unfortunately, most of this occurs on social media where any keyboard warrior or social media troll can say anything they like. Constructive debate is always welcome and healthy and if you feel you really do have an issue that needs sorting for the future of hunting and game animals, then write a letter to, or front at one

more productive than having some social media rant.

However, it has not stopped there and we have even seen people ringing around behind the scenes stirring up trouble. Even worse are those trying to destabilise our leading examples of hunter game animal management by complaining to DoC hierarchy for their own selfish ends. It seems they care little about how potentially damaging they are being to the future of hunting in NZ but are in it for what they can get personally and in some cases for their own financial gain.

To put it bluntly, if you feel you have issues with anything any of these volunteer organisations are doing, I ask you first to have a good look in the mirror and have a long hard think about whether what you are doing/planning to do about it is going to be beneficial for the future of hunting and game animals in NZ. If it is not, then for all our sakes please don't do it!

We should all be trying to give something back to those who have been selflessly fighting for all of us with so little thanks or public recognition. They are all volunteers who have given hundreds/thousands of hours and in some cases whole lifetimes working for the betterment of hunting and game animals. We all know it is hard enough getting people to do voluntary tasks these days and we should all consider joining one of these groups, learning from the inside how things work, and work constructively to change things if you think they could be done better. Become a giver, not just a taker!

To end on a more positive note, hopefully Covid will allow the Sika Show to go ahead at Mystery Creek on the 20th of November, and we can see you all there!

Greg

SPOT THE LOGO

The winners for last issue are **Tom Wright** and **Pat Fuller**. The logos were on the SR Marston Sig Sauer advert page 15 and Stager Sport Spartan advert page 68.

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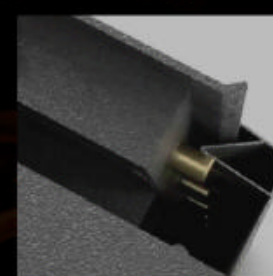
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HI GREG

I'd like to discuss my dilemma of selecting my next deer hunting rifle – mainly for Red and Fallow.

I currently have a Savage 7mm-08 Model 11. I have never been happy with its lack of consistent accuracy. Everything else about it I'm happy. I use Winchester Power Point and more recently Deer Season Extreme Point which has improved consistent groupings.

I'm pretty certain it's not my shooting, and have shot other rifles with good results. I got a DPT suppressor with four baffles – this was a big improvement, I went to 6 then 8 baffles which improved the grouping a little more – but then it throws an odd one 70-80mm away from the rest at 100 metres.

I've decided to get another rifle unless there's an obvious fix for the Savage 7mm-08. I shoot clearings and bushlines, never long shots i.e. over 300 metres as I don't trust the guns accuracy. I prefer the stalk and getting to 50-200m before letting off a round.

There is such a choice of rifle brands and calibres that I'm puzzled where to start. I'm thinking 308 Tikka or X-bolt but very keen for a chat and hear what your thoughts are.

Here's a spanner in the works - I have an old Sako Forrester 22-250 L579 with a heavy barrel and after not using it for more than 20 years, I put a few rounds through it and I'm still really happy with the consistent groupings. How would it go on Red deer or then again shall I re-barrel it to another calibre? To re-barrel it wouldn't the price be getting close to that of a new rifle?

I'm happy buying second hand if I know the history, otherwise happy to spend around \$1500-2000 for a bare rifle and/or suppressor as I have a Leupold firedot scope.

That's a brief summary of where I'm at!

REGARDS,
JOHN

HI JOHN

One of the common issues with modern synthetic stocked rifles of US manufacture is the forend on the plastic stock is very flexible and easy to get to flex and touch the barrel, changing the point of impact. This is especially so if shooting off a bipod which puts more leverage on the forend and with the variable shooting positions encountered out in the field. If that is your problem, then yes, I'd look at another brand with a stiffer forend like the Tikka. Either that or add a forend stiffener if that is within your home gunsmithing capabilities. You hog the barrel channel out and glue in a piece of alloy channel or tube split lengthwise that comes right back to the front of the action. This will add weight though, which might not be desirable to you. If it's a bore issue causing the thrown shots, then a new rifle is the sensible answer.

I would not rebarrel your old Sako, as the cost will be so close to that of a new rifle and you'll still have a blued action that will rust and a heavy wooden stock. And I would not use the 22-250 on Reds, unless you are prepared to develop a load with monolithic projectiles like the Barnes TTSX. Nothing else will handle the speed of the 22-250 on a shoulder impact without blowing up on the surface and failing to penetrate. **Leave the old classic as it is and start with a new rifle!**

CHEERS,
GREG

Visit www.nzhunter.co.nz for this issue's "Spot the Logo" Competition.

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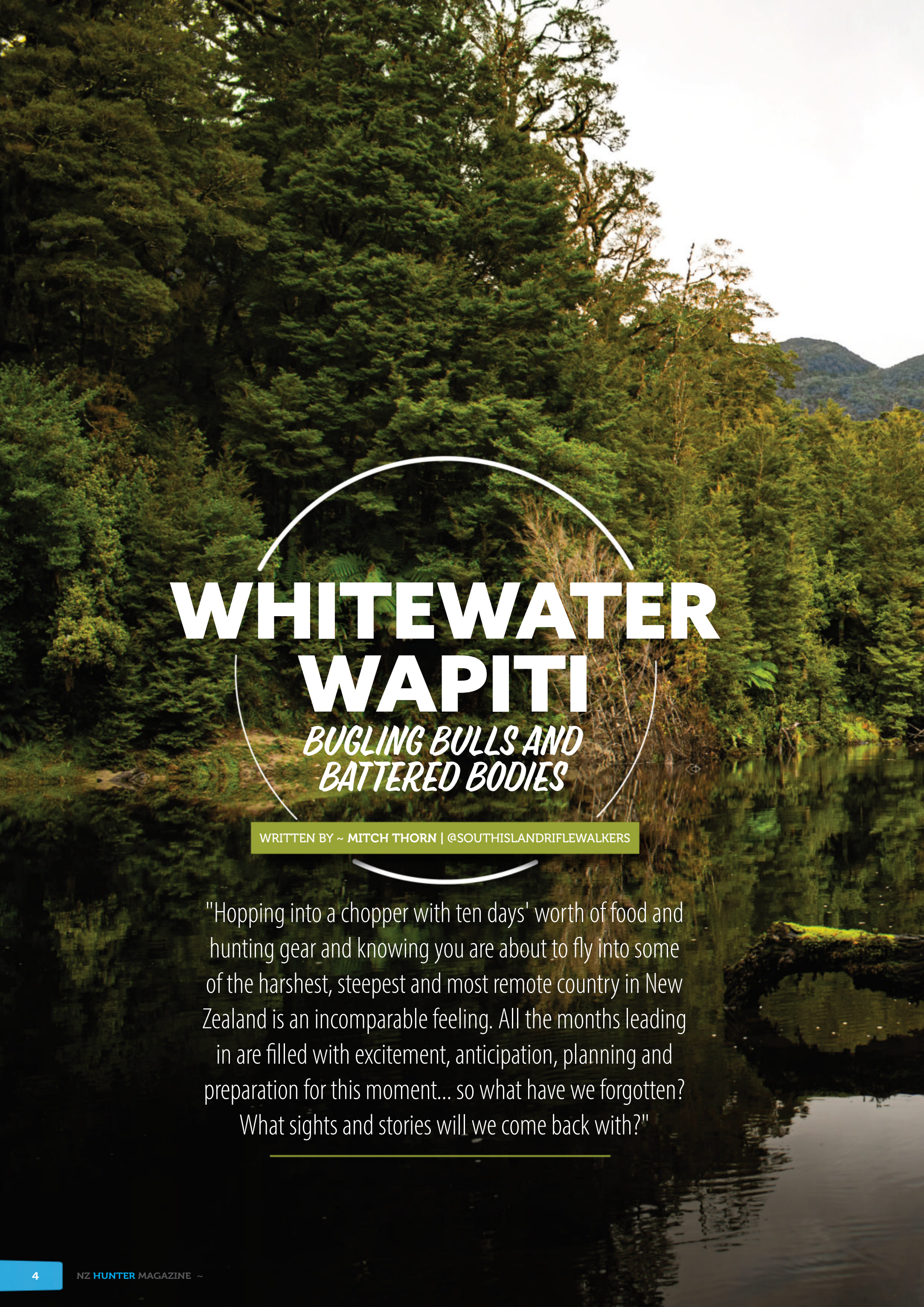

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WHITEWATER WAPITI

BUGLING BULLS AND BATTERED BODIES

WRITTEN BY ~ MITCH THORN | @SOUTHISLANDRIFLEWALKERS

"Hopping into a chopper with ten days' worth of food and hunting gear and knowing you are about to fly into some of the harshest, steepest and most remote country in New Zealand is an incomparable feeling. All the months leading in are filled with excitement, anticipation, planning and preparation for this moment... so what have we forgotten? What sights and stories will we come back with?"



A twenty-five-minute flight took us over the daunting peaks and steep glacier-carved valleys

The feeling of isolation grew as each unpassable ridgeline disappeared behind us. As we approached George

Sound, we received our first glimpse of the Whitewater Wapiti block - our home for the next ten days. As we were sharing the block with another hunting party we had split the block using the main Whitewater River as the boundary. The true left of the river was our hunting ground, and so we planned to drop the majority of our gear down near the river at a

basecamp – an area our pilot, Mark Hollows from Fiordland Helicopters, had told us about. We had five fine days of weather forecast before a classic Fiordland three-day deluge would set in, followed by a couple good days at the tail end of the trip - it's important to note that down there a long-range forecast should always be taken with a grain of salt



Glassing from camp on the tops



Our team of three



A bull caught out on a slip

To make the most of the early fine weather, the decision was made to be dropped on the tops with four nights worth of food in preparation to glass the surrounding bush lines in the hopes of an easy bull to kick-start our trip.

Chris, Scott and I were immediately drawn to the distant sounds of a bugle within minutes of

the helicopter departing. To our excitement, it did not take long to pick him up through the binoculars. Roaming high above the bushline was a young bull aged around three to four years, with three points on one side and a missing antler on the other. We set up camp and glassed for the rest of the day, picking up nine cows, but no more bulls. All

the bugles we heard were echoing up from lower down in the bush. With that in mind, we spent first light of day two watching the tops before heading down a ridge leading into the bush. **Chris and I set off on the first stalk of the hunt, while Scott sat back with the roaring horn to keep the target bull interested.** Unfortunately, the bull shut up shop leaving us scratching our heads as to what went wrong. Did the wind flip? Did we make too much noise? Did we spook his cows? Or did he just bed down as it was getting late in the day?

Upon our return, Scott was excited to let us know he had sparked up another bull down the other side of the ridge. This time Chris stayed back roaring so that Scott and I could close the gap. We had the wind on our side and got to within fifteen metres of the bull, but couldn't catch a glimpse of him through the tight bush. As we crept further around the face, I caught a bit of movement in his direction - his rack moving some bushes as he let out a bugle. Scott brought the rifle up for a good look before he turned to me and said, ***"that's all yours with the camera, mate"***.

The bull was in his mid-years with a measly six points and nothing up top. We decided to let out a low roar, which really sparked him into gear. Over the next five minutes we watched him thrash trees and aggressively reply to our calls before coming in and finally spooking at five metres. It was a special experience to see

the sheer size of a Wapiti bull up close, combined with the power behind their bugle - and that was by no means a monster bull! This experience only increased our motivation and enthusiasm to find more bulls in this wondrous place.

In the last of the evening light we climbed back up to camp to glass and found two new bulls who had entered the same area as the one antlered bull from last night. Again, they were young animals who needed a few more years to reach the desired seven to ten years of age for a trophy Wapiti. We let out a few roars and managed to coax them down off the leading ridgeline towards a saddle beneath our camp, taking the opportunity to gather more footage of a bull up close in the bush. Chris and I raced down towards the saddle and hid along the main game trail above a wallow. What happened next was unbelievable and an experience that I will never forget. One of the bulls came to within ten metres, oblivious to our presence, and started to play in the wallow, marking it as his own. We watched him rolling in the mud and kicking his legs like a toddler in a paddling pool for a couple of minutes before he realized he was being watched and took off back towards the saddle.

Convinced the older bulls were too smart to be occupying the tops at this time of year we spent days three and four dropping back down to our basecamp near the riverbed. We spooked a bull on our way down - managing only a glimpse as he crashed away.

Thankfully he was another young animal and not the old boy we were after!

Day five was our last good day of weather before the rain was predicted to set in. Wanting to make the most of it, we set off at first light and stalked our way upriver, hunting the riverbed and bush along the true left. By mid-morning we had made our way to the first gorge section of the river without hearing a sound. Concluding that we were too close to the river and that this was drowning out any distant bugles, we set off to climb up a steep ridge and to gain some altitude.

Avoiding the bluffs, we managed to find a route that could lead us to the top of the ridge. About three hundred metres up we finally heard what we had been waiting for all morning. We suspected that the bull was still far off, as Scott and I had



Waist deep swamps on the valley floor



A young 6 pointer in a wallow

already learnt a lesson about judging call distance on day three (we had dropped six hundred metres elevation only to find the bull was up on the other side of the damn river. We laughed at ourselves and noted the mistake as we slogged our way back up to camp).

Determined to make the most of what might just be our best day of weather, we set off after the distant bugles that were echoing down the valley. The next four hours were spent sidling, dropping down to a tributary, climbing up the other side, sidling, dropping back down to cross a 'side creek' (ravine) and then eventually climbing up towards the source of the bugles. By the time we made it we were hearing four different bulls bugling to each other in a dramatic expression of dominance.

We began stalking towards the closest animal, with the wind on our

side and thinking we were within one hundred metres of the bull. It was at this point that we spotted him on a slip four hundred metres away...maybe we still had a bit to learn about judging the call distance of a Wapiti in these steep valleys! He was a seven pointer- still a bit young to take, and again, missing any top tines. However, he had huge brow tines and a wicked shape- he could make a unique trophy in a couple of years' time.

At seven that evening we realised that we had been on the move for eleven hours, travelling away from our camp. Thankfully we had planned for a late return and had packed the head torches and plenty of food for the day. The return journey was much quicker as we followed the river and sidled above the gorged sections, whilst keeping the river close at hand.

Day six was a much-needed rest day spent watching over 100mm of rain

bucket down from the comforts of our deck chairs under our Stoney Creek bomber fly - a bloody handy piece of kit for a trip into Fiordland!

By the time day seven came we were feeling the pressure of not having a bull on the ground. With another 20mm of rain forecast, Chris and I decided we had better try our luck on the ridges above camp and accepted the reality that we were in for a wet day. We packed a dry set of clothes and plenty of snacks into a drysack and set off up the hill. It was about a 700m climb to the top of the bush covered ridge that we planned to hunt. Again, we found ourselves sidling the bases of bluffs trying to find a route up through the steep country. As we neared the top, we were greeted by the relieving sound of a bugle only 100m above us! It was at this point that we realized the wind was not on our side and was blowing up towards him. We attempted to sidle around so he would not catch our scent, but as we closed in, he went quiet. We knew we could not play the patience game on this stalk as a five-minute stop was enough to start shivering. A bit disheartened, we carried on along the ridge and circled down to camp empty handed and ready for a hot dehy meal.

The sound of rain pattering down on the fly was becoming an all too familiar sound as we woke on day eight. Our Garmin InReach weather forecast gave us the best news we could have asked for- from midday until the end of our trip we had clear weather again! We spent the afternoon discussing how to best use our remaining time to secure an old bull, whilst our gear dried on a makeshift clothesline on the riverbed. It was decided that our best chance was to return to the area we had hunted on day five, but this time take the tents with us. We knew there was at least three

bulls in that area that we had not laid eyes on yet; surely one of them would be a taker? To further our chances of success, we pushed our pickup time to as late as possible for day ten to allow us a solid morning hunt for that day. With a promising plan devised, we were off to bed eager to successfully close out the trip.

We woke with a spring in our step on day nine to pack up basecamp, ready for tomorrow's departure, with the foresight that we would be rushing back down the river to make our pickup time. **Once we had gotten ourselves back up to our target area we had a 'mare of a time finding a campsite!** The bush was thick - flat ground was almost non-existent- and to say it was wet would be an understatement. We ended up settling for a swamp. It was open, it was flat and by this point the anticipation of our last evening hunt superseded the concerns of a sub-par campsite - there was no time to waste.

As we got closer the clag rolled in and all the bulls went quiet. Once we had found a nice knoll with some open bush, we stopped to let out a few roars in the hope of stirring a response. We waited patiently for twenty minutes letting out the occasional roar- with no response. Our optimism for a last chance bull was fading as we sat there helplessly waiting.

Thirty metres below us we heard a branch break in a gut. As Chris prepared the rifle and began to stalk in, I frantically dug through my pack to find the camera. By the time I had it out Chris was ten metres ahead and, with some prompting from Scott, I followed behind. The bull let out a booming bugle as he circled around beneath us to cut our wind. Luckily Chris had set off straight away and managed to intercept the bull on his way up. I focused the camera on Chris who had the rifle up pointing deeper into the bush. All of a

sudden I saw a solid rack appear over his shoulder- only ten metres ahead of him. After a brief pause to age the animal Chris dropped him on the spot with his trusty 308.

As we approached the bull we weren't exactly sure what we were walking into; only Chris had managed a decent look at him, and even then he was mainly focused on making sure the animal had some age. To say that we were stoked would be an understatement! He might not boast the famed length these Wapiti are known for but with eleven strong tines, buried coronets and thick bases we knew he was an old animal. On top of that the bull was massive! Comparing his body size to the Canterbury Reds we usually hunt he was a seriously impressive animal. The photo doesn't give justice to the size of him - it took all three of us to move him somewhere suitable for butchering and photos. We definitely think he was a bit of a hybrid; being a 'fringe block' the Wapiti genetics don't run as pure which might explain his shorter length given his age. **We're awaiting the Wapiti Foundations results to his age using the lower jaw we gave them-** it will be interesting to see if our estimates match his actual age. Regardless, we were absolutely elated; through all of our efforts and close calls we'd finally made it happen and secured a bull we're all proud of.

After nine days of trudging through swamps, climbing between bluffs, bashing through bush and wading across rivers, success

The washing line on a 'fine' day



Chris with some big rubbing



had never tasted sweeter. To top it all off we managed to capture the whole experience on camera, which we will be releasing to our YouTube channel - South Island Rifle Walkers. After absorbing the momentous experience and corresponding emotions we celebrated, captured some photos, took the head and some meat before returning to camp as the sun set on an epic day, and an epic trip.

The last morning was spent in an attempt to find a bull for Scott. But with more rain falling the bulls had hidden deep in the bush and weren't responding to anything, so it was back to the pickup point - smiles all around.

Hunting the Wapiti blocks is like nothing else; you are in one of the world's most



The boys chuffed with the result

incredible landscapes, searching for an animal nowhere else in the country can provide, whilst being isolated from the worries of the world and surrounded by good mates. It always offers one hell of an adventure and is filled with a rich hunting history that only continues to

grow, and in my eyes, is the pinnacle of New Zealand trophy hunting. **Hats off to the members of the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation for their continued efforts in preserving the Wapiti herd and our rights to hunt them - thanks for all your work.**



The view on the flight out





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Outside The *Comfort Zone*

WRITTEN BY ~ NGAIRE DAMPNEY

I had always underestimated the sheer size of the South Island mountains, that was until I was flying past them in a helicopter – oh and let's not forget to mention that I'm afraid of heights



At this point the excitement had worn off and I was becoming a sweaty mess. Brooke, who's a bit of an adrenaline junkie, drew the short straw by sitting next to me and was grinning from ear to ear enjoying every moment. Lucas, my husband sat in the back quietly taking in the scenery while James our pilot flew us into the mountains where we would be for the next week.

Luke and Samantha had taken the first flight in, locating a primo little spot nestled in a basin that give us protection from the West Coast weather and providing us with stunning mountainous views.

After safely landing and doing the mad dash to get the gear out of the helicopter, the five of us made quick work of setting up our luxury camp, unpacking everything including the kitchen sink. **With the tents set and everything secured, we were pumped and ready to go scouting.** We headed off up the hill behind us that led to a ridge running between a rocky outcrop and a hanging valley. Over the next few days I grew to have a love/hate relationship with this daily climb, my body hurting at just the thought of it, however this high point allowed us to glass down into a rock garden, a spot that looked perfect for some animals with the rocks warming in the sun. It did not take long for some chamois to be spotted. After glassing half a dozen chamois play around in the rocks, it was decided that Lucas would have a go at a buck we had been watching. **The boys were going to go find a better vantage point while we stayed behind to be the eyes from above.**

Helping to navigate the boys down via radio, I was starting to get edgy and regretting to agree to stay behind. I wanted to be down there in the action, but patience is key when it comes to hunting. We got word that they had located a spot that Lucas was going to shoot from. Waiting for the shot felt like hours, my eyes had started to burn from staring through the binoculars but **I kept watching, waiting for the shot to ensure that if the buck decided to run we could find it.** Finally, the sound of the gunshot echoed down the valley, Lucas had taken the shot. Unfortunately the wind whistling down the face of the mountain required more elevation adjustment than Luke allowed for on a 600 yard shot and Lucas missed, sending the buck running for cover never to return.

It didn't take long for the West Coast clag to roll in, hiding the sun and bringing some chilly winds.

We had resorted to napping in the foetal position, attempting to wait out the clag and to try conserve body heat. After an hour or two Sam, Brooke and I decided we had endured enough and headed on back to camp hoping to find some warmth along the way to heat our chilled bones while the boys stayed, waiting for a break in the weather. While finding my sleeping bag back at camp (to save me from what felt like hypothermia) I had already started to question my life choices and why I had agreed to partake in this trip. I was hungry, I was cold, and my fear of heights was constantly setting



Even the helicopter ride in was a bit of an adventure

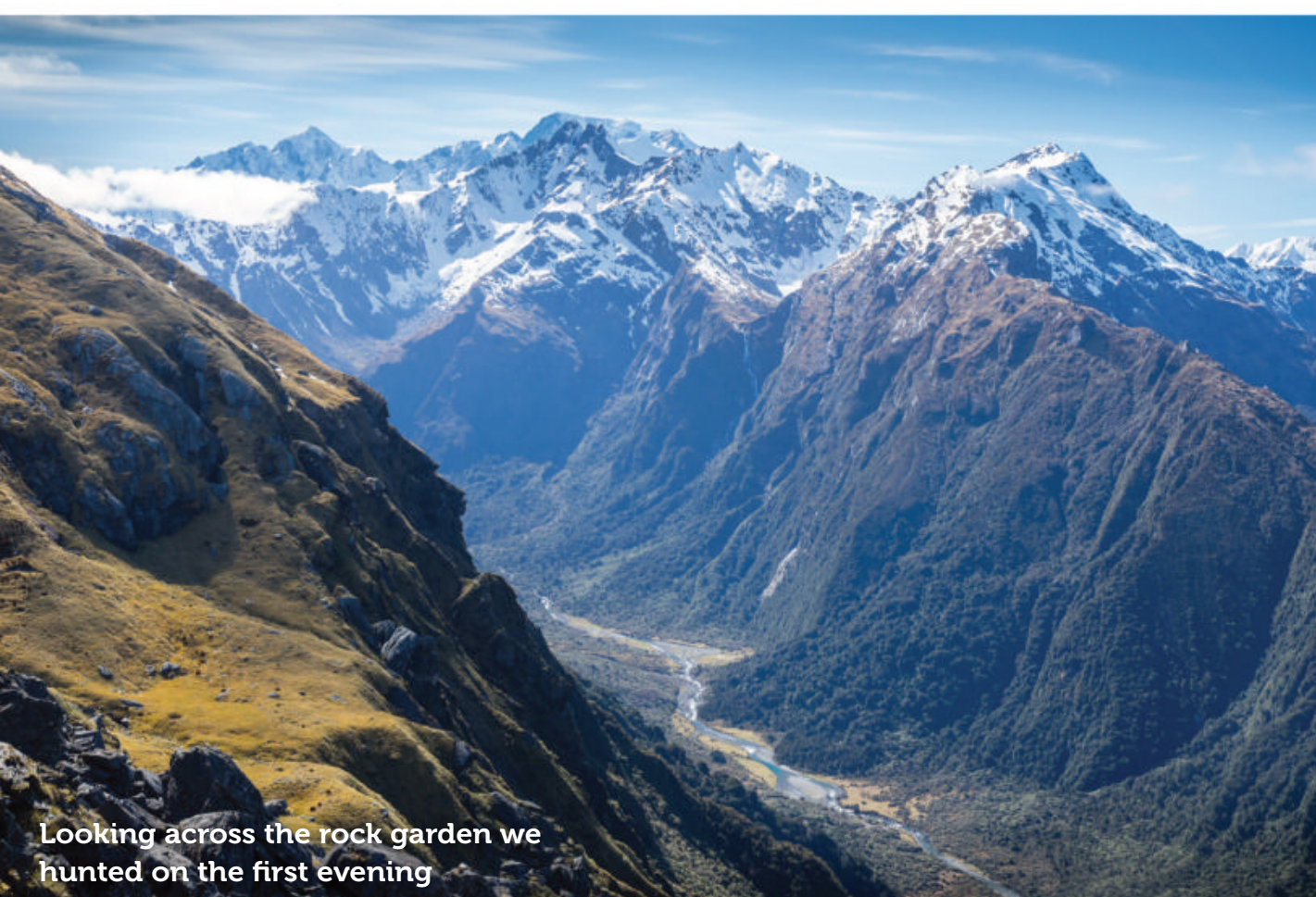


The young buck that nearly passed through camp on the first day





Lucas and his first chamois buck



Looking across the rock garden we hunted on the first evening



Lucas, Sam, me and Brooke making our way back to camp



The buck on the hoof

my Garmin watch off with it reminding me that I was stressed and needed a break! **On the bright side, the yarns around camp that night more than made up for it.**

The boys arrived back to camp just after dark and Lucas surprised us with some show and tell of the chamois he'd managed to take, a buck not too far off 9". A simpler 300 yard shot for his first buck and a bit of a redemption after the previous attempt. He was stoked and told me the story multiple times before he was content that I knew every detail on how his buck had gone down. That pure excitement from him was enough to perk me up and get me determined to make the most of this trip.

The next morning, we woke to what us Waikato people call, a very heavy frost. The tent was crispy, and I swear there was icicles on the inside but boy, was the view of the mountains a magnificent sight to wake up to. We made the same trek up the hill behind camp as we had done the day prior, the plan today was to glass down into the same hanging valley that Lucas had shot his chamois in and see what else was lurking. It didn't take long to spot some animals, a few bucks that were too young for our liking and the odd doe. Later in the morning one doe stood out from the rest though, with age creeping up on her and only one horn left she would be a perfect first trophy for me. She was tucked hard against a shaded rock face in a crevice on the opposite side of the valley, with a young buck sitting below her. A tricky stalk.

Discussing our game plan, Brooke, Luke, Lucas, and I were going to head down while Sam stayed up top to be our eyes in the sky. Looking down I realised not only did I have to climb down the steep face below us but also back up - I love to push my own boundaries, but this was possibly my limit. Climbing down I was using any plant and root I could get my hands on to help me. It had become a mental game, convincing myself that I was fine and more than capable to get down, trying to stop my



The valley my doe lived in. Crossing that big crevice on the right pushed my comfort zone



Me with my chamois, this was a hunt that really challenged me and it meant a lot to succeed

mind from playing tricks on me. Finally reaching the bottom, relief and delight passed through me but now we had to make our way across to where I would be shooting from undetected with minimal cover to get there.

Wading through the swampy terrain while in a crouched position certainly put a burn in the quads, but we managed to clear the open space without alerting our doe or her sentinel, Sam confirming on the radio that she didn't even look twice in our direction. **Brooke and Lucas stayed behind while Luke and I moved into position.** We crept up to the top of a small hill all while Sam kept us informed on our target's movements - the doe had nestled herself down at the top of a spur, facing us. At this point I had no idea if this was a hard or easy shot, neither of the boys had mentioned anything. In the back of my mind all I could think was that my aim had to be on point as I didn't make everyone walk all this way for me to miss!

I thought I would have been prepared for this moment and that all the goat and turkey shooting had taught me how to steady my breath and calm my nerves. Trying to look down the scope I found I couldn't focus in on the animal. My adrenaline had kicked in and I was again a shaky, nervous mess. **Luke set me up with a dry fire so I**

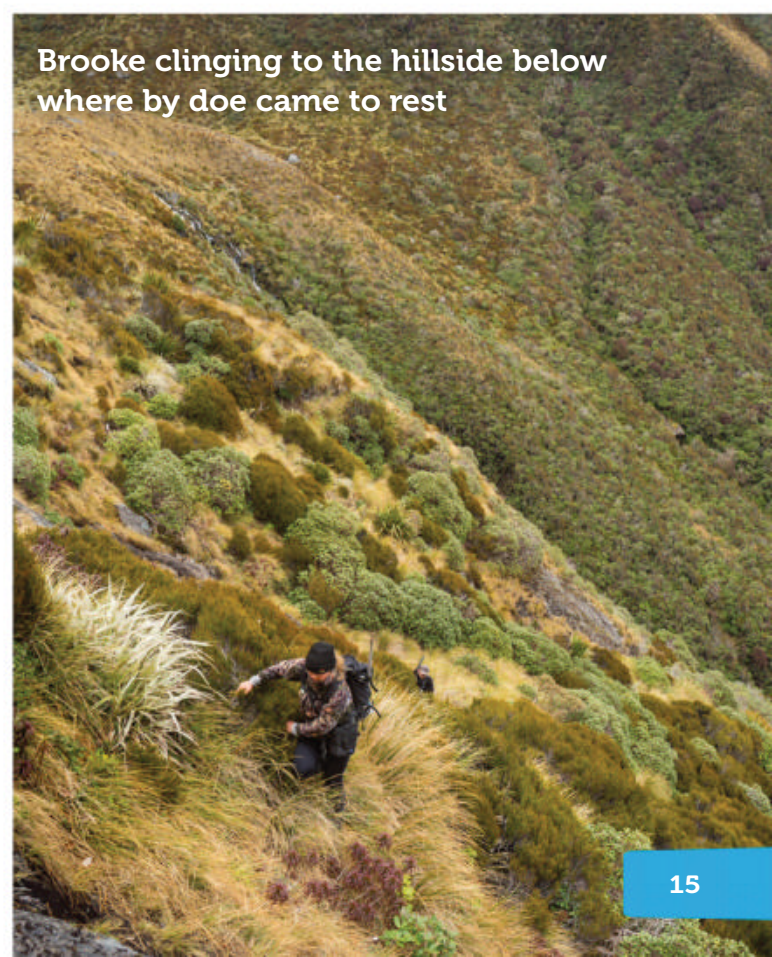


Pushing my limits finding a way through the steep stuff

could get a feel for the feather-light trigger, which also helped me clear my head and focus. I got the go ahead from Luke, taking a few deep breaths in before a long slow exhale, I focused in on the stripes down the doe's chin leading to her chest and squeezed the trigger. It all happened so quickly, the shot ringing back at me, Luke was cheering as if I had successfully done it but looking through the scope I saw a chamois racing down the hill. I'm right handed but left eye dominant so I shoot leftie, this meant I didn't have a good grip on the gun causing it to jump slightly and focus in on the younger buck that was



My 14 year old, 9" chamois doe



Brooke clinging to the hillside below where by doe came to rest



The detour the boys suggested since we were 'halfway there' had us up above the snowline



The view to the south of camp. Suprisingly we didn't see any chamois in this great looking country



Luke checking out the head of the valley

hanging out nearby. I had missed seeing my first trophy go down! Thankfully, Luke had recorded the shot and to my surprise it was a clean chest shot. **Realisation of what had just occurred settled in and I couldn't quite believe it, I had hit my target.** I was stunned for a while before I was overwhelmed with joy. A 420 yard shot with a chamois facing head on is definitely a highlight of my hunting and I was planning on getting this one mounted.

The hike up to the doe was the next part that pushed my limits, she was high up in a crevice that seemed almost impossible to get to. **We scaled up grooves in the side of another crevice using vegetation to gain grip, my watch at this point was constantly telling me my stress levels were too high.** I was going to be knackered tonight when my adrenaline wore off. Clambering across a slick mossy rockface was the last hurdle between me and my trophy, every part of my body was telling me no, but I didn't walk all this way to stop shy of the final challenge. With a bit of encouragement from Brooke, on shaking legs I made my way across the rockface to find my doe nearby. Exhilaration, delight, but also sadness, all washed over me at once, I had just taken the life of this doe but she sure did make me work for it and helped to push many of my mental boundaries which made me cherish this even more.

We all took a moment to see what story the horns of the doe told. Luke aged her at around 14 years and measuring at 9 inches with one horn missing due to rot, she also had cataracts in both eyes. **She had lived a long life and now left me with an everlasting memory.**

We sat on the small clearing the doe was on, only just big enough for the four of us, eating lollies and bumper bars taking a much-deserved break. Luke made light work of skinning it for me as I wanted to get it mounted. If I had attempted it I would've ended up leaving with just the horn as even for

the best of taxidermists wouldn't have been able to salvage the skin. Packing my bag full of meat and the skin I was loaded like a pack mule ready to haul my prize back to camp. **While heading back, we decided to detour up another ridge as we were already halfway there – so the boys said.** Climbing higher and higher, patches of iced up snow started to appear until the majority of the ground was covered in a white blanket. We ended up perching on a ledge high up in the snow, the plan was to try and spy some tahr. Try being the key word and sadly the choppers had been at work and that was when the realisation started to set in on just how many tahr had been eradicated. Even with Luke's sharp spotting, we couldn't locate a single tahr. Heading back was just as adventurous for me as that morning, my heart rate was up and my watch again was alerting me to my stress levels, it had become the running joke. **By time we got back I was absolutely exhausted, everything felt like it hurt and I was hungry.** Sam cooked up a big spag bol which we all devoured, it was the comfort food I needed after the mission we had done that day. Sleeping came easy, even with the hard ground, however I knew I would feel it in the morning.

We woke to the cheeky keas alerting us that it was time to get up for our final morning. Dragging my tired body out of bed I started

on taking our camp down. **The weather was meant to pack in so we had to leave this afternoon, cutting our trip short which meant camp had to be packed up before we went anywhere.**

Today we were going to venture out the opposite side of camp, day one we had seen two young chamois come from that area and nearly pass through camp so the idea was to see if we could get Brooke her first chamois. The clag soon rolled in thick and heavy, only giving us small patches of visibility. A few hours had gone by and with the few small windows of clarity, no animals were seen. **We decided to head back to the hanging valley where both Lucas and I had managed to get our chamois, hoping it would produce a third and final time.** By time we reached the top, the clag had cleared, and it was a beautiful sunny day, sunhats and sunblock came out as we settled in for some glassing, but not before we inhaled the last of the



The little fireplace made everything more comfortable



crackers and cheese. The lack of animals seen had caused me to doze off, this same spot yesterday was full of animals but today was not producing the goods. Finally, a few animals were spotted but unfortunately time was not on our side as we had a rendezvous with our helicopter flight in a few hours. We spent the next few hours simply watching the chamois go on with their lives, all while being completely unaware that they were being watched. **The kea accompanied us on our walk back to camp, darting and diving around being the mischievous birds they are well known to be.** Getting back to camp I noticed everyone taking a moment

to check out our campsite that had housed us for the last few days, tomorrow morning I would not be waking up to this beautiful view so I savoured every last moment.

The flight back to the hanger marked the end to a successful hunting trip, as tired and exhausted as I was, it was all worth it, getting my first chamois but also the journey to it. I had done things so far from my comfort zone that it made it so much more memorable. It's certainly a trip I will never forget and has possibly just given me the South Island hunting bug. **So Lucas, Luke, Sam and Brooke – are you ready for another trip?**





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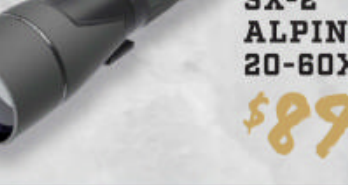
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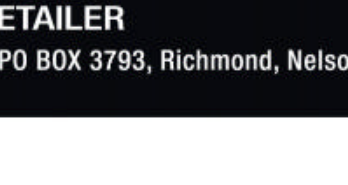
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Angus and Q



'There's a mob of tahr up there Dad'

Two Nights In Q CREEK

WRITTEN BY ~ TOM FRASER

On a small rock outcrop high above an isolated East Coast stream, I crouched with my twelve year old son as five young tahr fed quietly just 200 metres away

I'd set Angus up with the rifle over a pack to prepare for a shot but there was a problem – the wind. The forecast had predicted nor' west gales or severe gales for the duration of the weekend, and it had proven accurate.

We watched plumes of dust and debris being hurled into the air from the streambed below us while the tussocks

surrounding us shuddered with every gust. Dust blasted into our ears and eyes.

But there was little we could do about the weather and we couldn't close the distance for we were utilising the last piece of cover. The tahr meanwhile, were tucked away in a little fold amongst the tussock face, sheltered from the elements. The tussock around them barely moved. It was clear we were going to have to simply wait out the gusts.

Every few minutes there was a lull and each was enough to ensure a safe, productive shot with the .260

After what seemed an eternity, the wind gusts dropped, and I told Angus to get ready. It's an understatement to suggest he was anything but ready for he'd been preparing for this moment for a very long time.

He worked the bolt and settled in.

'Send it when you're sure' I said.



Angus and Dad

The previous day we'd undertaken a long and uncomfortable walk into the valley, slowly gaining height but blasted at every step by the nor' wester tearing down from the slopes above. **It seemed that nowhere was safe from the wind's onslaught.** But Angus and our Labrador, Q, still seemed very happy to be stretching their legs, as they both set out on their first ever tahr hunt.

We battled on, forgoing any attempt to glass, and set about finding a campsite in an otherwise unforgiving streambed.

The following morning dawned dark, ominous and windy. We huddled among the tussocks and did our best to hold binoculars steady. It wasn't long before animals appeared. Across a small creek the tahr were distinctive with their orangey spring coats. **As I began telling Angus they were nannies and juveniles I heard him counting; one, two, three and on**

"Wow," he said quietly.

Just a few hundred metres away I spotted nine larger, darker-coloured shapes amongst the tussock.

"And, there are some mature bulls," I told Angus.

It was tempting to stay longer and consider moving in for a shot but, being new to this catchment, I wanted to explore further. **So, our packs went back over our shoulders and we continued to move our way up the valley.** We saw several tahr, mostly nannies and youngsters, while in another small gut just upstream we watched five young bulls feeding their way towards higher ground.

It was clear that the decision to visit this valley was a good one. I'd been somewhat apprehensive leading up to the trip, that being on the edge of the tahr 'zone', our chances of seeing animals here would be low. **But the terrain looked very promising on Topomap and Google Earth – and always being prone to explore new country - we took a punt.** Another key consideration was that the contour lines on the maps suggested the

area was suitable for a twelve year old, and while it proved to be challenging in parts, was in the most part easily traversed creek beds, tussock lands and alpine basins.

We reached the junction with another side-creek and, with a large boulder offering protection from the sun and wind, stopped for lunch and a rest.

"What's the plan, Dad?," Angus asked when he woke after a short nap.

"There's two options," I replied. "The first is to stay and camp the night right here as I'm sure we'll see something later this afternoon. I like the look of those flats below the bluffs just over there," I said, pointing upstream.





Getting lined up
on the bull



Back at camp



Angus and his
first tahr

"Or, we can head back down the valley, set up camp there and have a closer look at those tahr we saw on the way in."

I wasn't surprised to hear Angus say he like the idea of heading back down the valley, as the opportunity to look again at animals we knew were about is always appealing.

It was easier heading down the valley with packs and we soon found ourselves amongst the boulders in the creek bed trying to find a sheltered spot to pitch the tent. And, again, the wind seemed intent on doing everything to make life difficult.

After erecting the tent we had some food and rested up before later picking up the binoculars and scanning the hills from the comfort of the sleeping mats.

It didn't take long to find tahr. The mob of mature bulls we'd noted earlier in the day were visible further downstream while another mob of nannies were visible closer to camp.

But a small mob of young bulls just a few hundred metres above us got my interest because there was adequate cover to get within shooting range and the climb didn't appear too challenging for the legs of a twelve year old. And, while I'm not in the habit of targeting young bulls, it was obvious

tahr numbers were healthy in the catchment and taking one wouldn't be a problem.

We planned our approach, collected our equipment and set out from camp.

The climb was straightforward, directly up from camp and out of sight of the tahr to a cluster of large rocks. But, once there it was obvious that the strength of the wind would make any shot too difficult. There was precious little cover available to us, so we crawled the last 100 yards to a slight tussock knoll. All the time Q was at my side, aware that animals were close and clearly anticipating some action.

Once we reached the tussock, out came the rangefinder. It indicated the animals were just under 300 yards away, so the pack was turned into a rest for the Tikka and Angus got ready. **Q meanwhile, crouched down on her haunches next to us, sniffing the air and watching the tahr who were still feeding, unaware of our presence.**

And then, we waited. And waited. All we required was a simple 30 second lull in the wind but it seemed an eternity before it eventuated.

Angus's shot was muffled by the sound of the wind but hit the tahr hard sending it tumbling into the gut below.

I gave Q the command and she was away, quickly making up the distance between our position and where the bull fell. She efficiently worked the gut and within a minute she was standing over the beautiful young bull.

Angus gave a fist pump and then his old man a big hug.

"I've done it Dad, I've got my first tahr," he beamed.

The weather was fast deteriorating and already the first spots of rain were being blown into our faces. Therefore, meat was quickly placed in the pack and we began our descent to camp.

It was two very tired, wind-beaten hunters and their hound that later arrived at camp for a well-earned, celebratory dinner.

The following morning we woke again to ominous looking clouds and it wasn't long before we found ourselves packing up in the rain and beginning the walk back to the truck. This is often the hardest part of any hunt, with tired, blistered and sore bodies resulting in laboured steps and murmured curses. But despite the rain and tiredness, Angus didn't complain. **Perhaps it was the meat in the pack and the unforgettable memories that made each of his steps that little bit easier.**



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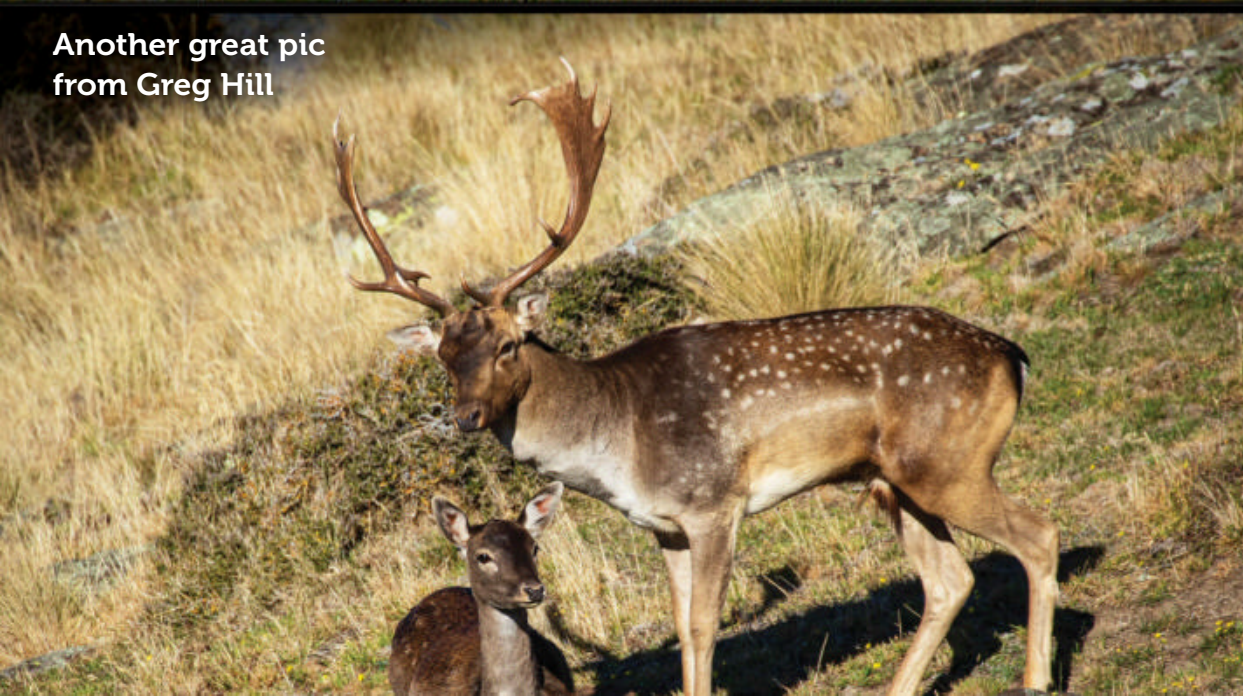


Bradley Robb with some chamois in the Hunter Hills



Kelvin Tibble - Young North Canterbury stag

Another great pic from Greg Hill



A skylined stag Ben Madsen photographed



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WRITTEN BY ~ LAURENCE FORREST

BLUEPRINT SUCCESS

I never thought I'd be grounded as an adult! But I was not alone, the whole country had to join me

Covid-19 had come at the worst possible time for a keen hunter, just as the roar was upon us. It was a big blow for all, but it had to be done to save lives..

I had just finished nine months of training Meg, my BGID (Big Game Indicating Dog) and I was planning that my first hunts with her would be after my annual

fly-in roar trip, which was obviously not happening anymore! So, now that there were several extra weeks ahead and not being allowed to hunt, I could put more

training into Meg, just to consolidate all of her lessons from "The Blueprint".

Back in 2017, the Edgumbe flood had my wife and I living in a 9m by 3m transportable cabin. We had bought a lifestyle block with plans to build our first house, but the cabin was now going to be home for a few months. One night in the cabin I saw a YouTube video of a training guide for a deer dog, and thought "man, how awesome would that be? Train a dog to take you to animals in the bush?" **Before I knew it, I had purchased the whole 15 plus hours of training videos.**

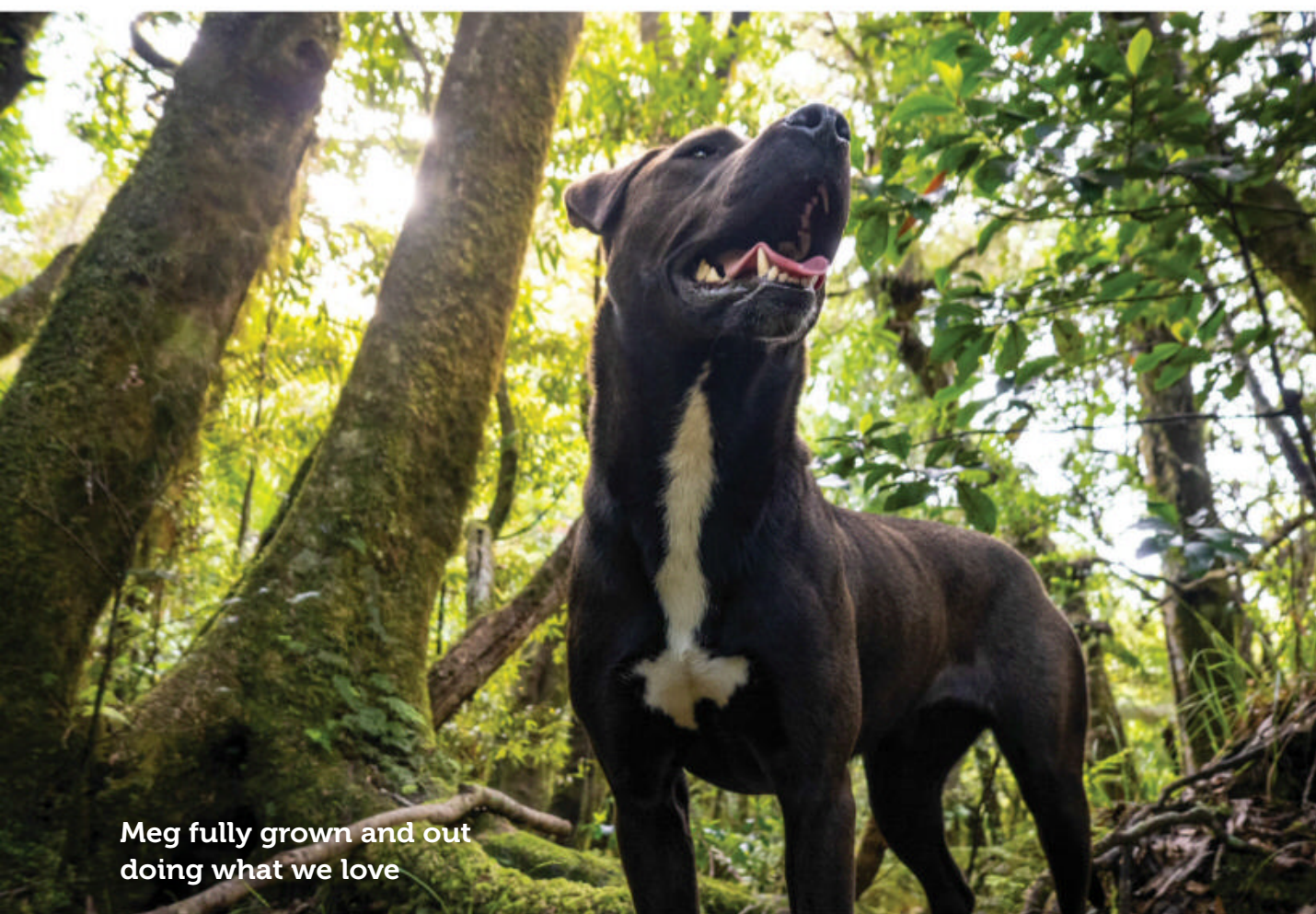
I already had a seven year old GSP/WHP named Choco. He had seen many deer while hunting with me and even held the odd pig, so he was to be my guinea pig for the new training schedule. As he already had a few basic commands, I did his training over five months. He absorbed it so much better than I imagined he would, and two short trainings a day was all he needed. After



Meg on one of our regular training sessions



The clearing where Meg saw her first deer shot



Meg fully grown and out doing what we love

five months of retraining I took him on his first fully trained BGID hunt. To my surprise he led me to two Sambar after an hour or so of stalking. He stopped dead in his tracks as we crested a ridge and when I looked up two Sambar hinds were looking at me, only 15 metres away. Then they bolted - and so did Choco, trail barking his way after them! No amount of yelling at him to sit or come back worked, so I had to give chase. A few minutes later he came trotting back, with his tongue hanging out and looking mighty pleased with himself. Hmm, 'It'd be nice to start from scratch with a new pup' I thought to myself!

But life got busy, and I had to convince my wife that I had the time to train and look after a new pup. **July 2019 came around and my father randomly tagged me in a Facebook buy/sell post for a black lab crossed with a kelpie/ridgeback - a pig dog basically.** I did want a lab cross, so a time was made later that day to check her out.

The pup was very relaxed and stood back assessing us, which is what I wanted to see. She ticked all the boxes and was coming home with us! As per the Blueprint, Meg was straight in the back of the truck. Not the back seat but under the well side hard lid. Doing the "worst first" is a critical part of the training.

Once home I wasted no time and started training straight away, using the long line. This is a 4mm-thick rope with a loose knot at the end to put around your pup's neck so that you have control. It doesn't harm the pup and is a fantastic tool. Starting training at eight to nine weeks old may seem too early, but every step of the Blueprint is set out in a way to deal with the pups age, and with age comes more responsibility. So, as you progress through training, you require more responsibility from the pup, and it's amazing how it all comes together. Stop and go drills came first, and straight away she showed good promise. I was particularly looking forward to scent training, introduction to gunfire and then taking the long line off. **Removing the long line meant I had all her commands set and she could be controlled without its use.** Together, these three skills are the core of what I wanted to achieve with training - tracking a deer, being calm around the gunshot and controllable with voice, whistle and hand commands.



After months of training and hard work, and the Prime Minister finally giving us the ok to get back out in the bush, we were off! My best mate Jason and I planned an overnight mission into Te Urewera, to a spot where we had spent nearly every weekend when in our mid 20's. **With Meg and all my gear in tow, it was off to Jason's, and travel to the Waioeka Gorge carpark, surprised to only see four vehicles already there.**

After a quick yarn with other hunters who had just arrived, exchanging plans and destinations, we started the ninety minute hike into our hunting spot. Within 20 minutes we reached a swing bridge, and although obstacle training is just one part of dog training, one thing I didn't have around home was a steel mesh swing bridge that crossed ten metres above a river! Despite all my encouragement, Meg refused to walk up the steep ascent up onto the bridge. After carrying her up and onto the bridge, and giving lots of praise, she pushed through her fear and

crossed with us.

An hour later her nose was stuck on the ground and she started to head to the bush. I called her back, as we were just about to start our descent into the bush via the walking track. We were soon to find out why she had shown that bit of interest. Jason suggested that I should go in front with Meg, so she led the way, with me close behind. Three minutes down the track the familiar sound of a deer trotting off through the bush bought all of us to an instant halt. A quick fawn call stopped the young stag in its tracks. My Tikka was quickly loaded and ready to fire. I had the deer in my sights but there was too much bush and not

enough of a gap to send a good clean kill shot so he was lucky that day!

I watched it slowly walk off while Meg sat patiently a couple metres in front of me, just as she had been trained. Darkness was approaching so we continued walking up to our camp site. Just 50 metres from our clearing Meg started to showed interest again and within a few minutes two deer took flight in front of us. **It was good to know there were plenty of deer about!**

With camp set up we sat and watched over our clearing, and just before dark a young stag came out to feed. Unfortunately for this guy Jason was onto him, and with the animal turning



A stag we've taken since that first hunt



broadside the calm sleepy bush sounds turned into a rumble of thunder and the stag dropped like sack of spuds!

We walked back up to camp for a feed and a couple of cold beers before hitting the sack. I was super excited for the following morning, as it was just going to be me and Meg out in prime deer country, stalking alone for the first time. All those months of training had led to this moment, to let her take the lead while I followed and to trust her to take me straight to a live animal and indicate to me for a shot.

The alarm sounded at 6:30am telling me it was time to rise. I was in no rush to get going because there wouldn't be enough light for safe hunting until about 8am. **It was a leisurely start, cooking a bit of breakfast and enjoying being out in the awesome bush that we have at our doorstep.** We left camp about 8:30, and within 100 metres Meg was nose down tracking deer! My job was to be in full stalk mode and keep myself calm and slow, to help Meg keep her range and focus with me, whilst taking on this new experience of tracking live deer scent in Te Urewera bush. With her hunting range set up at three to four metres in front of me during training I let her range out to seven to eight metres to give her a bit more chance, in case she happened to over-shoot the scent she was tracking.

With the pup tracking fresh marks I set the pace as slow and quiet as I could. She was doing the same, staying nice and slow and turning back to check on me.

About 9:30am she got a direct wind off an animal not very far away, stopped dead in her tracks and stuck her nose as high as she could. I knew there was an animal within 100 metres of us, but the wind had come downhill from a thick looking patch and I wasn't too keen to push straight into it as we would make far too much noise. I put her back on the ground scent and she carried on tracking. As we sidled up the face to our right we hit the spur and she turned left so I was confident she was tracking the deer she had winded. The bush was fairly open and good for stalking but that was short lived as she pushed straight into a thick patch. I had no option but to follow!

Pushing through as slowly as I could, even on hands and knees at times to keep the noise down, my eyes were periodically closed to avoid getting poked with a stick. When I opened them up, Meg was standing dead still in front of me, with her neck stretched out looking as though she

had seen something she had never seen before, I knew it was time! "Don't stuff it up Laurence" was running through my mind. Trying to look past her for a deer, like a hawk trying to spot its next meal, I couldn't get eyes on anything. I started to doubt her, but remembered a key phrase often repeated by Paul Michael in the Blueprint, **"Always trust the dog"**!

It felt like an eternity but was literally only five or ten seconds, then I looked down to my left, and spotted a deer's head looking straight up at us, as clear as day through the trees! I gently shouldered my rifle and clicked the safety off, and with the cross hair approaching the deer's forehead I pulled the trigger. The very quiet subsonic projectile flew through the air ... and clean missed the deer's head! With another round rapidly slammed into the chamber, the deer's head still in the same spot, a second round was on its way and to my relief it hit its mark and the young deer hit the bush floor!

I turned to look at Meg, who was sitting on the spot and looking calm.

'Perfect' I thought to myself, holding in my extreme excitement as I wanted to remain calm, to show Meg that's how we want to be in this situation. She was still pretty fixated on the direction she was indicating before the shot, so I was sure she must have seen the mother of the young deer I had just shot. We had our trophy though, so we took a few minutes to soak it all in, then slowly made our way 25 metres to our kill. Meg was very cautious on approach and I let her take her time, giving her a calm "good girl, good girl" as she finally put her nose on her first wild deer! With a heap of photos taken, I boned out and we headed down to the track to meet Jason. After a quick debrief, we shouldered our packs and headed back out to the truck.

I've been hunting since I was young - shooting your first rabbit is such a buzz, your first deer is even bigger, and now with probably 140 deer under my belt, this five to six month old deer was one of the most satisfying and memorable hunts of all! My enthusiasm for hunting has grown to another level, as I now have a fantastic hunting tool and mate that is always free to join me, and always keen!

Training a dog has, in turn, made me a better hunter.



Owner - Allan Foot

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While I think mirrorless is the way of the future, I spent a lot of time with a DSLR and took some of my favourite images with it, they're still a great option for photographers. Though maybe not so much for videographers



WRITTEN BY ~ LUKE CARE

Part 4

WHAT CAMERA SHOULD I BUY

DSLR VS MIRRORLESS | FULL FRAME VS CROP SENSOR

The uniting factor for the cameras in this issue are interchangeable lenses

In this article we cover the various types of interchangeable lens (ICL) cameras – DSLRs and mirrorless, crop sensors and full frame. It would be great to split this topic into two articles about crop sensor cameras and full frame cameras, but unfortunately all of the discussion is relevant to both, so buckle in for a big one!

LENSES

Interchangeable lenses give you the ability to swap between lenses for specific photographic situations.

Each camera manufacturer has a mount system unique to their own camera bodies, so generally people use lenses made by the same manufacturer as their body, but there are a few independent lens makers. Sigma and Tamron are probably the biggest and they make lenses for a variety of mounts. **There are also adaptor plates for using, say a Nikon lens on a Sony body, but there are often corresponding reductions in functionality, such as not being able to use autofocus.** We'll cover lenses specifically in a later issue as there is plenty to talk about with just the camera bodies!

DSLR

DSLR – Digital Single Reflex Cameras – are the original interchangeable lens design which began around 1988 in the days of film.

The basic premise hasn't changed - light is focused through the lens onto a mirror which projects the scene up into the viewfinder. When you take a photo, the mirror swings out of the way, allowing the light from the scene to be projected straight back to the sensor (previously onto the film). Early DSLRs lacked live-preview (the ability to see data from the electronic sensor, i.e. what you see on their LCD screen) due to this swinging mirror construction. This heavily restricted their usefulness as a video unit and general ease of use, but workarounds are standard now and practically all DSLRs have live view and

video recording abilities.

DSLRs and Mirrorless cameras have quite different autofocus systems, and for a long time DSLRs had the upper hand here. They still utilise the typical 'contrast detect' method (which looks for the area with the highest contrast, i.e. the sharpest point), but the good ones also utilise 'phase detect' autofocus. This uses a separate mirror and sensor just for running very quick and highly accurate autofocus. Phase detect requires the mirror to function, so if the mirrors are flipped up for live-preview or videoing, it can't work.

DSLRs have their place. I ran around with a Canon 5D for quite a while myself and one huge advantage was the startup time. Being mostly analog, you flick the switch and you're ready to go. When I stepped up to a Sony A7ii the 1-2 second lag time in starting cost me a few shots, however the new Nikon Z6ii I have now is so much quicker, and I think that's representative of most modern mirrorless. The other advantage they have is battery life - typically double the life of their mirrorless counterparts, which is important on a big backcountry trip. However, I think the advent of lightweight powerbanks has negated that advantage



Image quality is not a deciding factor between mirrorless and DSLR cameras, it's the technology and physical attributes like weight that really set them apart

somewhat.

In my opinion the biggest advantage is cost. The second hand market is saturated with cheap lenses and bodies, with a monumental array of lenses available. Used DSLRs are the best way to dip your toes in the full-frame world and then move up to a newer mirrorless with more tech if you think your hunting and photography justify it.

MIRRORLESS

Mirrorless cameras are an evolution on the DSLR. With advances in technology over the years we can now do away with the bulky and costly optical mirror system (hence 'mirrorless') to reduce cost, bulk and weight – all important things for a hunter photographer!

The information the sensor receives is now transmitted to the electronic viewfinder (EVF) and LCD screen electronically in real time as opposed to the strictly optical system of DSLRs. Most do retain the mechanical shutter, while including a silent electronic shutter option as well – excellent for sneaky live-animal photography. Though even the mechanical shutter is quieter on a mirrorless as there isn't the noise of the

viewfinder mirror slamming home as well.

This mirrorless system obviously requires the camera to operate only on live-preview, so until the mid 2010s mirrorless cameras hadn't really taken off, as the LCD screens and EVFs didn't have high enough resolution, responsiveness or contrast to out-do the optical DSLR system. All of this electrical activity does place higher demands on the batteries as opposed to a largely analog DSLR, but not to a problematic degree.

Live preview offers a number of other features not available on a DSLR, like focus peaking, histograms and face/eye tracking, and showing corrected exposures in real-time is hugely valuable.

LENSES

Mirrorless cameras often require a different lens mount than DSLR lenses even when using cameras from the same manufacturer, as the back of the lens, referred to as the 'flange distance', is now closer to the sensor due to the slimmer design.

This was typically around 45mm on DSLRs, but is now half that with mirrorless, typically 15-20 mm. Again, adaptors can overcome this much of the time but there

can be some loss in functionality.

This smaller flange distance does have repercussions for lens construction as it makes smaller, brighter wide-angle lenses easier to build. For example, while Nikon's DSLR 16-35mm f/4 lens is 680 grams, it's new Z series 14-30mm f/4 mirrorless lens is almost 200g lighter and 2mm wider-angle. There's some feedback that the smaller mirrorless bodies are less comfortable in the hand, but I've never noted it particularly and for my use that's a price I'm ready and willing to pay for less weight and bulk. There is less real-estate for control buttons, but I've not found it to be a problem. The Nikon Z6ii I use has more than enough external controls to keep you confused. I mean happy. I mean confused.

AUTOFOCUS

Early mirrorless could only work with contrast detect autofocus. This is very accurate as it analyses the image on the sensor to hunt down the point with the most contrast. It can be quite slow though, too slow for moving objects, and when filming, the shifting back and forth of focus as it hunts down the area of highest contrast is quite distracting. However, around 2010 Fujifilm introduced



Full frame cameras tend to have more external controls so you can adjust settings quickly and intuitively, rather than laboriously scrolling through menus and potentially missing the shot. With this camera I can customise most of the buttons to do the things I need most often



Here are some images from Josh Morgan showing the size difference between his old DSLR 750D (left) and new mirrorless Z5 (right). This size difference is even more marked with some other brands. Notice the difference in flange distance in image two, as well as the general bulkiness of the DSLR. It is also interesting to note the vastly larger LCD screen on the mirrorless

the first 'hybrid autofocus' system on one of their point and shoot systems, with a form of phase-detect autofocus on the sensor itself. Fujifilm quickly extended this to its higher spec cameras and other brands caught on, with Sony releasing it in their MKIII Alpha. This hybrid system uses the phase-detect to tell the mirrorless camera which direction it needs to move for focus, to stop that shuttling back-and-forth as the image is hunting for focus. True phase-detect as on DSLRs may be marginally quicker, but technology is moving fast, and I wouldn't buy a DSLR just for that. Huge demand from videographers is driving massive investment in better autofocus systems that has extended to the incredible image recognition software improvements like live-tracking, eye-detect etc. So it's now no longer contrast-detect vs phase-detect or even hybrid systems. There's so much investment that almost every manufacturer has powered into developing a myriad of different and more refined systems. Safe to say, the newer the camera, the better the autofocus.

STABILISATION

Lens-based stabilisation – where the lens elements inside the lens barrel move around to compensate for shaking and vibration – has been around since the mid-90s when it was introduced by Canon. This is an expensive system, so not all lenses have it and the major downside is you have to pay for it each time you buy a new or additional lens. Currently, mirrorless cameras almost exclusively use in-body stabilization, typically with allowance for 5 axes of movement. This is a cheaper process as it applies to any lens you put on the camera. You can have in-body stabilisation on DSLRs, though Canon and Nikon never adopted it, favouring lens stabilisation until they launched their own mirrorless system. In-body systems do use more battery as opposed to lens stabilisation but it's a system that makes so much sense to me.

FIRMWARE

Being an almost entirely electronic system, basically tiny computers with lenses attached, mirrorless cameras can be updated just like any other program. DSLRs, being mostly analog, cannot. This means your mirrorless camera stays at the front of the technologic curve for longer. Updates can come out to increase autofocus performance, startup speed, app support – you name it.

Mirrorless cameras have also changed the face of the market somewhat. With more of a focus on electrical components and a little less on precision engineering some brands rose to dominance more – particularly Sony, with their head-start in the lucrative full-frame mirrorless market



by the launch of the a7 series in 2013. Industry giants Canon and Nikon were much later to the game, both launching in late 2018 with the EOS-R and Z6 respectively.

Touching on image quality, I heard it best put by Chris Schodt in his online camera guide that 'for now at least, image quality, and maybe more importantly, image character, varies more between the brands than it does between DSLRs and mirrorless cameras'. The advantages of mirrorless lie with their technology and portability. As for image 'character', the look and feel of photos produced by different brands, is all in the eye of the beholder. Personally, I much prefer the Nikon or even Canon colour science, especially in nature scenes, to that of Sony.

WILLIE'S VIDEO COMMENTARY

From a video perspective, we've now entered a really good space for the aspiring hunter who wants to do a semi-professional job of documenting their trips and beyond.

The interchangeable lens DSLRs and mirrorless cameras open up a whole lot of creativity (by being able to pick different lenses with their corresponding magnification and aperture for different scenes) and they offer some high-quality specs in terms of picture profiles, bit rates, frame sizes and rates.

To keep things short and not double up on Luke's DSLR vs. mirrorless debate, I'll just say for the majority of hunters who prioritise weight and compactness, mirrorless is also the better option for video. There's an endless array of cameras

to consider here, from the great entry level Sony Alpha series (which many professionals still use), to much higher end and spec cameras that Luke will hopefully cover off. Depending upon the individual camera, they'll likely offer you 4K and high frame rate 1080p recording options, a variety of picture profile options like the Log formats we've discussed previously, touch screens, a range of handy auto focus features, good manual control over things like aperture, shutter speed, ISO etc., and the ability to add functional extras such as handles, mounting brackets, monitors and gimbals. A big benefit of using a mirrorless for video is their ability to turn into a fully functional still photo camera in an instant with just a simple flick of a dial!

So what are the limitations of this category for video?

In my eyes the biggest constraints of these mirrorless cameras are their lack of audio inputs (usually just a single 3.5mm input jack which doesn't support split two-channel audio recording) and they also don't have quite the same run-and-gun functionality as a professional camcorder in terms of easily changeable manual controls at your fingertips (from built-in ND filters to audio level wheels).

Compared to the previous issue's bridge cameras and superzooms that use a single built-in lens with a huge zoom range covering you for the majority of hunting scenarios, you'll now be forced to enter the everlasting debate of what lenses to take, do you just take the versatile 24-70mm 2.8, or do you take a low aperture/wide angle prime like a 16mm 1.4 for scenic shots in combination with a 100-400mm for filming distant animals? Obviously every lens required is

an extra purchase and more importantly, adds substantial weight to your pack, so there is a big compromise going down this interchangeable lens track in return for the extra quality and creativity it offers your filming.

Deliberating on a bridge camera/superzoom vs a mirrorless? If you simply want to film animals and a few other scenes to share with family and friends – stick with the bridge/superzoom, but if you're feeling the itch to start your creative journey in video with aspirations of producing short films and YouTube videos – these types of mirrorless cameras are a great starting point.

CROP SENSOR VS FULL FRAME

To further muddy the waters, we now discuss the merits of crop sensor or full frame digital cameras. I'm only going to cover mirrorless systems as I believe they're clearly the way forward for hunter/photographers, and the discussion is just as relevant for DSLR crop sensor vs full frame as it is mirrorless.

FULL FRAME

A full frame camera is defined as having a 35mm sensor (even though the true dimensions are usually 36x24mm). This size is a hangover of 35mm film days, and was actually a relatively small film format, the smaller sibling to medium format, large format and some even bigger. Nowadays, only high-grade cinematographic cameras commonly use anything larger than the 35mm full frame sensors.

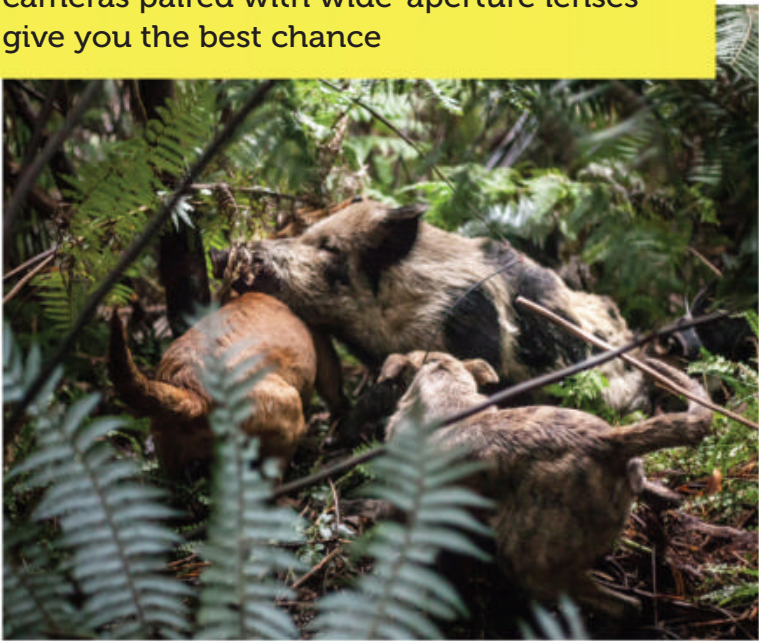
The greatest advantage of a full frame sensor is image quality. With the larger



Full frame cameras offer the most advantage in low light. The bigger sensor means you can have a faster shutter speed to capture movement in scenes that would just be a dark blur in a lesser camera



Taking photos of fast moving subjects in low light is very difficult to achieve. Full-frame cameras paired with wide-aperture lenses give you the best chance



sensor each pixel can be larger, which will capture more light. Think of scope or spotting scope objective lens for a crude analogy, more ‘light gathering’. With the individual pixels being larger it also means there’s less noise generated by adjacent pixels, and other advantages concerning EMF fields and photodiode spacing but just bear with me when I skip that and say it’s all good stuff.

In a nutshell, the larger sensor results in less noise and greater dynamic range. This may not be a huge concern to hobby photographers, but hunters spend a lot of time in low-light situations, morning and evening, camp scenes, heavy bush cover etc. This becomes even more important when you add focal length. That’s why live-animal photos in heavy cover are some of my favourite images, like our cover from Feb/March this year by Brendon Cappely or Emil’s Wapiti from the camera article last issue. I respect so much the investment in heavy, expensive equipment and the dedication as a stalker it takes to capture those stills.

Full frame cameras benefit the most from new technology. It’s a highly

competitive market where the line between enthusiast and pro is pretty blurred so every offering has to be a sharp unit at the forefront of technology. Because of the competition, and combined with the fact that they’re a more premium product with higher expected use they’re typically better waterproofed and constructed than crop sensor cameras, which is a big bonus for hunters.

The first downside of the sheer cost of full frame setups is the stumbling block for most kiwis.. Brand new entry level cameras range from \$2,500 to over \$4,000, and the pro level cameras are 10k plus –and that’s without adding lenses! In reality you have to be really in to your photography or publishing your work in magazines etc. to justify the expense of full-frame kit.

Of course you can ease your way into it, buy a second hand body and lens then upgrade the body, then upgrade the lens if you need, and so on. They’re a modular system and the older models devalue quickly. Starting out with an older camera is generally easier if you’re a still photographer, but as video has come a long way in recent years an older camera may inhibit you a bit.



The above illustration shows how a crop sensor camera captures less of an image, hence the name 'crop' sensor. The lens are always referred to in 35mm (full frame) equivalent, but a 50mm lens on a crop sensor will see an image that is actually 'zoomed' or 'cropped' in to 75mm. For a Nikon or Sony APSC sensor anyway, Canon is slightly different but they're all a factor of somewhere between 1.5 and 1.6x

The next downside is size and weight - full frame cameras are big and have correspondingly large lenses hanging off the front. They add significant weight to your pack. Besides pack weight the bulk can be too much for youths or slight women. My Nikon is too large and heavy for Sam to use comfortably, and there is often motion blur in the low-light images. The Sony A7C seems to circumvent this somewhat in terms of body size, but as a rule full frame glass is bigger (when comparing apples with apples, e.g a 50mm lens with a 50mm lens) than crop sensor lenses. **You can't get around it, a crop sensor setup will be smaller and lighter.** The price of excellence eh.

Sony were the first to introduce a full frame mirrorless ILC camera, the a7, in 2013 and now have an array of 17 models and variants. As we said earlier, Canon and Nikon have now joined the party along with Leica and Panasonic. Which of these to choose? That's an absolutely enormous can of worms. The field here is infinitely more competitive than the cheaper models we've covered so far. The Sony A7C has a lot of appeal because of its compact size and access to that huge array of Sony (and third party, Tamron, Sigma etc, lenses) but it doesn't have the same specs as some of its bigger brothers and also a little less functionality. The Nikon Z series have incredible specs and that legendary Nikon build quality, along with much better colour science in my opinion. The Z5 packs a whole lot of punch and is only 80gms heavier than the

A7C, or you can step up to the Z6 or Z7 for serious pro-level specifications. A Leica will be outside the budget of most hunting photographers I know and I haven't had a chance to have a play with any Canon or Panasonic yet.

CROP SENSOR

A crop sensor ILC is any sensor format smaller than full-frame. That includes the various APS-C sizes and Four Thirds (see the attached diagram for how they sit relative to each other). APS-C again, came from film - being equivalent to size to the Advanced Photo System film negative in its C ("Classic") format. Which also happens to be equivalent in size to the Super 35 motion picture film format. I'm going to skip Four Thirds format cameras entirely and focus on the various APS-C derivatives, they have just that bit more light-gathering capability so that's where I'd steer prospective photographers.

A little confusingly, all lens manufacturers refer to lens 'zoom' or focal length in mm relative to 35 sensors, so you'll see the phrase '35mm equivalent' a lot. E.g, 50mm 35mm equivalent. On a Sony, Nikon, Samsung or Fujifilm crop sensor you will have to multiply that 50mm by 1.5 (Or between 1.52 and 1.56 depending on the brand and model) to get the actual image size relative to a 35mm, full frame, sensor. It's like 'zooming' in 1.5x. A crop sensor 'crops' the image compared to a full frame camera, the smaller sensor sees less of

the image so the 'crop factor' (the 1.5 multiplier) is the telephoto effect of the smaller sensor seeing a smaller portion of the image. **The diagram above explains this best.**

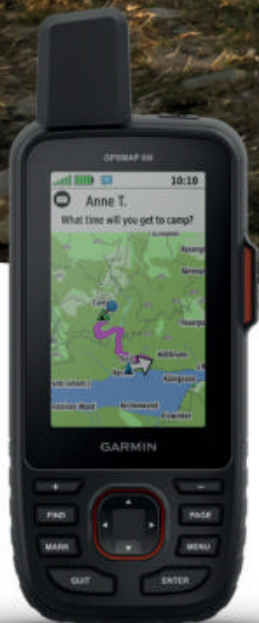
So, this smaller sensor reduces all of the advantages we've talked about in full frame sensors, but still does better than the 1" and smaller sensors on cameras we've discussed earlier in the series. This smaller sensor is easier and cheaper to manufacture and requires a correspondingly cheaper and smaller lens. This means crop sensors are both more affordable and lighter, great for hunters!

As such, for 90% of hunters looking to maximize their photography and especially videography, I would recommend a compact mirrorless like the Sony A6600 or Fujifilm XT4. These cameras are light, affordable, produce extremely high quality photos with great noise control and dynamic range. I've used Emil's A6500 extensively on trips and edited a lot of the photos from it, and it's a very good unit. Not quite as good as full-frame, but very good nonetheless. The A6600 and XT4 both go for around \$2,500 for body only, but the Sony has a much larger selection of lenses available.

It's a big wide and somewhat bewildering world when you get into higher level cameras, but hopefully this has helped some of you on your journey a little, or if nothing else you've learnt a couple things. I get huge enjoyment out of hunters documenting our passion with high quality images, so I hope this pushes some of you to improve your photography. **Have fun out there.**



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WRITTEN BY ~ CODY WELLER

A BOARING OBSESSION

A chunky boar that was bedded with a sow

There is something about gnarly, stinking, weather-beaten, dog-savvy old boars that gets my full attention when out for a hunt

Most old boars would show an outhouse rat a thing or two about cunning. In this yarn I'm going cover a few facts about boars that may interest you.

Pigs inhabit a huge variety of areas, from pig beds in massive open basins in the mountains, to pig digging on the foreshore of some of our coastline. They are a very hardy and adaptable animal and can be found over much of New Zealand's landscape.

In my opinion, pigs were made for bowhunters. Their poor eyesight lends a helping hand when closing into bow range, and they are often very noisy as they go about their days feeding and socialising, making it easy to locate them. **They can be quite bold and create a lot of sign, adding to a good day out.**

But I don't want to talk about that nice fat eater you can see out at 2pm, although he is well worth pursuing to fill your freezer. I want to talk about the big fellas; the ones where the mud spews up between their big blunt toes as they walk along the pig track. I want to talk about those boars that give you the stare down

to try and ascertain if you're friend or foe as you are sneaking in on them and you feel intimidation and exhilaration all at the same time. He is different to your day-to-day table pork. **The old boar is wary and cautious and can remain extremely hard to detect for years.**

His body is built to overpower another opponent for rights to the best food or to a sow, and to keep predators at bay. He also possesses incredible stamina and the will to survive. A boar spends his life fighting. At the start he fights his litter mates for the teat, then as time goes by he has to fight his litter mates and others pigs for the best fern roots or the best bit of a dead sheep. **He fights the cold winter nights with barely a fist full of tucker in his belly.** As he matures, his drive to seek out a sow becomes impossible to resist, only to find that a big old sow isn't going to put up with an over-excited young boars crap, and will

give him a chewing. Then there is the unrelenting pursuit of a pack of pig dogs every Saturday.

As his life goes on, his body changes and he becomes thickset and broad through the shoulders, his head hard as mānuka, his body covered in wiry hair and skin like leather. But the one thing that sets him apart from other species of big game in New Zealand is his thick, rubbery, armour-like shield. It's his own armour grown on his body to help protect him from the impact of rival's flying tusks. His shield is what makes him walk with a certain swagger, as if to say 'you want a piece of me, come and get it'. His shield becomes thicker with age and tougher after every bruising encounter. A boar is one hardened game animal.

His senses are right up there with the best, starting with his nose. One fresh human molecule up that nose may cause him to explosively exit the scene, or alternatively he might just ghost off without you even knowing that he was there. His eyesight is poor but beware; if he catches movement at close range it could be game over. His hearing is outstanding too - he can pick up the grit crunching under your boots or a release aid click at 50 metres out and become extremely alert in an instant. His reaction time is lightning fast, and has played a

part in getting him to this point in his wary life. I like to keep most shots under 20 metres to manage these light speed reactions, and because the kill zone is small and very close to his shield covered shoulder.

Taking one with a speeding arrow shaft and a sharp piece of steel isn't never going to be easy. I like to keep it simple arrow-wise. None of this earth-shattering, bone-splitting cutting diameter of 'Excalibur the Sword' stuff. If you hit major shoulder muscle and bone on a boar, he's most likely going to thrash around a bit then pull himself together and take off, never to be seen again. It needs to be cut on contact with a forgiving blade angle.

I don't think a massive cutting diameter broadhead is a wise choice. Keep your broadhead strong and simple. Accuracy is key, and both lungs, or the heart need to be cut. It is extremely rare to recover a boar that has taken damage to just one lung or liver in my neck of the woods.

Good quality arrow shafts are a definite must, something with high grains per inch. Your bow should be throwing down a good bit of kinetic energy too. But once again, accuracy is crucial. There's not much point delivering 80 foot pounds of energy to the guts because you just drew back 75 lbs, almost blew a valve doing so, and made a poor shot. Unless bedded or standing listening, boars move a lot.

Even in a patch of rooting, they shunt back and forth and make slight body angle changes.

There is a great debate at times about shot placement but with boars it's simple - quartering away, broadside on or nothing. Front on can be done, but be prepared to be disappointed if you do try it. Taking a broadside on shot should have you lining him up two inches above the elbow, keeping it very tight to the shoulder crease.

With quartering away shots, think about where your broadhead is going to end up exiting and adjust your entry impact to achieve this. For example, if I'm shooting a boar bedded facing away from me and I have moved in from above, I will look to impact by the kidney so my broadhead exits on the opposite side of his body, forward and under his front leg.

GETTING THE STALK.

Sometimes boars can be patterned with ease. For weeks he might come out at 5.30 in the evening on the dot. At other times, all you can manage is a random footprint on a wallow, or a few snaps of him on the



Shoot a boar here and the result should be a good one



A boar's toes are blunt and his foot is more rounded than a sow



A mature boar's shield is an incredible defence. Here's an example of its thickness, note my finger for scale



It's always worth checking out runs for fresh marks after rain



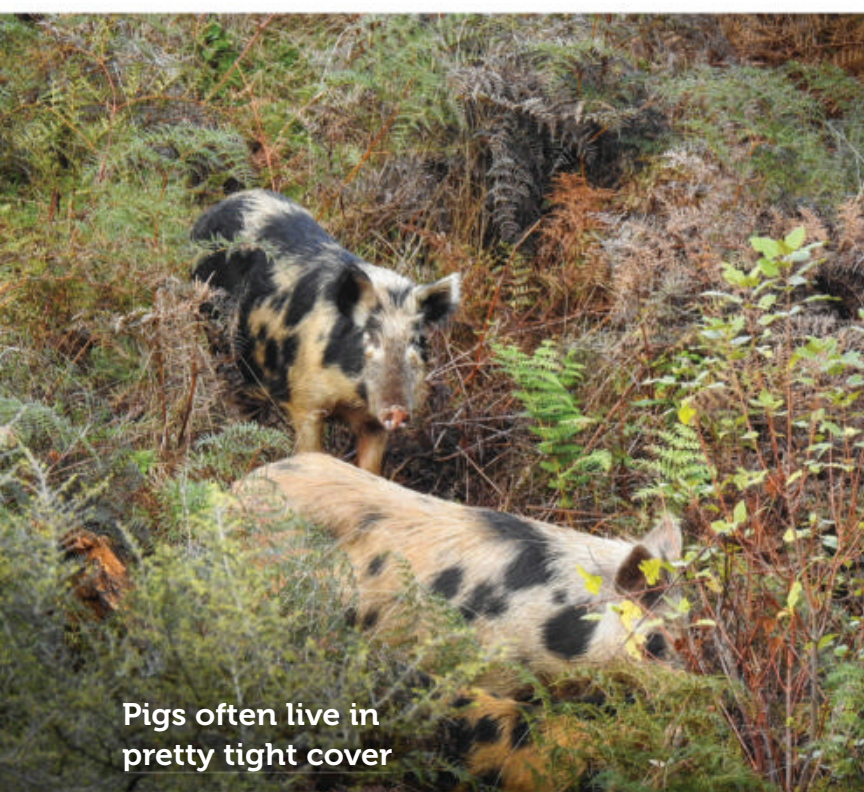
An old grey boar on a frosty morning



Keep your boots well oiled, one squeak and it's all over



A boar can carry some very effective defensive tools



Pigs often live in pretty tight cover

HEAVY RAIN.

You just might find a boar out a little bit earlier looking for some soft ground to start on when the rain clears off. Damp, calm and drizzly days are also good conditions for heading out. Fruiting native bush can be very profitable for a boar bowhunter. Food such as supplejack and tawa berries, hīnau and nīkau palm fruits are all on the menu.

ALTITUDE.

Get up into the tussock and look for their big blond tussock beds. On occasion there will be a big black dot in the middle of them and can

make for great bedded stalks. Sometimes it's worth hunting during a good cold southerly blast. The wind chill gets the boars on their feet looking for food early in the day, and these conditions can also cover any stalking errors you might make, which on a good day wouldn't go unnoticed.

THE BOAR ROAR.

There is one thing above all that can find you creeping in on multiple boars. You think a Red stag letting rip with a roar at close range is skin-tingling stuff? When a sow comes on heat, she can attract some absolute beasts - the sort of boars you didn't even know existed. So when they turn up, pecking orders are established and they often have big scraps to get it all sorted out. When these battles for order break out, big boars roar like lions and let drive with all manner of loud scoffs and almost barking-like sounds. This makes for some real shivers down your spine.

This kind of action doesn't happen very often, so take it all in when it does. Big, wise old boars don't often let down their guard or become distracted by other influences. It's an insane experience. This sort of activity can happen year round, but I have found a bit of a spike in hogging activity around the end of April.

STEALTH.

Your own personal hunting kit must be super quiet. Clothing, day-bags and boots must not squeak or scrape. One synthetic sound will have a boar bolt.

THE LAST STAND.

A well-placed shot will often have a boar only make 40 metres and then kick the bucket. But on some occasions, he may make 200 metres just on sheer speed and will to survive. Blood trailing these warriors can be hard work. Sometimes the blood does not leak out of the broadhead hole very well due to the thick skin and shield almost sealing shut. If the shot was good he will be there though, so just keep looking. Sometimes they can drop a mighty blood trail out the mouth and nose. It's always an unknown.

A mortally wounded boar will tough it out for hours and just keep pushing on. They are extremely hard to catch up with and the likelihood of you catching up with him is very low. If you are lucky, treat the boar with a bit of respect. Even though he will try and flee from you 95% of the time, he just may well try to defend himself. Just remember he is far better designed for close-quarters confrontation than you are. I have only ever been chased once. Although thrilling, I wouldn't like to try it in the thick stuff. **Big boars aren't common; so stay focused, shoot straight and get close.**





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Simon Bullivant
NZ Hunter Writer



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Gallery

WINNER



1

Chris Brimblecombe takes some handle bars home from Clements Mill Road. First blood for the LH Tikka 7mm-08



2

Mark Sinden took Luke Burn out with his Dad's new T3x 7mm-08 and he nailed this little Fallow. His first deer and the first blood for the new rifle!

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3

Ari (14) and her two-for-one. She took a Fallow yearling and doe with a single shot from a Tikka 7mm-08 near Upokongaro

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Riley (8) and Daniel (12) Clarke pleased after bagging this rabbit with a Tikka T1x 17HMR whilst night shooting on the farm, North Otago

4



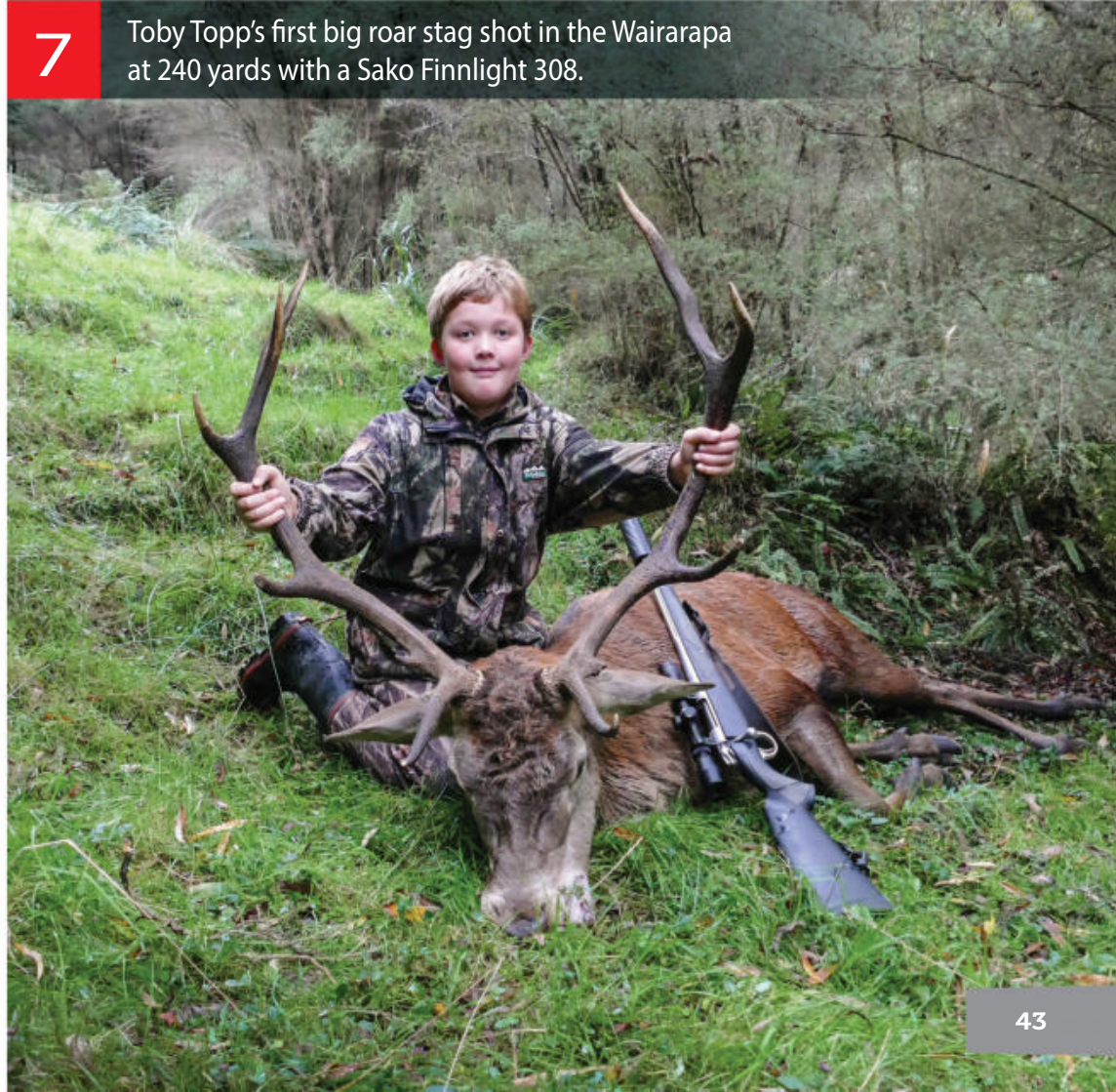
6

Max Philpott (14) with his first bull tahr. A 13 inch bull with Dad's 7mm-08 Tikka T3.



David Billington 'This year was a shocker for ducks in the Waikato so I've been focusing on pheasants, I bought a German Wire Haired pointer pup at 7 weeks and the training started immediately'

5



7

Toby Topp's first big roar stag shot in the Wairarapa at 240 yards with a Sako Finnlight 308.

HUNT LIGHTER

WRITTEN BY ~ GREIG CAIGOU

PART ONE
GET READY

Top hunting guide Joseph Peter using a fly for Summer/Autumn hunts. Total weight is just over a 1kg for tarp, mat and sleeping bag for one person, and the much reduced bulk allows him to trim more with a smaller/lighter pack. With such gear an efficient hunter can do more of what we're in the hills for!

Thinking ahead to summer missions on the tops?

Here's a series to help you get ready. For both new and experienced hunters, the focus is on gear requirements, with some suggestions to help you trim down and 'hunt lighter'.

We'll start with ways to hunt lighter with the gear that you most likely already have. It may make you re-think what you carry and why, or there may be simple ways to switch it up with a few key purchases.

With summer and autumn hunts on the horizon you'll likely want to get more out of these trips. Perhaps you're thinking of doing a few reconnaissance trips to spy out where big stags might be for the roar, or looking out for good concentrations of female chamois in those less frequented valleys, so that you can be in the right place when the bucks start appearing. Perhaps you want to explore new country and gain knowledge of routes and best approaches. We're thinking of these kind of pack hunts . . . as a 'weekend warrior', or over a long-weekend or a three to five day trip.

Whatever the reasons, an adventure along mountain tops is always good for mind, body and soul!

WHY HUNT LIGHT?

For summer missions on the tops, there are a few advantages to hunting light:

- » **You can cover more ground with your current level of fitness.** This is especially valuable if you're stitching together an alpine route that covers potential territory, looking into head basins and catchments. This strategy is usually more fruitful than hunts based out of a fixed camp, or out-and-back hunts over ground already covered.
- » **There is less energy expenditure** - especially in the heat - and this also helps while building up towards being 'mountain fit' for later hunts.
- » **Carrying your shelter as you go** means you can hunt right through into prime time at dusk and camp where you finish the day.

» You might just discover how little of what you normally carry is truly necessary! Everything less matters.

And some disadvantages?

» **If you are carrying less gear your comfort level might be less** – creature comforts and luxuries are left at home!

» **You may have to make some smarter calls around environmental conditions, with less of a safety buffer** (however this can be a necessary part of being an adventure hunter and developing skills and experience).

» **Trimming down may also mean you will carry less tech or specialised optics such as a spotter, which results in some limitations for trophy hunting or filming.** However, there are good 'work-arounds' (for example see Luke's article in the last issue on using a zoom camera).

Start with what you have.

Most of us will already own a pack, sleeping bag and mat system, and perhaps a fly or tent.



A weekend on the tops might look like this. Use track networks to gain ground up a valley before taking a spur to the ridge. Hunt along the ridgeline, working towards an 'out'. A hut or track adds a fallback option. For longer trips simply 'stitch-on' extension routes.

1. YOUR PACK

To hunt lighter with your existing pack my suggestion is to re-think your existing gear, aiming to only use 75% of the pack's capacity. It should not look stuffed full when ready to go.

Let's say you've bought a pack typically used here in NZ; perhaps a Tatonka 90L, Cactus 75L, Alpine Lowe 80L or say a Macpac Cascade 75L.

Aim to fill to only 75% capacity. **If you don't, you'll learn these big packs have an uncanny ability to entice in and soak up more gear.**

(My preference is for single compartment packs . . . lighter, less straps and zips, and other 'extras'. The more bells and whistles you have the more you'll be 'blowing' when slogging uphill.)

Your best tool is a set of scales. Weigh the pack empty and set yourself a goal to get under a certain weight for your long weekend hunt. Having a benchmark really helps you set a challenge goal for your gear. For example, my pack is 55L, weighs in at 950gm and my usual all-up weight for three days is 8.5kg including everything – pack, food, binos, camping and cooking gear and so on.

Most of the packs mentioned above weigh in at 2.5 to 3.2kg when empty, so you've got to get ruthless to trim the overall weight down to meet that sort of target. You might consider purchasing a specialist ultralight pack for these types of missions, and reprioritise



The goal is to fill a larger capacity pack no more than 75%. The pack on the right is 75L weighing 2.4kg empty. My Dyneema pack (left) is 55L weighing 930gm - 7 years old now - the extendable roll top allows for packing out meat

what you put in it.

Have a look at what you carried on your last trip and think back through what you actually used. **Even thinking seriously about what you would need in a really wet storm you may discover that some gear can still be left at home.** Have an experienced hunter glance over things and give their opinion about what to leave out, or what to take instead. For example, I've seen hunters putting on fresh socks each day of a hunt. Carrying several spare undies and socks is a small extra weight in grams, but it's exactly that way of thinking that makes the kilograms add up – little by little. Be more ruthless! Life is quite tolerable in the same jocks and socks over a two-to-five-day hunt! **A few light layers weigh less in total and are more versatile with less bulk than one thick jacket.**

If you're a new hunter and reckon your



Specialist Kiwi manufacturers can now produce custom ultralight options for NZ hunters, with choices of modern fabrics and features. Here's a sample from Southern Lite Packs

self-discipline is awesome and you won't be tempted to fill up a huge capacity pack, then buy a 75L pack to cover all your hunts. **Those wanting to go more ultralight will discover they can do everything out of a 55L pack, and still pack out meat.**

Overall, the goal is to take less gear in your pack and to reduce bulk.

This is simple to understand . . . if you decrease the number of items, or their weight, or bulk, then you can go smaller with your pack . . . which will in itself be lighter! Reductions can unlock further benefits. You will be more maneuverable and nimbler in the mountains, go further with less energy expenditure, and so have more gas in the tank for when it's needed (generally for climbing, or that big push to gain ground quickly on a good animal at the end of the day).

2. THE SHELTER

An important consideration regarding your shelter is that less weight often means sacrificing a degree of comfort.

In days gone by you might also have compromised strength and durability, but that is not really the case now with modern fabrics, some improved construction techniques and modern fixtures and features.

Selecting a tent or shelter simply because it has the lightest

weight is not always the best idea either. Riding out truly bad weather with minimalist protection can be miserable, if not dangerous (without appropriate skills) but you can determine to some extent the lowest (lightest) level of comfort you are willing to accept.

A good approach is to think about what 'lighter weight' means for what you will be doing.

For trips along alpine routes, you will want more protection than a hunter on a bush route. That said, as an adventure hunter, I've been a minimalist for some time now and am always prepared to drop to the safety of the bush if conditions dictate. With a light pack it's not a big or taxing climb to angle back to the ridge after the storm.

There are lots of options around shelters, which we will discuss in the next article in this series, but here are a few general considerations to get you started this season.

A double-wall tent is what it says - constructed of two walls - typically the tent body and a rain fly, and most hunters are familiar with this style.

Overall, you will be dryer with space to store gear out of the weather but comfort and space come at the expense of an increase in both bulk and weight. For a pair of new hunters, an ultralight tent would probably be ideal.

A single-wall tent encloses the hunter with only one layer between the interior and the outside world, whereas a 'fly' has a more open configuration.

Typically, single skin arrangements weigh less than a double-walled tent of the same category and size. A single skin tent/fly isn't completely weatherproof.

If you are making ready to hunt light for your summer missions on the tops then you have a couple of options to try . . . without spending any more money.

1. Use your existing double-wall tent in a single-wall configuration - to reduce overall weight

2. Or, try using just a fly for your trip, especially if going solo. Borrow one and give it a whirl.

The first option of using a single-wall configuration simply means leaving your tent inner at home. You have now reduced the overall weight and further reduced the bulk in your pack, which means you might even consider borrowing a smaller capacity pack to trial as well.

With the second option check YouTube clips for different ways to pitch a fly. Practice a couple of these at home, and then do some trips with only the fly, working out the best options to camp. Get slick - less faff makes you a more effective mountain hunter.

In the next issue we will look at options with shelter systems in more depth, with more suggestions for further reducing bulk as you trim down what actually goes into your pack.

Let's get lighter . . . that'll help overall, especially when your aim is to carry a heavier load out of the hills than what you took in (and shoot a hind for meat).



Double-walled tents are most suitable in all seasons, such as for this hunt. For Summer missions around the tops one option is to divide the components amongst mates, especially to help reduce bulk. Also try using a tighter configuration; two hunters don't need a four-person tent for example!

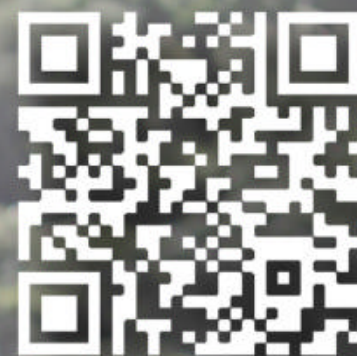


To reduce both bulk and weight for 2-3 season hunts, Murray just carried this tent outer around the tops in South Westland



The other option is using a fly for Summer/Autumn hunts. Total weight is just under 1.4kg for my two-person tarp, with mat and sleeping bag, but the much reduced bulk allows me to trim further by using a smaller/lighter pack. With such gear an efficient hunter can do more of what we're in the hills for!

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WRITING AN ARTICLE

WRITTEN BY ~ HANNAH RAE

Is there a tale from a recent hunting trip that you've thought about sharing in an article for the mag, but you're just not sure where to start? This one's for you

One of the great things about the NZ Hunter magazine is that they welcome submissions from anyone, regardless of age, gender, hunting background or writing experience.

Hunters all around the country have stories of epic trips and memorable experiences that could inspire readers to enjoy the great outdoors or extend their comfort zone. Each of us celebrates hunting as a sport and way of life in our own unique way, so we all have the potential to bring a fresh voice to the mix. Many of the stories in the mag are from folks who are hunters first, and writers second, and have a hearty yarn to share. Plus, it could be almost anyone who has the opportunity to take that 50" Wapiti bull or wily old West Coast bull tahr. No matter the writing skill, I know I'd want to hear about that!

While I don't have any fancy writing qualifications, I am a writer at heart and I'd put myself firmly in the camp of being a writer first, who then discovered enjoyment and satisfaction in hunting. Here I'll share an insight into my writing process along with a few tips to help your chances of getting published.



An improvement on this photo would be to have the subject glassing toward the view you're capturing

So, if the idea of putting pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, is a little overwhelming for you, you'll want to keep reading. Don't worry, it's a far cry from those nightmarish lessons we were forced to endure in English class at school.

FLESH & BONES

The way I like to approach writing is rather appropriate for a hunting magazine, and this is the method I use for anything from a long caption for social media, to blog posts and articles for publication.

Start by writing down everything that you can remember or want to share about the trip, a bit like a brain dump. This is what I call the bones. If you have a memory like a sieve then go back through your photos, retrace your steps on the map, and chat with your hunting companions. Note down all the details including what animals you saw, where you went and the weather conditions, and don't forget how badly your feet hurt after hours of walking and what you dreamed of eating upon discovering you were one Backcountry meal short. This might also include the start of your idea for the trip, how long you'd been planning it, and any relevant

history or legends about the area.

I sometimes start this with a pen and paper, as there is something about it that helps my brain tap into storytelling mode. If I'm out and about and am suddenly hit with a flurry of ideas, I'll jot them in a note on my phone. **When it comes to the next step I like to settle in with a hot cuppa, no distractions, and put it together in Google Docs.**

In constructing my story, I like to give some structure to the bones. I shuffle around all the pieces into an order that makes sense, normally in chronological order. Then I go through and take out the snippets that don't add anything to the story, what I call throwing some of the bones away. This is a crucial step in the process. The readers want an engaging story. They don't want to be taken on tangents like your grandma does when she's telling you about her latest trip to the supermarket. Details from every waking moment of the trip, such as what was on the breakfast menu, and the full conversation you had with your mate Trev, only serve to slow the story down. I ask myself questions like **"Does this move the story forward? Does the reader really need to know this?"**

Once we have the bone structure then we can start adding the flesh. This is

where I pick several moments that were pivotal to the story, for whatever reason, and go into more detail. In technical writing terms this is called writing a scene. Often these are scenes like the anticipation of planning, arriving at the hunting area, spotting the target species, getting behind the rifle, or recovering the animal of your dreams. And sometimes it's the hilarity of a big balls up or a type two fun scenario.

We have five senses that can be used to describe a scene. What could you see, hear, smell, taste or touch? What was going through your head at this moment? Use these to make us feel as though we were right there with you. **Help us smile and chuckle, feel the pain with you when it all went wrong, and the ecstasy when it all came together.**

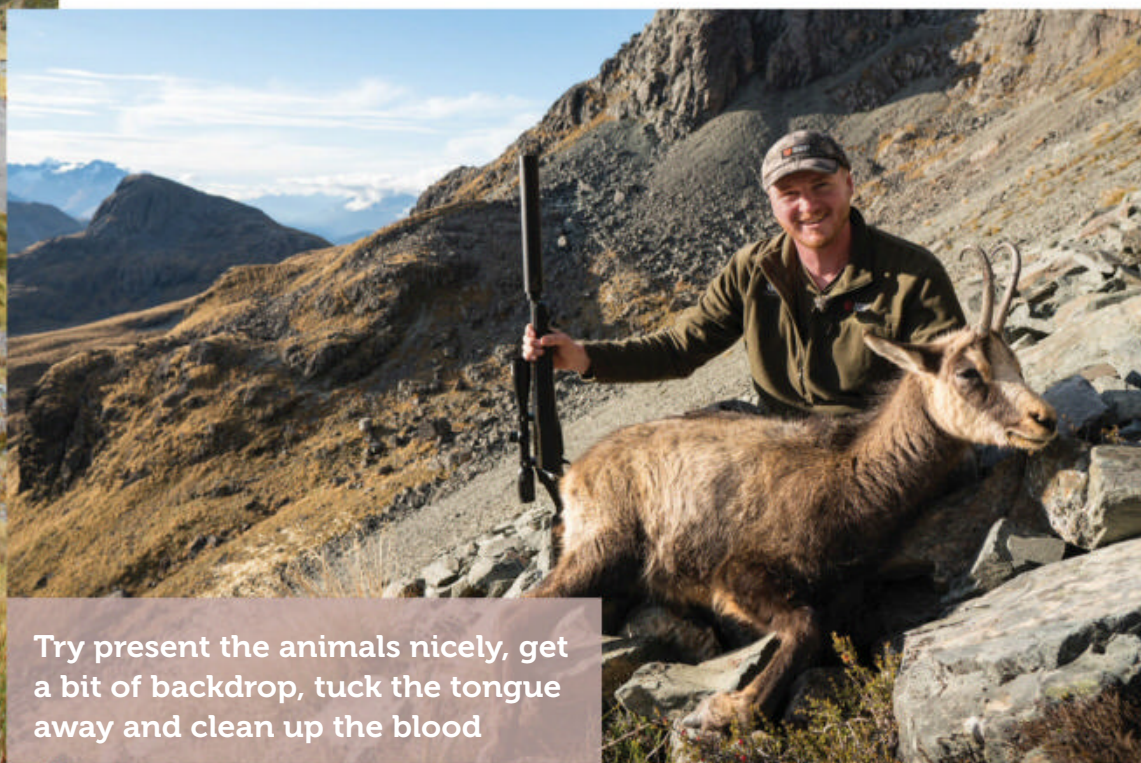
The opening paragraph is crucial and you want to make sure it grabs the reader's attention. Some kind of excitement, anticipation, or setup that leaves them wondering what happens next is often effective. You might also notice that Luke may start a story by dropping us right in the middle, then filling in the backstory. This is another great technique to pull the reader in right at the beginning and demonstrates that there is no rule saying your story has to start at the first chronological point. I often write the



It's great to have people in the landscape for some scale



Document the funny bits as well



Try present the animals nicely, get a bit of backdrop, tuck the tongue away and clean up the blood

opening lines last to make sure it captures the essence of the story, and like to ask myself *“if I was reading this for the first time, would I keep reading?”*

EXTRA TIPS

- **Write what you like to read.** Write for people like you who enjoy getting out and about, stretching the legs, and bringing meat home for our friends and family.
- **Often there is a secondary story to the main one about the hunt,** the “human” part of the story. What did you learn about yourself? Did you learn another one of hunting’s hard lessons?
- **Use your own voice.** It’s a good idea to look to other writing for inspiration but don’t try to write like someone else. You have your own unique perspective and way of telling a story - write it in the way you might tell the story around a campfire.
- **Is there a new way you can describe things that happen on almost every trip?** Eg. *“it was a*

bluebird day” or “we packed the truck with much excitement” or “we hit the hay with tired legs”.

PHOTOS

We all know that we’re more likely to read a story that has great photos, as we’re only human after all. So, make sure you have a selection of good quality photos to go with your story. It will go a long way to helping your chances of getting it published.

Include photos that help to tell your story or support some of the scenes that you wrote about. Photos of the views, terrain, a stunning campsite, action shots of your group, and animals you were watching, all give the reader a sense of what it was like to be there. **This can be difficult to do in retrospect, so if you’re heading on a trip that might be worthy of an article, keep it in mind and take snaps along the way.**

A few moments considering the composition of your photos can take your images from good to great and will truly enhance the story on the page. An

hour or two on Google or Youtube will be plenty for gaining an understanding of the basics of composition, and you’ll soon be up to speed with terms like rule of thirds, leading lines and negative space. Photos with an animal should be tasteful – clean the blood off with some grass, tuck the tongue back in (or remove it), don’t rest the rifle on the antlers or horns, and pose with a bit of respect for the animal.

The photos need to be the highest quality possible. What you have might look great on a cell phone, but will not be of high enough resolution to be blown up to a half or full page image. Sometimes this can be because of how you send them. Send large images as files separate to the text document using a transfer service such as Google Docs, Dropbox or WeTransfer and be sure to send them at full resolution – nothing downloaded from messenger or compressed in anyway. When you send them make sure to include suggested captions for the photos. Don’t leave it up to Luke to guess what’s going on. If they’re short, rename the file with the caption. If they’re a bit longer, include them in the text document with a label showing the



When you have a break from looking for the trophy stag/buck/bull spend some time getting up-close photos of other animals, it's good fun and always illustrates the story better

more likely to pick up on any words that are out of place - which a spell check can't do for you.

Another option is to have someone else read it. Do you know someone that reads a lot? They're a good bet to ask a favour in proofreading your article before you send it off. You might also ask them a) if it all makes sense and b) if there are any parts of the story

corresponding photo.

In terms of the ideal technology to take into the hills to capture these images, Luke has recently done a *"What camera should I buy?"* series in the mag that will answer most of your questions. Putting some effort into learning about depth of field, aperture, ISO and shutter speed - that's right, not auto mode - will also make a huge improvement in the quality of your photos.

REVIEW

Once you've completed a full draft of your masterpiece, use the built-in spelling and grammar check on your word processing program, and begin a review. Read it out loud, to someone else if you can. It feels weird at first, but it's a robust way to see if the story flows. Reading out loud also forces your brain to slow down and you're

they'd like to hear more about.

There you have the flesh and bones of my writing process. I hope it's given some of you tentative hunter-writers a place to start putting your article on paper. I can assure you it's a real buzz seeing your own story in print for the first time. **I look forward to reading your story in the mag soon!**



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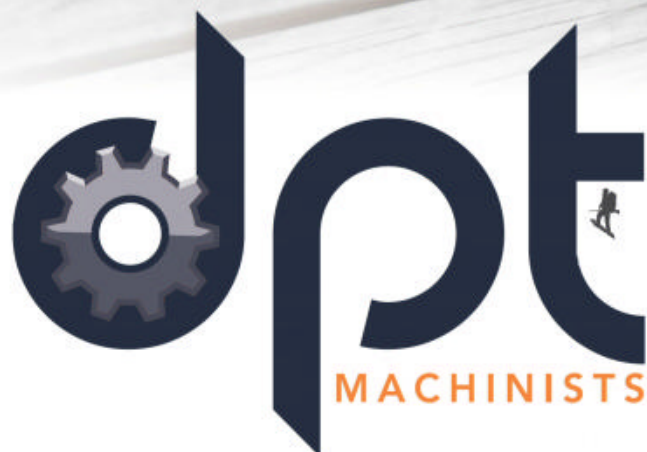
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NEW ZEALAND PLANTS PART 2

LANCEWOOD

Latin - *Pseudopanax crassifolius*

Maori - Kapuka or papauma

WRITTEN BY
MATT WINTER
@WILDNATURENEWZEALAND

During my research, I discovered a very comprehensive study carried out by Landcare Research which showed a wild Red deer's diet is made up three 'types' of plants – woody species, ferns and grasses

70% of a deer's total annual consumption is made up of woody plants and that 70% consists of seven main preferred species. At the top of that preferred list at 22% is broadleaf while lancewood came in second at 14%. This was a surprise to me as lancewood just doesn't seem like a nice, succulent, nutritious food source. But there you have it ... the deer obviously know something I don't.

Lancewood has several very distinctive identifying features. At first glance the most obvious one is a very straight and slim trunk. A closer look at the stem reveals a second physical attribute, that of lovely, fluted ribs and channels running length ways up the tree. These two physical characteristics make the lancewood ideal for use as a walking stick or 'hill stick' – consistently straight as well as textured for good grip but not so much as to be uncomfortable in the hand.

These types of hill sticks have been used by high country musterers for well over a

hundred years, though more commonly they are made from manuka or kanuka.

Another name for a hill stick that you might hear in the Marlborough area is 'nibby'. This term originates from old Scotland and refers to the hooked staff used by shepherds.

Lancewood hill sticks generally provide more flex and forgiveness (bendier) than mānuka. The latter is far more rigid and can support a person's body weight when leaning back on it. Some people like the suppleness and flexibility of a lancewood staff while others (me included) prefer



a nibby that can take the weight when needed. **No matter the species of tree, here are several reasons why hill sticks are so beneficial to the user.**

1. BETTER BRAKING – a nibby can be used to control your speed when walking downhill. eg, shingle slides or steep bush travel with loose conditions under foot.

2. CONTROLLED CORNERING – great for controlling your changes of directions when boosting it down hill.

3. BETTER WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION – with the extra 'leg', your weight is spread over more contact points on the ground saving wear and tear on your joints and limbs, especially knees.

4. COMFORT – makes an awesome tool for parting nasty, prickly vegetation, whacking back blackberry and even pole vaulting over obstacles such as small creeks (dry feet).

5. BALANCE – your balance is improved immeasurably by holding the stick horizontally and stabbing it into the hillside when sidling steep faces. (Think of how much more stable a tripod is compared to an item with just two legs).

6. STABILITY – dodgy terrain such as river crossings are made safer with use of a nibby. Also great for testing the depth of water features or swamps.

We all remember how young, fit, full of energy and bullet proof we once were in our early years of hunting. Looking back at my own youth, I think of long exhausting days, huge back-breaking loads, the way we used to travel (often run) over rough terrain and all those hours pounding our bodies without a care in the world. Almost every weekend we would be charging round the hill sides chasing game animals and we would then get up mega early the next morning and repeat the whole process. Heck, it wasn't unusual for us to get on the 'turps' after a massive day in the back country, get maybe an hour or two of sleep and be off again before daybreak. The physical recovery times following all that punishment was simply amazing. It was as though the previous day never even happened.

Taking into account the state of my body nowadays, but more specifically my joints, I really wish I saw the light regarding nibbies back in the day.

More recently for about 15 years I have been employed in the pest control industry, with most days spent out on the hill running trap and ground laid poison lines for 'possums, ferrets, stoats etc. The now popular trekking poles were yet to hit the New Zealand markets so with a bit more maturity and common sense than was obvious back in my twenties, I decided to try a nibby. I can honestly say it has been a game changer.

I found the most benefit when descending. With one hand positioned about halfway down the nibby and the other near the top, I could simply plant the tip of the nibby on the ground behind me to provide balance, stability, steering and most importantly, to take a lot of the weight off my joints. Being made of

kānuka, if I happened to trip or stumble I could literally place all of my weight onto the hill stick and right the ship, so to speak. **I also noticed far less fatigue and tiredness at the end of each day.** On one occasion I even used it to fend off an overly aggressive sow by clouting her on the schnozzle when she got too close.



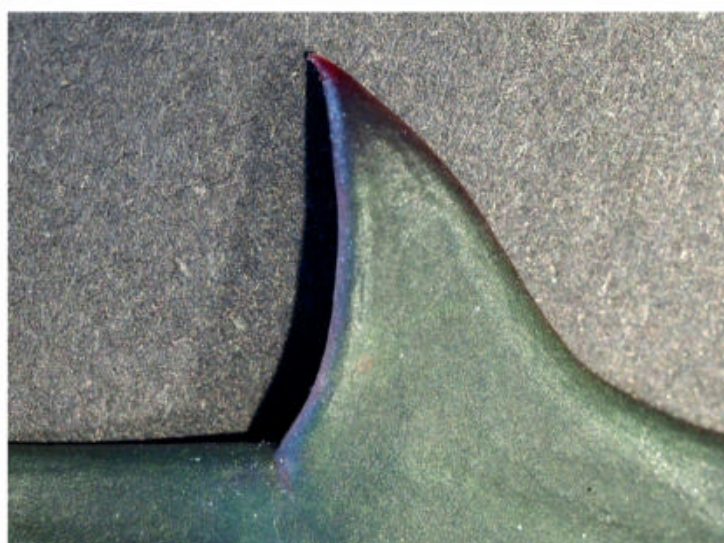
Close up of the beautiful rope-like fluted channels and ribs on the trunk of a lancewood

1/4000 @ f/2.8, ISO 400



An immature riverside lancewood displaying the half open umbrella-like leaves

1/200 @ f/8, ISO 400



Juvenile leaves have hard tipped leaves that may have helped to deter moa browsing



Lancewood leaves showing distinctly different forms - juvenile (left) and adult (right)



This image shows a lancewood at the very early stages of maturity. Note the shortening and 'clumping' of the upper most leaves which will eventually become branches in their own right. The lower leaves will die and fall off

1/1600 @ f/9, ISO 400



Adult lancewood showing multi stemmed round headed form

out of the wind and growing in tight, dense stands the trees will always grow directly up and thus develop trunks with little or no side branches. They will also be very straight for the same reason.

A lancewood is a 'heteroblastic' species which means that the juvenile and mature forms are distinctly different.

As a juvenile the leaves are long and very narrow, reaching up to a metre or more in length, with a prominent mid rib and closely spaced sharp 'toothy' bumps along the edges. As a whole, the leaves grow in a drooping fashion towards the ground and resemble a half open umbrella with the trunk as the 'handle'. Leaf colour varies from an olive green to green/brown.

As the tree matures (it will remain a juvenile for 10 to 15 years) it will eventually enter the branching stage of its life.

I guess you could call this stage the adolescent phase. Leaves shorten to between 15 and 30 centimetres, lose their harsh toothiness and in time will form as a tight bunch or clump at the very top of the tree. Eventually, when fully mature, actual woody branches will develop and the trunk loses all its lower leaves to render the trunk completely bare.

There is no general agreement in the scientific world as to why a species of tree has the heteroblasty trait.

One suggestion is that the condition evolved as a direct response to browsing by moa, in that once the tree grew above the browse height, it no longer needed the defence of the sharp edges leaves. Another idea proposes that the change occurs as the tree pokes its nose

I would say that it took a wee while to get used to carrying one and on more than one occasion I found myself back-tracking to retrieve the nibby I had left leaning up against the tree at the last trap site.

A really good nibby that fits you like a glove is like gold. Actually, its more like finding that one classic rifle that you've spent your life looking for and will never, ever sell. They are a very personal thing and as dumb as it sounds, you become very attached them.

Through experience and trial and error, I think the ideal length for a nibby is arm pit height when standing up straight. If you decide on mānuka or kānuka, the ultimate specimen will be a dead standing tree. If cut green it will need to be dried for several months before it is at its strongest, and a dead fallen tree will usually already be rotting. The best place to find the ideal hill stick is on a shaded face, out of the wind and amongst a stand of tress that are growing tightly together. The shaded face means they will be slow growing therefore the wood will be denser and stronger. When

DESCRIPTION, HABITAT AND RANGE

But, back to the main topic of interest, the lancewood.

There are actually three species of lancewood. *Pseudopanax chathamicus* is, as the name suggests, restricted to the Chatham Islands and goes by the Māori name hoho. *Pseudopanax ferox* can be found right across the North and South Islands though it is relatively rare and classified as 'at risk – naturally uncommon'. Its common name is fierce lancewood - so called because of the shark tooth-like serrations on the leaf edges. The variety we are all familiar with is *crassifolius*. It exists on all three main New Zealand islands.

The common lancewood or horoeka may grow up to 15 metres in height with a trunk that can reach 50 cm in diameter. Typical habitat is that of lowland and subalpine forests and it can exist anywhere from sea level to 760 metres.



A small lancewood in the 'adolescent' stage. Leaves have shortened and clumps are forming near the top growing portion of the tree

1/80 @ f/6.3, ISO 800

out from the under storey and into the sub canopy where there is more light to use to advantage. Interestingly, the Chatham Island variety evolved in the absence of moa and does not possess the heteroblastic characteristic. Make your own conclusions.

Individual trees are either male or female therefore rely on insects to pollinate the small yellow/green flowers which develop from mid-summer into autumn. After flowering, fruit develops in the form of small, purplish-black berries, ripening during the winter months and providing an important food source for many native birds.

MEDICINAL, HUMAN AND OTHER QUALITIES

Although I could find no documentation or evidence of any medicinal properties of lancewood there has been no shortage of practical uses for the various parts of the plant.

The central mid rib of leaves on an immature tree are very stringy and strong yet also supple. Europeans used this part of the tree to very good effect as boot laces and for mending bridles and harnesses. Staying with the horse theme, they also sometimes used the flexible stems of very young trees as whips.

South Island Māori pounded the leaves to extract the fine fibrous 'hairs' for use as a kind of primitive paint brush to make rock wall paintings.

Wood pigeon (kereru) were commonly targeted by Māori using spears made from the stems of juvenile lancewood. Europeans, mostly in the Otago area, occasionally used lancewood as a source of timber. However, the wood is not as durable as many other native trees so never really became popular. **Māori also used lancewood stems as walking sticks before European times and as we already know, it didn't take long for Europeans to also discover the virtues of the humble old lancewood.**



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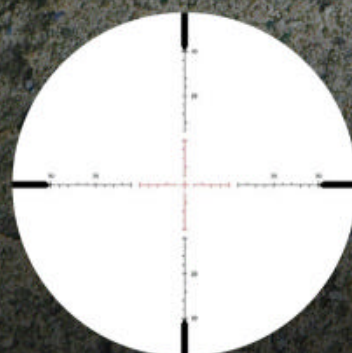
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WRITTEN BY ~ MICHAEL MCCORMACK
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Part 2

NUTRITION

IN THE WILD

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are one of the three macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates or fats) and are one of the bodies key sources of energy

Our brain, muscles and nervous system all rely heavily on glucose as their main fuel to make energy.

Carbohydrates are composed of three different nutrients: sugar, starches and dietary fibre. Sugars, starches, and some sugar alcohols provide calories and stimulate a hormonal and metabolic response in our bodies.

SUGARS

Sugars are often referred to as 'simple carbohydrates'. Sugar can be added to foods, such as the sugar in lollies, desserts and processed foods, or also be found naturally occurring in fruits (fructose), vegetables, and milk (lactose) for example.

STARCHES

Starches are often called 'complex carbohydrates', which are made

of lots of simple sugars bound together. Your body needs to break starches down into sugars to use them for energy. Starches include some processed foods such as bread, cereal, noodles and pasta and certain vegetables, like potatoes, taro, lentils and corn.

DIETARY FIBRE

Fibre is also a complex carbohydrate. Consuming enough fibre can help to prevent stomach problems, such as constipation. Fibre can also help lower cholesterol and blood sugar. Fibre is found in many foods that come from plants, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, and whole grains.

DIGESTION AND UTILISATION

The digestive system enzymes break down carbohydrates that we consume into simple sugars, mainly glucose. For example, both rice and fruit juice will be broken down to simple sugars in your digestive system. This simple sugar is then carried to your body's cells through the bloodstream.

When blood glucose levels rise, our pancreas secretes a hormone called insulin, which helps the glucose to move from your blood into the cells. Once inside a cell, the glucose is metabolised alongside oxygen to produce energy. The body converts excess glucose into glycogen. Glycogen acts as a storage form of glucose within the muscle tissue and the liver. Glycogen's role is to supplement blood glucose levels if they drop between meals (especially overnight) or during physical activity.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

SERVING SIZE APPROX 33G (1 BAR)

SERVING PER PACK 5

	Avg. Quantity Per Serving	Avg. Quantity Per 100g
Energy	706kJ	2140kJ
Protein	8.6g	26.1g
Fat, total	10.9g	32.9g
Fat, saturated	1.3g	3.9g
Carbohydrates, total	7.5g	22.8g
Carbohydrates, sugars	1.9g	5.8g
Dietary Fibre	3.8g	11.4g
Sodium	86mg	260mg

WHICH ONES ARE THE 'GOOD' CARBS?

The short answer: All carbs which come from natural whole-foods are good. The not-so-good carbs are the refined products of processed foods. We especially want to minimise added sugars.

If a person is on a low carbohydrate diet for a particular health goal such as insulin resistance, or diabetes for example, then they may be required to know more about the main sources of starch and sugar in their diet.

Regarding fibre, most people are not required to count the fibre in their diet. If we meet general guidelines of having at least 4-6 cups of vegetables per day, fibre needs will be easily met.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO EAT THE RIGHT KINDS OF CARBOHYDRATES FOR YOUR HEALTH:

When eating grains, choose mostly whole grains. Whole grains are foods like whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal. They offer lots of nutrients that your body needs, like vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

Try to avoid foods that have a lot of 'added' sugar. These foods can have many calories but not much nutritional value. Eating too much added sugar raises your blood sugar and can lead to obesity or exacerbate medical conditions such as diabetes.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

All sugars, whether added or naturally present in foods/drinks are shown in the carbohydrate section of the nutrition information panel. It is the total carbohydrate content that we need to look at first. This is the

carbohydrate 'load' that our body will be taking in and processing to glucose. Remember that 5 grams is equivalent to 1 teaspoon.

It is not simply about the amount of 'sugar' listed. People with prediabetes or diabetes must be careful with how much total carbohydrate (and sugar) they

consume per meal to ensure blood glucose levels do not rise too abruptly.

Using the example above, this nut bar is listed as having a total carbohydrate content of 7.5 grams, with 1.9 grams coming from a 'sugar' source and 3.8 grams of fibre per serving.

Fibre is technically a carbohydrate, however, we don't immediately digest and absorb the calories from fibre to convert to energy. We don't have the enzymes to break down fibres in our upper digestive system, but the bacteria in our lower bowel does all of the work. A simple way to boost your intake of fibre while on the hill is to carry some ground flaxseeds or LSA (a ground mixture of linseeds, sunflower seeds and almonds) to mix in easily to your meals.

A FEW POINTS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE

- When you are comparing one food against another in terms of its make up (protein, carbohydrate, fats, fibre and sodium etc) it is best to use the 'per 100g column rather than the 'per serving' column as similar foods can often have different suggested serving sizes.
 - Look for added sugars on the ingredients list, such as sucrose, corn syrup, fructose, or any other word ending in -ose, chances are it is an added sugar. If a sugar is listed within the first three ingredients, it will be a major component of that food/drink.
 - If you see a product that says: "no added sugars, "no sugar added," or "without added sugar" that means it just has what is naturally found in the product.
- Some foods don't have a lot of carbohydrates, such as meat, fish, poultry, some types of cheese, nuts, and oils.

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THE GLYCAEMIC INDEX

The glycaemic index (GI) rates carbohydrates according to how quickly they raise the glucose level of the blood.

Generally speaking, in High GI foods, the carbohydrate is digested and absorbed into the blood quickly, causing your blood glucose (sugar) level to rise rapidly. In low GI foods, carbohydrate is digested slowly resulting in a more gradual rise in blood glucose levels. Slow releasing carbohydrates are the best fuel source for long days on the hill.

These ranges, along with some example foods, include:

Low GI (less than 55) – include soy products, beans, fruit, milk, pasta, grainy bread, porridge (oats) and lentils

Medium GI (55 to 70) – examples include orange juice, honey, basmati rice and wholemeal bread

High GI (greater than 70) – examples include potatoes, white bread and short-grain rice.

HITTING THE WALL

If your blood glucose levels fall extremely low (known as hypoglycemia) your brain functions can begin to fail. Common brain-related symptoms of hypoglycemia include headache, dizziness, confusion, lack of concentration, anxiety, irritability, restlessness, slurred speech and poor coordination, even leading to seizures or a coma. Prior to these symptoms, you may also feel like you have 'hit the wall.' This is often your bodies way of telling you, you need to drink or eat something quickly with a good dose of sugar in it!

The short term solution could be a couple of barley sugars, energy gel, sugary drink, or a couple of lollies. Make sure you have a fast acting source of sugar in your carry on first aid kit and remember to snack regularly if you are exerting a lot of energy from dawn to dusk.

Q & A WITH REGISTERED DIETITIAN JULIA SEKULA

Hunters can have some long arduous days commuting and



stalking, is there a recommended intake of carbohydrates per hour to sustain physical and mental performance?

The amount we need will differ depending on the duration and intensity of activity carried out. How much do you need when you're going out hunting?

First off, consider how you eat in the lead up to and on the days hunting, what has worked for you before, what hasn't? You will need to fine tune what works for you, determining what energy you need and your response rather than having a static intake.

Consider the type of food you are eating and how quickly you want the energy release; do you want quickly absorbed carbohydrates or carbohydrates that release energy slower? For example, a handful of jelly beans will give a quick burst of energy compared to eating a sandwich made with whole grain bread.

In terms of the recommended amount, rather than carbohydrate per hour or percentage of daily intake, recommendations are now based on grams of carbohydrate/kg of body mass. Consider carbohydrate intake per kg of body mass and then, consider the intensity of the activity you are doing.

Recommendations for moderate intensity exercise are ~5-7 grams/kg/day and for those with a high endurance training load ~6-10 grams/kg/day.

If you don't like porridge or oats for breakfast and you need a lightweight option that provides sustenance for an active day, what would you recommend?

Not everyone likes porridge or oats for breakfast and often, people struggle with a routine of regular meals.

Eating regularly across the day and choosing a variety of foods that includes whole grain sources of carbohydrates is important. Options you could consider include wheat-based biscuits or cereals that have more than 6g fibre/100g or less than 10g sugar/100g. If you are not a cereal person, try whole grain toast with a

topping of peanut butter, cheese or egg (whichever way you like). When time is not on your side, options could include drinking your breakfast, such as a protein shake or a healthy bar for on the go.



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Bradley Bartrum

"Managed to shoot this 13 pointer up the Macaulay on a tahr trip. This was my first trip with the local NZDA club, I was meant to looking for a bull tahr but managed to find this old boy hiding above the hut. Had a tough choice of shooting the stag or shooting the tahr that was 300m above the stag. Ended up shooting both from the same rock and was back at the hut by one o'clock. Awesome first trip away! A local deer farmer aged him at nine years old"



WINNER

Cameron Forlong

"Shot this bruiser of a Sika a couple years ago from Clements Mill Road. I had very mixed emotions seeing him on the ground. His one antler is 30.5", would've been quite something if he had a matching one on the otherside... He also had a damaged left eye and baggy skin like he didnt fit it anymore"



Jay Hawkin

"Myself and Travis were heading up a side creek one evening when a nanny appeared perched on top of a large boulder 30 yards from us. She stood there staring at us while I asked Travis "Should I shoot it?" He replied "Yea! Look how old she is, that's a trophy!". I took my backpack off, removed my gun from its sleeve and took the shot, all while she stood there staring waiting to be shot. My first tahr, estimated at 14 years old. "

LOOKING AFTER OUR GAME ANIMALS

HEALTHY ANIMALS REQUIRE A HEALTHY HABITAT

The health of the game animal habitat is the foundation of the hunting resource. A healthy habitat with quality feed produces quality animals. Too many animals have a negative impact on the habitat and the health of the herd.



HUNTERS AS CARETAKERS

By making the right choices as to what we harvest, hunters can manage our game animal herds, improve the hunting experience and help our native species thrive. In this way we can be caretakers of the game animal habitat.

IT'S QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

A male-focused harvest leads to a herd with a high proportion of breeding females.

A more female-focused harvest provides better herd balance with lower animal densities and a healthier habitat. This means higher quality animals and better hunting. This is a 'win-win' for hunting and conservation.



MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

Success is hunter-led game animal management that balances the desire to target trophy males with the need to harvest more females.

The benefits of good management are outstanding rut hunting, quality meat and young males being given the opportunity to mature. It also means a healthy forest and better outcomes for our native species.





WRITTEN BY ~ CAM MCKAY | POINTS SOUTH

SPRING MEAT

When stag antlers have dropped, and tahr capes are bleaching in the sun, the focus often shifts to re-stocking the freezer in preparation for summer evening barbeques - part of our DNA makeup here in New Zealand.

Spring has many positives, with days getting longer and pleasant temperatures. It's the ideal time to fill the freezer and easy enough to keep that meat in good condition before its frozen.

It's also an ideal time to take the kids out on an adventure and show them where their food comes from. Also there's enough daylight left after work hours to get away for an evening hunt, or to tackle a walk in on Friday evening and set yourself up for a weekend in the mountains.

As the spring growth comes away on the river flats, it's likely that's where the deer will be. The flats are easy hunting from a terrain perspective, and focusing on the first and last half hours of light is not too disruptive to your sleep patterns. Again, it's perfect for taking those young folk for a short but authentic adventure.

It's also a great time from a meat quality perspective, with hinds and yearlings offering easy targets and absolutely prime venison. **This is also the time of year when we, as recreational hunters, are most effective at doing what we need to, which is to help control numbers.** The best way to do this is to target hinds and yearling females.

Often those wandering, silly spikers offer an easy target, and they do eat well. But the best way we can look after our favourite spot is to actually leave these spikers to mature. If we take out hinds and yearling females we are creating more feed for that silly spiker to get a good start in life and eventually become a

trophy stag that you might want to chase in the roar.

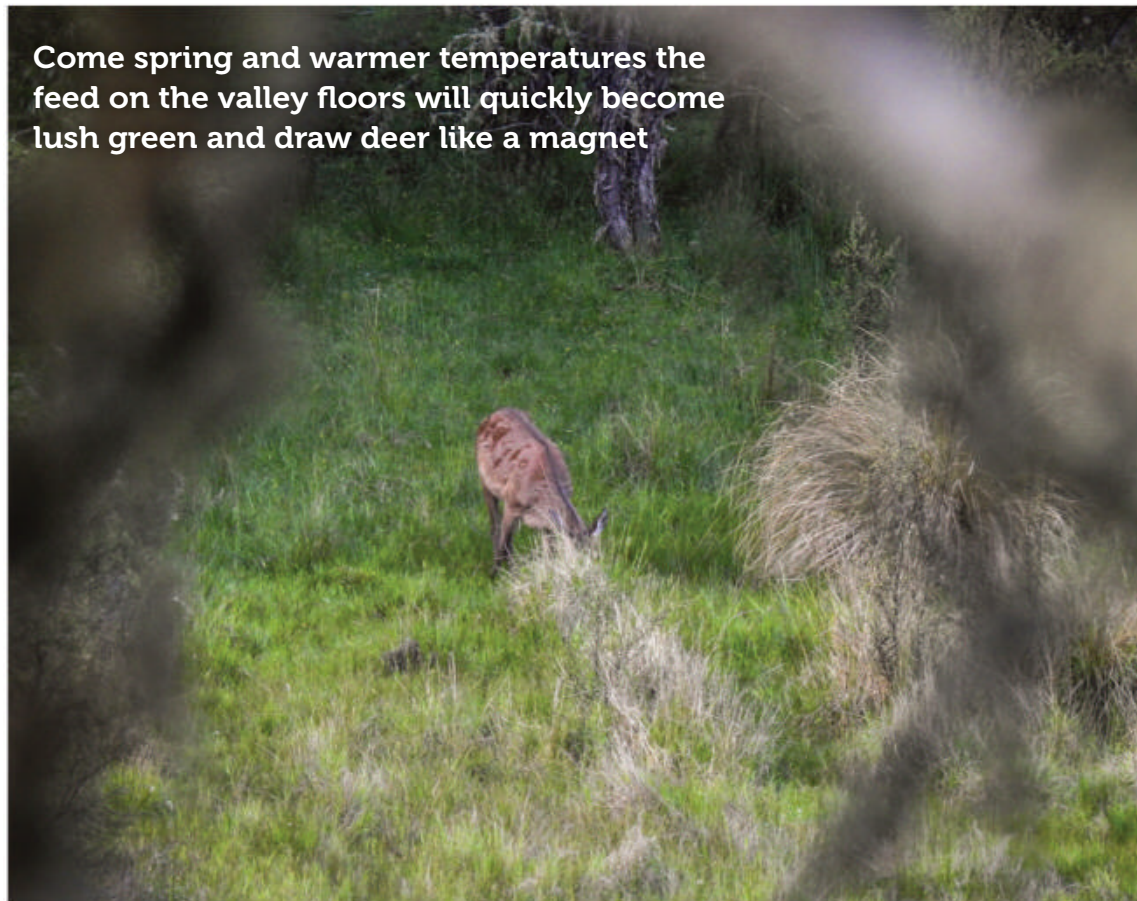
It's worth keeping in mind that hinds will start to drop their calves from late November to mid December, so after that time, one has to be mindful that there may be a fawn lying in the grass nearby.

Personally, once the hinds have dropped I target only the yearlings, making the pack-outs a whole lot easier as well. But up to that point I have no problem in taking a hind that is still in calf, as really that's just doing a better job of keeping the numbers in check.

With fawns on the ground the yearlings then represent an easy target, as more often than not, they have been kicked off mum and are rather blasé in their approach to personal safety, wandering haplessly by themselves or with other castaways.

I like to carry out the full carcass, as it simply hangs better and is easier to keep clean, and you can utilise all those underrated cuts such as the shin or shank, not to mention the front quarters and all the trim that make great sausages and mince. I'll admit that for years the dog used to enjoy chewing away on all the

Come spring and warmer temperatures the feed on the valley floors will quickly become lush green and draw deer like a magnet



shins I'd carted home, but more recently I've been refining my slow cooking skills and learnt to add herbs and spices to create a delicious meal. Sorry dog, but it's now one of my favourite cuts.

Realistically though, it's not always possible to pack out an entire animal, especially for those guys who want to hunt further afield for the experience and isolation, or for those who have matured enough to develop some respect for their knees and backs, and would rather still be hunting in their old age. **Taking the rear quarters, backsteaks and tenderloins and discreetly leaving those shot out shoulders and frame behind can make more sense.** It's always a shame to waste any, and I'll always pack out what I can. Shaun Monk, who by the way has been harder on his running gear than anyone I know, recently pointed out to me that 54% of the total boned out meat comes from the hind quarters, backsteaks and tenderloins, and these represent all the prime cuts. So wasteful becomes a matter of perspective and what is realistic in each circumstance, although I'm pretty sure I know what my dog's perspective on this would be.

Another good way to do our bit in controlling numbers in more remote places whilst also getting home with a bunch of meat, is to walk in and then fly out. You can enjoy wrecking your legs on the way in and hunting hard whilst you're in there. Within reason, you can stack up a bunch of prime venison, knowing you're not going to have to lug it all the way back out again. Throw some bin liners in your pack if this is the case, as no pilot wants a bunch of hair and blood to clean up later.

Spring is still a great time to be in the alpine, although personally I'm pretty mindful of not disturbing those wee pockets of chamois whilst they are

dropping kids (usually around mid to late November).

Chamois don't need controlling like our deer and tahr, as they are very susceptible to hunting pressure and don't build up into larger mobs like our other species. And let's face it, they simply don't eat anywhere near as well as some of our other species. A young nanny tahr on the other hand provides some seriously tasty protein, although unless I'm somewhere on the coast where there is still an obvious density problem, I tend to find myself leaving these guys on the hoof as they've been getting more than enough attention from our friendly department.

So, get out and enjoys the hills this spring, and try to involve the wife, kids, nieces, nephews, kid from next door or whoever.

And be sure to tip over a couple of extra deer to keep everyone's freezer full.



River flats, big or small, suddenly produce a lot more deer than they did through winter



With antlers dropped it's a good time to target the females to fill the freezer for BBQ season



With warmer temps and deer coming out on flats it's also a great time to take the kids

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Note: Photos must be of a suitable size for printing - a minimum file size of 1MB is preferred.

Grand Winner

Mitchell Thomas 13 with his first stag shot at 40m with Dad's 6mm Rem - Pureroa Forest



Thomas Brown with his first billy goat, shot up the Old Woman Range with his new 223



Jacob Johnson (14) shot his first stag with his cousin in Wairoa



Lachie Ensor 'I am 10 years old and I caught this 42cm Rainbow trout trolling on Lake Taupo with my grandad John'



Shane Powley's buck was taken on a recent trip to the South Island with a Browning 7mm WSM



Josh Telford (15) with friend Chris in the Tongariro area



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My First Hunt

WRITTEN BY
DAIMIN REEF HUDSON

My first hunt was awesome

Mum had jacked it up for me, and when she got the call that it was on, I was ready to go. Zane picked me up and it didn't take that long to get to where we were going. He had a mean place sorted for us.

When we got there, we had to get ready. We put snacks and a drink in our bag and got our hunting gear on. Zane put his rifle and bag with our goodies on his back and we set off.

We had to walk up big hills and through the trees for about an hour.

There was bush everywhere and lots of fallen trees so we had to climb over and through them. We stopped a few times to roar at the stags and then we'd wait and listen to see if any roared back but we heard nothing. Further on, we started to notice some sticks scraped from the stags' antlers rubbing them up.

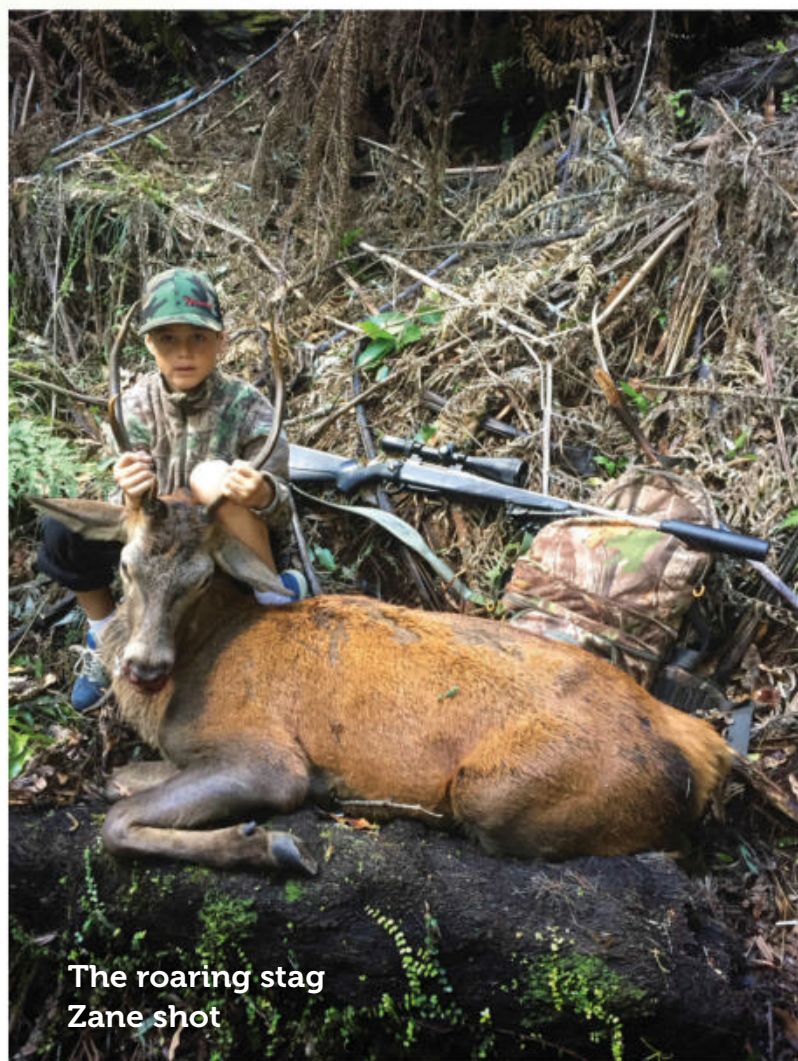
We walked up to a drop-off and then sat down and Zane told me some things about hunting.

We let out a roar every now and then and after a while I heard sticks breaking down below us. The snapping got louder and louder and all of a sudden, I saw antlers amongst the thick bush. The stag couldn't see us as we were very still and quiet so it kept coming closer, until it was only five metres away. I was so excited!

Then it got spooked but Zane quickly roared and it came straight back up the bank. It saw us and ran; Zane quickly grabbed his rifle and without even aiming, he fired as it was running. We didn't know if he'd got it because there was no blood trail so we searched down the hill just in case and then we saw it stuck in some bushes. We pulled it out and gutted it and then put it on a log and I sat by it for a photo.

It was then time to get the stag back; I had to carry the head and Zane carried the body. The head was bony and made my neck sore; it was pretty heavy for a

head! We carried on hunting on our way back because Zane told me that hunting is never finished until you get back to the truck. **He also said that if you see little round poos, pick them up; if they are slippery that means they are fresh and the deer could be ahead of you.**



The roaring stag
Zane shot

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Daimin lining up on his first deer at 150 metres



The all-important first deer for Daimin - hooked for life!

Halfway back, we sat down by a tree near a huge grassy clearing that was surrounded by bush for a rest. We had to be really quiet so the deer didn't hear us before we could get a shot.

After what seemed like ages, it was starting to get dark so we carried on. We'd done a lot of walking when suddenly we saw a big hind and a

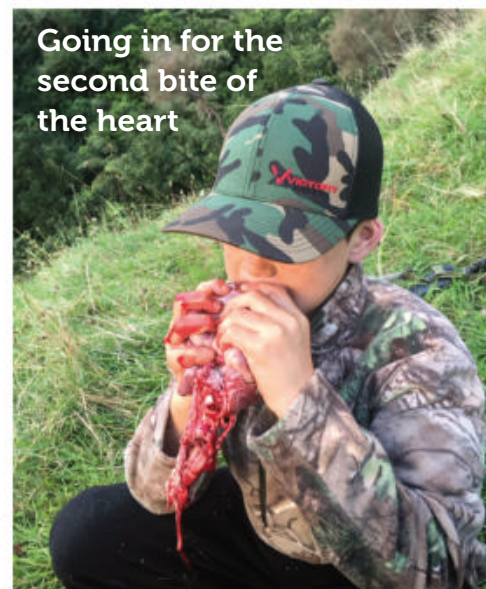
yearling feeding on a grass patch on a hill. We sneaked closer and closer, and Zane got his rifle ready and gave it to me to line up the target. I wanted to shoot the yearling as the hind would have more babies for me to shoot next time. **'Bang' went the gun and the deer dropped straight away.** We walked up and saw that I had shot it right in the shoulder where

you're meant to, mean! Zane showed me how to gut it and because it was my first deer, I had two bites of the heart!

I learned a lot about hunting that day and I shot my first deer from 150 metres away. I felt excited as with the hunt and I can't wait to get out again. **Hunting is the best thing ever!**



Going in for the second bite of the heart



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PELL STREAM HUT

WRITTEN BY ~ ANDREW BUGLASS | REMOTEHUTS.CO.NZ

Looking down Pell
Stream from
saddle 1345m

Geoff Spearpoint

Pell Stream is a DOC minimal maintenance hut located in the Maruia catchment near Lewis Pass

The tracked sections up Pell Stream from the Alfred River are not officially maintained but have been kept open and in quite reasonable condition by volunteers.

The last bit of trackwork in the upper section of the route took place in January of this year. The Pell tracks were marked on NZ topomaps from 1979, but were removed and have been absent from the 2009 series onwards. Pell Stream Hut is located on the edge of an open river flat on the true right (TR) of Pell Stream with views of the Mueller Range. Whio, kaka, kakariki, and long-tailed bats can be encountered in the area and old gold

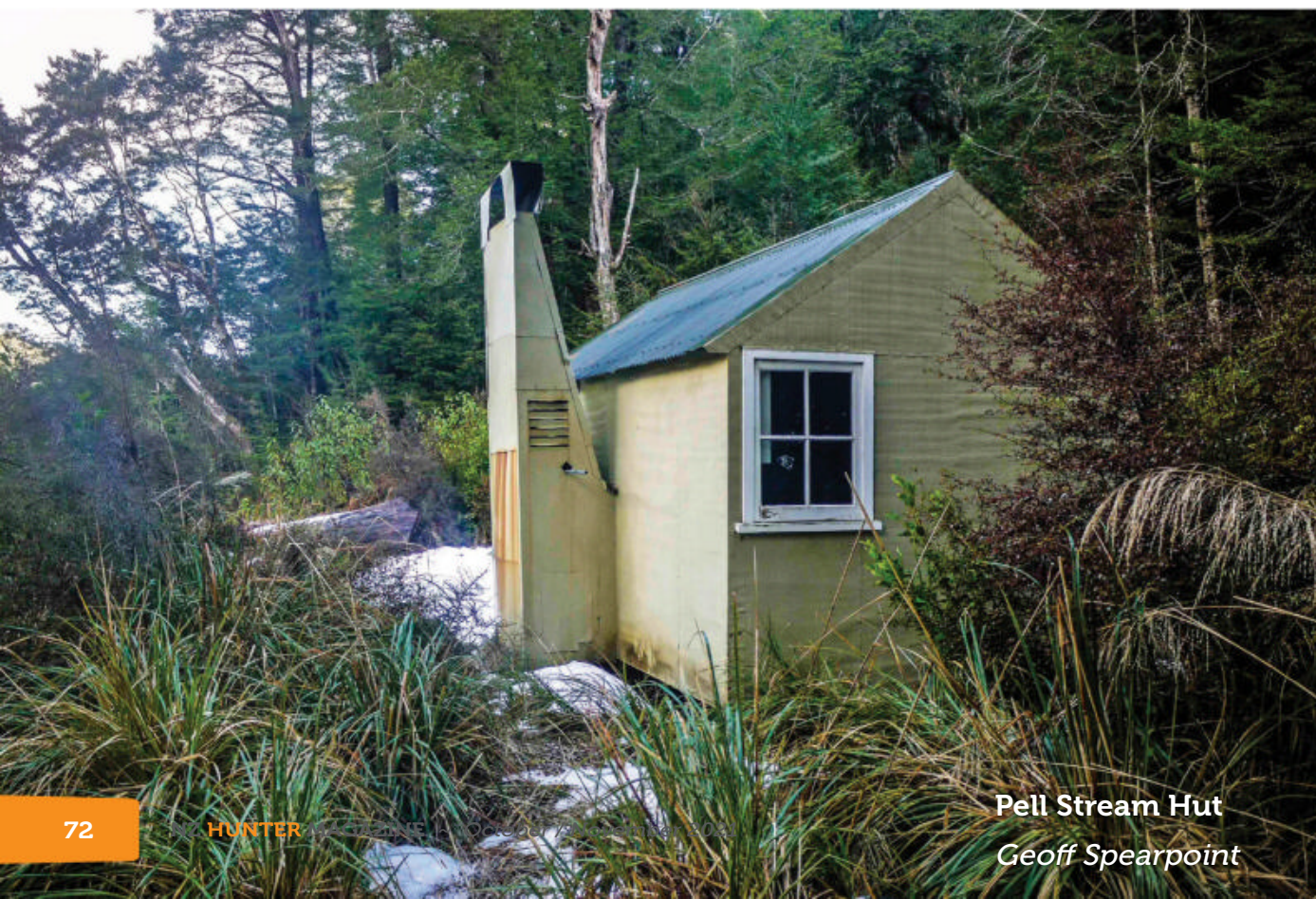
workings are evident in the lower sections of the stream where there are several deep vertical shafts beside the track. There is a surprisingly well-maintained gold miner's hut on the TR of the lower Pell, the future of which is uncertain currently.

Pell Hut is a 4-5 hour walk from the Marble Hill carpark on SH7 which is also the start of the popular Lake Daniels track.

Part of the route to Gilchrist Creek follows an old mining bench and water race. The mid-section of the route a mix of river travel and short tracked detours. A bit of wading and several crossings are required but it would probably be possible to stay on the true left (TL) the whole way if the stream was too high to ford.

Pell Hut is your classic S70 hut with open fire and all the old-style ambience that comes with it. It was built in May 1961 by G. Coombs and R. Osman of NZFS Reefton according to the inscription on the interior cross beam. Although a six-bunk design, Pell has only four bunks, with a gun rack and bench filling the space between the bunks. The fire smokes a little without the window open and water is from the Stream. There is a long drop toilet for your convenience as well. The Hut is in a shady location and reputedly very cold in winter. Its hutbook goes way back in time and makes for interesting reading, with 16 visits recorded in 2020. Pell Hut is in good condition currently. Volunteers have done the odd bit of maintenance over the years and DOC Reefton did some general work and scrub clearance in 2018-19.

Pell Stream above the hut is untracked with a fair bit of windfall in the riverbed and the odd waterfall and bluff to negotiate further up. An easier option is to sidle up and along the bush faces on the TL of the valley, staying a reasonable distance above river the whole way. The forest is very open silver beech and pretty good travel mostly. It gets a bit thicker and scrubbier in the head of the



Pell Stream Hut
Geoff Spearpoint



REMOTEHUTS.CO.NZ

valley but there are some good deer trails through a lot of it. For the more experienced a nice overnight circuit can be done up into the head of Pell Stream and over saddle 1345m into the right branch of the Maruia River. The crossing from Pell Hut to Cannibal Gorge Hut in the Maruia takes 5-6 hours in good conditions.

The tops above the Glenroy River can be accessed up the TR branch of the Pell and Mt. Mueller by a number of untracked

spurs. A high circuit of the Freyberg Range can be done using the spur just upstream of the hut for access the tops. Access to the Range from the Maruia Valley is via two tracks, neither of which is officially maintained or marked on the Topo maps anymore, but have had the odd touch-up by volunteers.

Deer numbers are pretty low in the Lower Pell, however if you feel inclined to wander a few hours upstream from the hut where fewer go, their trails are quite



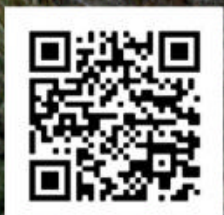
well-used. Chamois can be encountered here and there on the surrounding tops.

More information on Pell Stream and other remote huts can be found at remotehuts.co.nz



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SECOND TIME'S A CHARM

WRITTEN BY - TYRON SOUTHWARD

This was my second attempt at hunting for Alaskan moose, and as before, I was flying into the tiny fishing village of Bethel via Anchorage, where I was met by my very good friend, Wade Renfro, of Renfro's Alaskan Adventures

He runs a hunting and fishing outfitting business, specialising in moose hunts. His hunters harvest several moose per annum over the 70 inch mark – yes 70 inches!! Personally I wasn't too worried about the width of a moose but had antler mass and big fronts in mind. I had paid for a moose tag, and also one each of a brown bear and black bear tag, although the chances of filling all three was very remote.

Having two bear tags in my pocket allowed me to be able to shoot a wolf or wolverine if we came across one, and still have the brown bear tag up my sleeve, which I could use for brown or black bear.

So, I had options (Alaskan Fish and Wildlife have a system where they see brown (griz) as the top animal, then black bear, wolf, wolverine – so if you have the brown bear tag you can use it to shoot any of

these other animals on that tag).

Wade dropped me in at the hanger to catch up with another good friend of mine, Tom Ferguson, a top Alaskan bloke who was to be my guide. I was a little surprised to see Tom, as he was supposed to be out "in the field" with camp set up and a moose tied to a tree for me! My first words to him were ***"What are you doing here, mate?"*** He told me that the weather had been terrible and Wade had hunters backed up everywhere waiting to get into the hills. It was two days later when Tom and I finally made it to our new home for the next twelve days, landing on the top of a little flat-topped hill along an exposed ridge. **This was very 'moosey' looking country, being low, rolling hills with timbered sides, boggy creeks with willow, and exposed ridges.** With camp quickly thrown up, we moved out onto the top of our flat-top hill for a look around the area. The first animals we spotted were a pair of musk



Tom Fergusson (guide) and Wade Renfro (pilot) leaving with the first load of gear



Mum and calf Musk Ox that we bumped into on the stalk

oxen. This was a real bonus for me to see as they are not an easy animal to come across. There wasn't much else that day so back to the tent for camp dinner and a brew.

The following morning – our first legal hunting day – again found us on top of our little hill. This became our standard routine as it offered us great 360° views. We saw 20 or so moose and several black bears that first day. Several bull moose had potential but were either too far away or wandered back into the heavy timber before we had time to get closer. One of the important things to consider when analysing a potential moose bull is how far from camp he is, as with a 'fly in' remote hunt there are no horses and no ATVs - nothing but the boots you are wearing to carry out all of the meat (on the bone), plus your antlers and skin. Generally, the guides try to find a good bull within one to two kilometres from camp, otherwise it is just too difficult

to carry out.

Every day started with a routine similar to the previous one, with a quick breakie in the dark, then sitting on our little hill glassing for hours and hours on end. The weather played a big part in our schedule as it rained or fogged-in every day to some extent. Very cold and damp! As it was early September the rut was beginning and bulls were moving around more each day, rubbing their velvet off and scenting for cows. This type of hunting can be incredibly boring, with long periods of seeing bugger all or else having no visibility through fog or cloud. **Knowing this in advance I had a good book with me to help kill some time – an 800 page book!**

Finally, on day five, we picked up on a good looking bull with a younger bull in tow. Unfortunately, they were a good two kilometres away but we figured it was worth a go. Quickly sorting gear for our day packs, we grabbed rifles and dropped off our hill into the creek below. Climbing

out of the creek we soon found a game trail to follow, heading towards the bulls. We made good time and soon were within 350 yards of them. **As we made our way through the alders, we came face to face with a musk ox mother and her calf.** Thankfully they didn't care less about us and we discreetly left them be. We were getting very close to the bulls by now but the roll of the hill is made it incredibly hard to see into their small clearing. We also had to

keep an eye on a black bear above us, feeding flat out on berries. Sidling the face to get a better viewing angle we finally had a glimpse of the clearing, but the bulls had moved off into the timber. Tom and I realised we've been skunked, so we turned our attention uphill. The black bear was still eating very happily only 300 yards above us, so we closed the distance. **Tom looked him over and declared that it had a beautiful coat and that I should shoot it!** No arm twisting necessary! The next decision was which rifle to use. I don't bother bringing a rifle on these trips as Tom has a couple of canons for me to use. He's brought his two faithfuls, a 375 Rem and 415 Rem. Tom takes great care of his rifles so I knew I could trust their accuracy (he always brings the target sheets for me to inspect, so I know where they're zeroed in for).

The range to the bear was 240 yards, so the 375 was the better option. Settling in behind the stock I waited for the bear to give me a good broadside shot. For me, there's always a little edge of excitement



A beautiful high altitude, mountain Black Bear



Look at those fronts. Exactly what I was looking for, massive big bladed front tines just like this



the bear wave”, which apparently means the bear is on it’s back with a paw in the air. It’s a good sign that they are down for good. Well, no one told this bear, and in a whirl he was up and racing downhill and out of sight. Now, it was time to see how brave I was. **Instructed by Tom to stick in behind him and not to load the rifle unless he told me to, we made our way over to the small clearing.** Ever so slowly Tom edged out into the open. He froze, pointed downhill, and sure enough,

putting the crosshairs on a bear!!

The bear presented its shoulder, so I touched off the shot – poleaxed it! You beauty!

What a relief! Tom patted me on the back saying *“He’s done - he’s giving you*

there was the bear laid out dead as a doorknob – was I happy about that!

On inspection we discovered that the bear was a barren female with a beautiful black shiny coat. I couldn’t have been happier, the photo session began and I

skinned it out for a full body mount for my showroom back home.

The following morning, in the usual mixed bag of fog, cloud, wind and rain, we were again on our hill scanning for a moose that might be a little closer to home.

Late in the morning Tom detected a promising bull in the bottom of a creek directly below us. He appeared to have good paddles and most importantly (to me) exceptional front points. It was time to go! We raced down there hoping he’d stay put long enough for us to get a closer look. The bull cut us a break and sat down, allowing us to sneak in to 400 yards and analyse him. It was the moose for me, so after a quick discussion we decided the best option was for me to belly crawl further down the ridge, to reduce the range, while Tom kept watch from cover. There was almost no cover for me, so I waited for rain showers to come through and moved when the visibility was poor. **Closing the distance to 200 yards I was directly across from him and decided that would do.**

Two smaller bulls had arrived, annoying him, and sure enough he was on his feet and letting these young fella’s know who was boss! There was a lot of cover near the bulls and I was worried that he would disappear in the timber while chasing one of the young ones. He was heading towards a small clearing, so anticipating that he would walk through, I placed rifle over day pack as a good solid rest, and sure enough – there he was, coming through the clearing! I could tell that he wasn’t going to stop, so I lead him slightly and touch the shot off. Thump! Down he went, with a fair bit of yahooing!! We

made our way over to him, and found he was an old bull, going grey all through his face, tons of character, and with good heavy paddles and huge big front points. Tom looked him over and commented **“Now the work begins”**. How right he was, as it was 1.6 kilometres back to camp (as the crow flies) and all uphill. It took us two and a half days, and 14 pack loads, to get that moose on top of the hill, and it rained solid the whole time!

It was a fantastic trip. I’m very lucky to have done it with my good mate Tom and get to experience wild Alaska again. Tragically Tom passed away before I was able to hunt with him again.

Footnote: It was a further two days before Wade was able to get us flown out due to bad weather. If you are considering hunting in Alaska be prepared for delays due to weather. **Take warm clothes, good wet weather gear and a very patient attitude.**



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THE GAC UPDATE

WRITTEN BY ~ TIM GALE | GENERAL MANAGER
GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL



Collaboration with government is important for hunters

Some of you may have read a recent post I shared on social media in response to ill-informed accusations about the hunting sector in a prominent online publication

If not, you can find it on the GAC's Facebook page and Instagram. I don't wish to repeat that post but it is worth reflecting on some of the issues raised within it.

The gist of the accusations were that DOC and government are working on behalf of the hunting sector lobby (including the GAC) to the detriment of the environment. The article even argued that DOC is basically farming animals on behalf of the hunting community. Obviously, such claims are ridiculous, but they do highlight a sentiment amongst a small but outspoken minority that hunters are the enemy and are actively working against conservation and the good of the environment.

Hunters, as we know, are massive contributors to conservation. Not only do we harvest and remove literally hundreds of thousands of game animals and pest goats every year (not to mention possums, hares, rabbits, wallabies etc), but we also heavily involve ourselves in native species protection, the preservation of our backcountry heritage and fund hunter-led management like the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation's annual control operations.

On a policy-level GAC are heavily involved in advising DOC around the development of the Te Ara Ki Mua deer management project. This project seeks to develop a 'pathway' for sustainable deer management that includes the aim to keep deer out of places where they aren't and reduce numbers where they are having a significant impact on the environment. The project is in its early stages but is something we see as important, not only for conservation, but also to improve the quality of the hunting resource.

This brings me back to the issue of working with government. I have found it curious during my time with the GAC that both extremes of the hunting/conservation debate have a real problem with the GAC and other hunting bodies working with DOC and other public sector agencies. These hardliners see it as either us or DOC giving up their values. While working with government can at times be difficult and frustrating (and that's no reflection on the many good people involved), it is entirely necessary if we are to achieve positive and enduring game animal management, conservation and environmental outcomes. I firmly believe that our sector benefits from greater stakeholder collaboration with the Department of Conservation, not less. Finally, with spring upon us and the weather getting better, more of us are looking to head into the hills. If you are,

remember to follow the alert level rules relevant to your region. Don't push the envelope when it comes to how far you travel, the type of country you choose to hunt or mixing bubbles (if those rules apply at the time). It's really important we don't contribute to the already difficult job police and local authorities have during heightened alert levels, so follow the official advice and most importantly, hunt safely.

For those of you that can get out, spring is a great time to undertake some meat gathering and population management hunts, particularly before females drop their young. We all know there are certain deer herds around the country that are carrying too many animals – Lake Sumner Forest Park, the Raukumaras and parts of the Central North Island, for example. Making a contribution towards reducing the numbers and improving the quality of these herds by harvesting breeding age and yearling females will result in better meat and trophy animals in the future and less pressure on the ecosystem and native species.

If you shoot spikers and young stags for the summer BBQ don't be surprised if you can't find mature stags during the roar. Remember, spikers and young stags will grow into mature stags given half a chance.

Spring is also a really good time to knock over a few goats while out on your hunting trips. It was a real shame that a joint NZDA/DOC goat hunting competition to be run in the central North Island had to be cancelled due to the lockdown. Nevertheless, I would still encourage hunters in areas where goat numbers are high to do their bit to reduce those populations. I understand the sentiment that you may not want to use expensive ammunition on a goat or spook a deer in the area by shooting at goats, but once your main hunt is over, removing some goats on the way back to the truck is a great way to help encourage healthier game animals and protect the native ecosystem. Those objectives are worth a few rounds of ammo, in my opinion!

The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.

The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.



Hunter and wildlife ecologist Cam Speedy instructing Sika Foundation volunteers on setting predator traps to protect whio

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GREG DULEY, NZ HUNTER

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ECOFLOW RIVER

PORTABLE POWER STATION

WRITTEN BY ~ LUKE CARE

Ecoflow is a new company specialising in what are essentially jumbo lithium powerbanks, or portable power stations, who made great headway on a crowdfunding website called 'Kickstarter'

The exciting product range is distributed here in NZ by the team at Lacklands and I was thrilled to get my hands on a unit to play around with.

These units can charge both 12v DC and 240v AC devices. **The River is the smallest of the range in weight and power. For only 5kg it can power devices up to 1800w on X boost mode.** It has 3x 600w (1200 surge), pure sine wave AC outlets for running virtually any common 240v appliance short of an electric stove. Alongside that it has a 100w USB-C, 2x 12W USB A ports plus 1x 18W fast charge USB. For DC power it has a 136W, 10A Car Charger port (which we wired our LED light strip to) and x2 3A DC5221 3A ports (the common 5.5mm plug).

AC TESTING

We took it out to the hut for a night and it comfortably ran a jigsaw for a few fix-up jobs, using only 600w. At home I tested it with a circular saw,

the Makita specs said 1200w but it only peaked at 600 cutting dry 6x1 decking timber. The unit showed 25 minutes of power at full draw, which is plenty. It charged Makita batteries at the same rate I'd expect from a mains power outlet and I even ran the ute battery flat and used a 240v AC battery charger to give it enough juice to re-start. The River estimated I could charge the battery for 2 hours before it went flat, but I set a timer for 10 minutes and that was enough to get the ute to turn over. Leaving 93% battery for other activities! **This is an absolute lifesaver in my mind as I'm always paranoid about flattening a battery while I'm 80km up a Canterbury riverbed.** That same capability is easily transferred to other applications too, I'd love having this in the boat on an overnigher at the Mokau trench 60nm offshore!

DC TESTING

Whilst at the hut we also tested the 12v functions. Using the common car charger plug we ran a 4m strip of LED lights in the hut for a whole winter evening, all the while running a radio and charging some powertool batteries. The user interface is great, it accurately tells you how much power you're using and how much is left so you can confidently plan and ration your power usage. Using this unit for a backcountry basecamp like a tahr ballot would be epic. You could run a little strip of LEDs for hours, charge all your kit without a worry, even have a few tunes to while away those long winter evenings if you were so inclined. It's only about the size of a toaster so it's easily portable. **There's dust covers on all the big ports and the design seems nice and robust.**

There are all kind of other uses that come to mind. For us pig hunters a tricky part about extended trips is keeping tracking gear charged, not to mention walkie talkies and everything else. If you're running a few dogs it quickly becomes a bit much for a conventional powerbank and its good peace of mind to head out in the morning with everything sitting at 100%. Even at home its great knowing you've got a bit of backup power should the lights go out. The bigger units in

the range can even be patched into the house mains supply, but the River will still power a fridge, a TV, the coffee maker – you name it.

Ecoflow claims to be the world’s fastest charging portable power stations, in fact that’s one of their major distinctions from the other brands of power stations around - and they are mighty quick. Our River unit charged in a shade over an hour from flat and some quick online research (hardly gold-standard, but an indication) shows most units with similar wattage take several hours at least. You can also charge it via car 12v, so if you forget to top it up you can plug it in on the drive out to the hills. **It will take approximately 3.5 hours to go from 0-100 percent on 12v though.**

They have planned compatibility with solar chargers, and even sell their own units – A 110w and 160w model, awesome for off grid adventures. Without testing it’s almost impossible to say how quick the recharge will be. You’d need to factor in things like our latitude, the weather and the angle you place the panels at however Ecoflow quote 2.5-5 hours using 1x 160w panel in full sun.

The Ecoflow app can control the unit remotely via wifi, giving you more information than the screen. Particularly useful is the charging tracking, which would be useful in fine-tuning your solar panel placement. You can also customise features like beeps, slow charging mode, timeout etc. You can also turn off the light and AC and DC ports remotely.

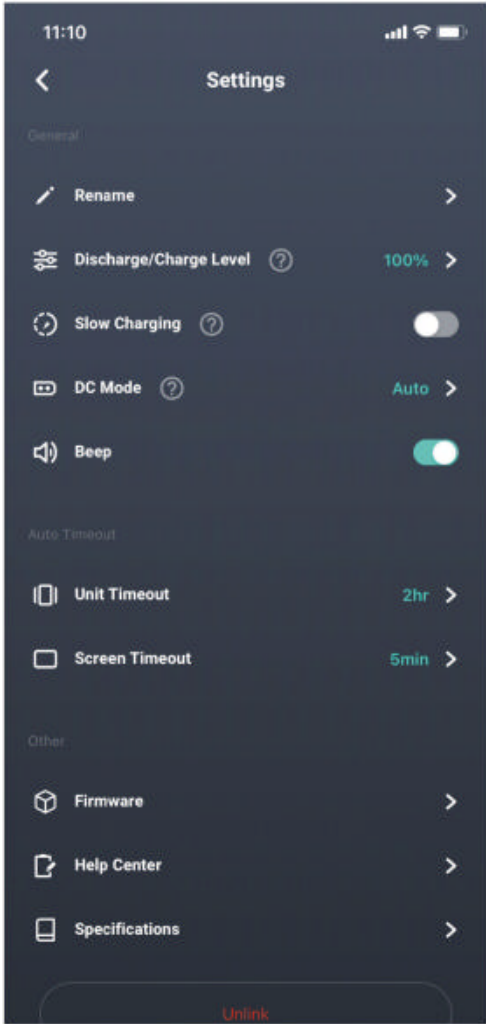
These are effectively a replacement for a portable generator, and much kinder on your ears whilst preserving that outdoors ambience. The River emits virtually no noise. There is some tiny fan noise but you need absolute silence to hear it. And they’re a great alternative to generators for more reasons than just the noise. You can’t forget the fuel, they don’t need servicing, and perhaps most importantly, there’s no harmful fumes or fuel so you can safely use them indoors or in confined spaces. The only drawback compared to a generator is that to use it as an emergency backup it has to be plugged in full time as otherwise it could be flat when the lights go out! That and the power supply is limited by battery life, not fuel supplies. A small gene will undoubtable weigh more than the River, I couldn’t find any that were under 10kg and



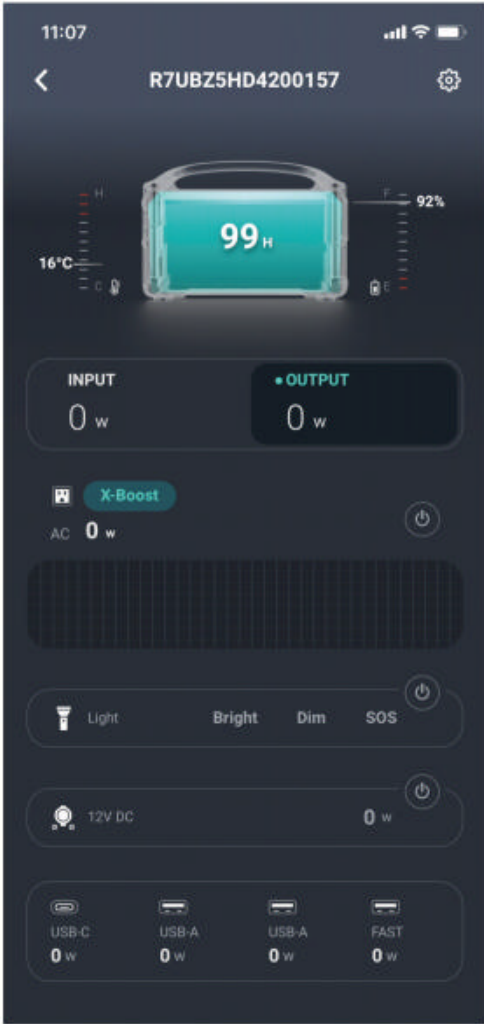
I continually found more uses for the Ecoflow River



You'll be surprised what tools and appliances you can run using the Ecoflow River



Some of the app functions. Input/output tracking and customisation



ECOFLOW GIVEAWAY

Lacklands have put up an incredible prize for this issue.

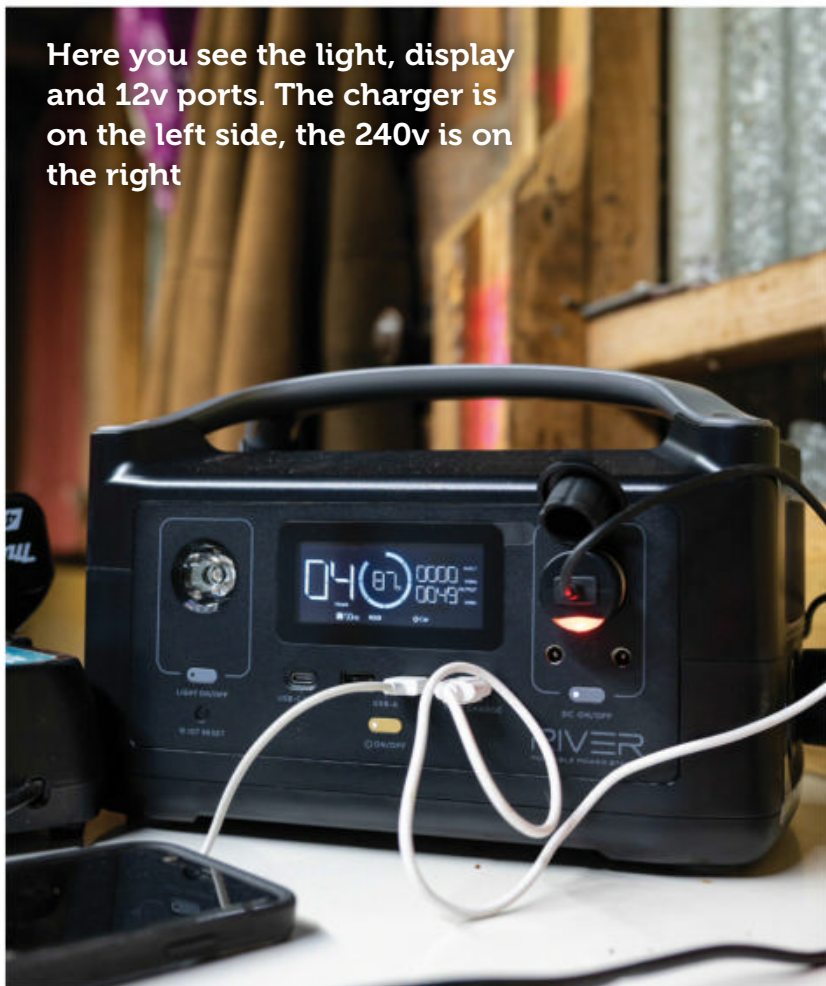
The unit reviewed in this magazine will be going home with a lucky reader (I promise I looked after it). To enter, email ecoflow@anzhunter.co.nz with your details and answer this question from the article:

How much does the Ecoflow River weigh?

We will draw the winners when this magazine comes off sale

products really open up a whole raft of opportunities. For myself I think I'd upgrade to the extra battery model (River Max) so you have enough juice to comfortably run a few nights at a hut with all

Here you see the light, display and 12v ports. The charger is on the left side, the 240v is on the right



that's excluding fuel. So while they're typically 1000w plus at the bare minimum, they're a lot heavier, louder and more hassle. **The River and its brother units fill a niche that an inverter generator can't hope to touch,** and for those uses where you might need the bigger wattage there's the big, big boy Delta unit, but hopefully we can tell you more about that in another issue! Hint hint, wink wink Lacklands.

Which unit to buy depends on your usage, this River is fantastic for the likes of mountain basecamps. Paired with the solar charger it would last you plenty, I wish I could tell you myself but lockdown cut the testing time down a bit! **These**

the bells and whistles, and/or a big spell on the tools for those off-grid projects without needing to worry about a solar charger. This takes you from 288 to 576Wh for the weight penalty of an extra 2.5kg (5kg for the River, 7.7 for the River Max) but it's modular so you can remove the battery pack and go lightweight for helicopter basecamp missions if you want. Or you can upgrade to the River Pro for the big boy 720Wh.

I've never even remotely considered taking a generator with me to a hut let alone a basecamp trip, it always seemed a step too far. These units however are a different kettle of fish - **I'd quite like to hang on to this one myself but instead a lucky reader will be able to take it on their trips!**

RRP \$779



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Andrew shooting his custom 7mm at 800 yds using the LongShot LR-3 system in challenging windy conditions. He was pushing the 180gn Hornady ELD-Ms at 3250fps out of one of our wildcats. You can see the receiver on the right and the LabRadar in the centre

WRITTEN BY ~ GREG DULEY

LONGSHOT TARGET CAMERA SYSTEMS

As anyone who's done any shooting at longer ranges can attest, seeing where your bullets are hitting is one of the challenges

And when you're shooting at long range, you're often wanting to make elevation and windage corrections for the specific environmental conditions of the day - but to be able to do this, you need to know where your shot actually went in the first place! No matter how powerful your spotting scope, atmospheric conditions like mirage will dictate whether you can see your bullet holes or not.

In ideal conditions with a quality spotter you can usually see reasonable size bullet holes in the white of a target out to 600 yards, but beyond 300 yards they are impossible in the black. The bullet splash on a freshly painted gong can be seen a lot further out, but if you miss the gong due to misreading the elevation/wind correction required, you mostly can't see where the shot went to make that correction. **And you will have to keep painting the gong to see fresh bullet holes that go in or near existing ones.**

The acoustic target system we have on our home range is certainly superb, but reasonably expensive and not particularly portable. Assorted target cameras have been around for a while, starting with a simple little video camera set on a tripod down at the target that you then play back later and see what shot went where,

but this obviously doesn't help you correct while you're shooting unless you drive up and down after every shot.

And now to the latest in the target camera genre being used more and more by the leading experts in the extreme range shooting field – the LongShot LR-3. Made in Texas in the good ol' US of A, this UHD camera system offers some serious advantages for anyone who spends any time punching paper at extended ranges. The guts of the system that puts it ahead of the simpler versions already discussed is it has a radio link that transmits what's going on down at the target back to your screen of choice at the shooting position – either a smart phone, tablet or Laptop with Wi-Fi capability, and provides a unique range of extremely useful features via the TargetVision app.

OPERATION

Simply, you set up the camera 8 to 16 feet away from your target, with the back of the unit pointing generally towards your shooting position. Connect the camera via Wi-Fi to your smart phone via the downloaded app, then aim the swivelable camera at your target using the image you now see on your screen. Then set up the receiver back at your shooting position pointing at the target, connect your smart phone to it instead of the camera, and you are in business. Depending on the particular unit chosen, this system will give you instant point of impact info out to 2 miles/over 3km away! The Long Shot Marksman camera on its own will transfer the image to your smart phone up to 300 yards away without needing the extra receiver, and there's also the Hawk spotting scope camera enabling you to use all the features of the app out to any distance at which you can see your bullet holes through your spotter without





Examining the 800 yd target. LR-3 camera in the left foreground, 8 feet from the target. Ideally for best results try not to be shooting directly towards the sun, resulting in a backlit target and sun on the camera lens - and therefore also the objective lens of your scope – just common sense really!



The Hawk spotting scope camera is self centring and levelable as you zoom up the eyepiece

having to get up from your shooting position to look through the spotter. There is also an optional external antenna that connects to the camera from up to 75 yards away that allows you to protect the camera in front of the target with a steel plate or earth mound etc to prevent it getting shot by an errant round. Or you can pay about \$50USD extra and LongShot offer an extra bulletproof 2 year warranty in case you accidentally shoot it.

FEATURES

Now to the features of the app:

BLINKER SHOT LOCATOR – if you touch the shot locator button after each shot, your most recent shot will blink making it easy to distinguish.

SHOT MARKING – after each shot you can touch your screen to place a consecutively numbered shot marker on each impact, making it easy to keep track of your group.

LIVE GROUP – if you first touch on your screen each side of a known dimension of your target eg your bullseye diameter or target frame width etc, then the app will tell you what your group size is after each shot.

ZERO MODE – if you tap and register the centre of your bullseye, then the app will tell you the required amount to zero after each shot, or of the whole group – in either inches, MOA or Mils depending on what you choose as the output.

You can take snap shots and video, and there is the full range of shooting session record keeping options, so you can go back at a later stage and review your shooting session shot by shot.

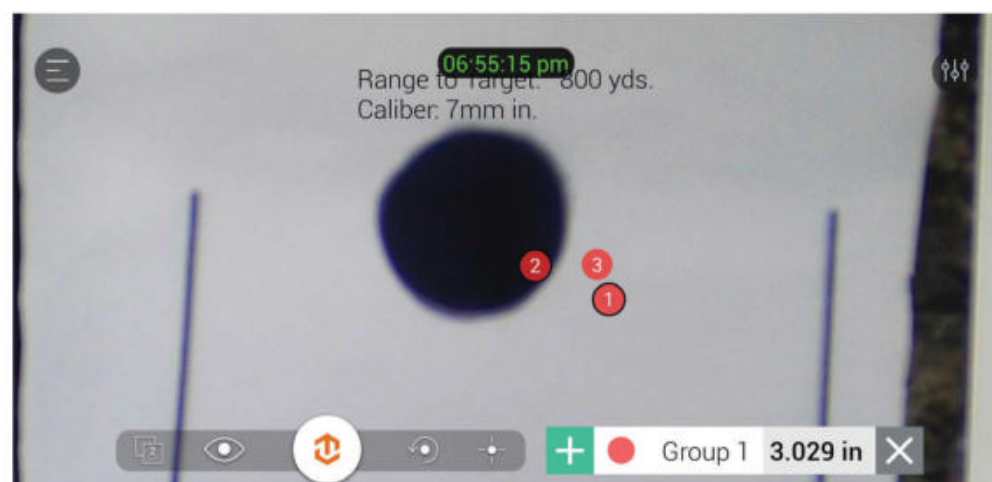
As you can see a lot of thought has gone into the software that makes the system extremely useful and user friendly.

I was really impressed with the whole package and can see why the leading long range experts in the USA use the LongShot system almost exclusively. You can upgrade the Marksman to the LR-3 without having to buy a whole new system, and you can run up to four LR-3 cameras off the one receiver so you can monitor multiple targets and shooters at the same time. The self-centering and levelable Hawk spotter cam is also very well thought out. All the systems are powered by replaceable rechargeable batteries that give up to 9 hours run time. They come with chargers and tripods all stored in padded carry cases.

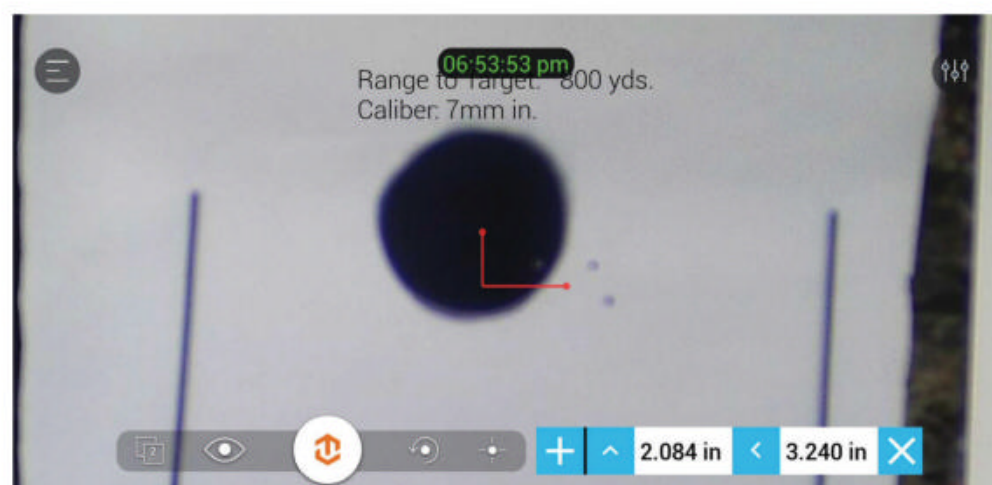
Owl Optics are the NZ distributors, and they also supply the LabRadar Doppler radar chronographs - which combined with the LongShot provide a superb one stop shop long range range shooting analytics package.



The target as seen through the LR-3 camera system



Using the shot marker feature



Using the zero feature

RRP

\$479 - Hawk spotting scope camera

\$959 - Marksman 300yd camera

\$1799 - LR-3 two mile system

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WRITTEN BY ~ LUKE CARE

FIRST LITE SAWBUCK PANT

The Sawbuck pant by First Lite is what they call a 'brush pant' – we'd translate that to scrub pants

They're general duty pants with heavy duty double-layer nylon from upper thigh to ankles like chaps, then wrapped right around the bottom like gaiters.

The concept is great, especially for pig hunters or upland bird guys, but I'll admit I was doubtful how well they would wear with all of that reinforcing. I needn't have worried, the Americans have their pants down to a fine art and First Line especially so.

It all comes down to fit. **Restrictive pants sap your energy and can chafe enough to break the skin.** This was not an issue in the Sawbuck pants and that's especially impressive given they're built from non-stretch heavy nylon from upper thigh down. The articulated knee functioned well, retaining an attractive cut whilst preserving a full range of movement. They're shaped already bent at the knee as that is where poorly or lazily designed pants restrict your movement most, when you try to step up.

While not skinny jeans they are an 'athletic fit', so bigger fella's may want to try a set on (As long as you just try them on you can send them back to Points South to exchange if they're the wrong size). There's a smidgeon of bagginess around the knee to allow for the lack of stretch in the material but everything else is very trim and tidy. You order using two measurements, the waist and length of leg, so there's some degree of customisation. This is a fantastic feature

as even just amongst our team we have very different body types. At 105kg/6'1" I went for 36/32's.

The pants have a high waist to stop scrub getting down your builders crack with a good flat design so a knife or pack belt doesn't chafe on the belt loops. They fit so well I don't even wear a belt, the tailoring all around the waist/butt is great. **The commitment to longevity shows with triple stitched seams in the high wear areas** of sides, inseam, crotch, back of the knee and where the heavy nylon meets the lighter material. Clearly they've been designed by someone who's thrashed pants in the scrub. They sport traditional open pockets, two either side and two on the seat. I much prefer that to a profusion of little pockets, though the little corner gusset is a thoughtful addition.

I had a whole winter to really wear these pants in. They're great in matagouri and gorse as well as general wear. The light 4-way stretch nylon (pinched from their Corrugate Guide Pants) up top and at the back of the legs allows your legs to breathe well. After a lot of use, and even a bit of stray blackberry, the heavy nylon is unblemished. The lighter upper has some minor pilling but



They're not just a set of chaps, they're very comfortable for general hunting too



Ready to do battle with a scrub gully

it's absolutely minimal. **Surprisingly, they clean well, I was sure litres of pig blood were going to destroy the nice 'dry earth' colour** but it never required anything more than a machine wash with my other smelly garments. The pants are DWR treated, but they aren't really waterproof. Water beads off when they're new but a couple hours in the scrub soon finishes that off.

At 600g they're not really backcountry pants, especially as they'd get a bit heavier than usual with the heavy nylon when wet, but they're simply not meant to be. First Lite have plenty of other styles to suit that role more, but these would certainly be nice in that monkey scrub! These are scrub pants, work pants, and I was highly impressed. **They're my go-to everyday hunting and general outdoors workhorse now.**



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HARD LABOUR WITH THE BOSS

WRITTEN BY ~ TRACEY MORROW



An invite to join Paul and Andrew at Labour Weekend for their annual long weekend goose fest meant a quick check of the wall planner and a fast yes to join them.

For me, the added bonus of spending a couple of days in an awe-inspiring location meant that any geese taken

were going to literally be the icing on the long weekend cake.

The weather forecast was a mixed bag

of everything, but we headed north on an absolutely stunning spring day starting out cold and ending sunny and warm. In this location a northerly wind forecast is always an advantage for getting the birds up and moving off the riverbed but it turned out to be vastly more than a light breeze. As



we headed up the lake toward the valley huge swathes of dust from the braided river and mountain sides rolled down the river, creating a dramatic backdrop for our afternoon hunting location. It was typical weather for the area at this time of the year. We had two hunts planned but Saturday afternoon on a paddock of decade old lucerne was the only one that produced any birds.

We headed out in the warmth of the afternoon, kitted out appropriately in light clothing and footwear. It made a nice change to be hunting in something other than heavy waders and multiple layers of clothing. Walking over the paddock we noticed plenty of older sign on the ground but little that was fresh. A concern? Maybe, but the birds do love this paddock. Brett and I had hunted with the guys on this same crop a couple of years prior, same weekend, similar weather and an almost repeat hunting pattern. We set up the layout blinds in a slight natural indentation in the ground and grassed up the blinds with a big bag of long lush green stuff we had cut at home. Decoy spread consisted of a "tried and true set up" that Paul has shot over "forever", two dozen Avian X Feeders, one dozen GHG Alerts, with three Alerts 20 metres out front of an open V formation.

The wind was strong and steady. There were plenty of pairs of mallards and groups of parries flying, but we were, of course, here for their bigger, bolshier mates. While finishing the set up a group of 11-12 geese turned up in front of the spread, a few whiffing and fluttering as they approached but they decided there was too much activity below and stayed high, wide and out of range.

Once the guys had taken the vehicles well out of sight across the paddock and returned we gladly settled into the blinds, the wind constantly hammering at us in great continuous hits from behind. It was probably a good hour before much happened but just after 4pm, perhaps as that wind intensified even more and shifted direction slightly to the west, the first few birds started turning up front and centre straight into the decoy spread.

The first two birds drifted slightly east which put them in perfect range for Andrew to take out easily in the left hand position. It's always reassuring to get the first birds on the ground, giving hope that there should be a decent hunt as afternoon turns into early evening when birds generally start moving. It was a relief when we saw more a good 20-30 minutes later, as for a wee while I thought it might have been a one-hit wonder.

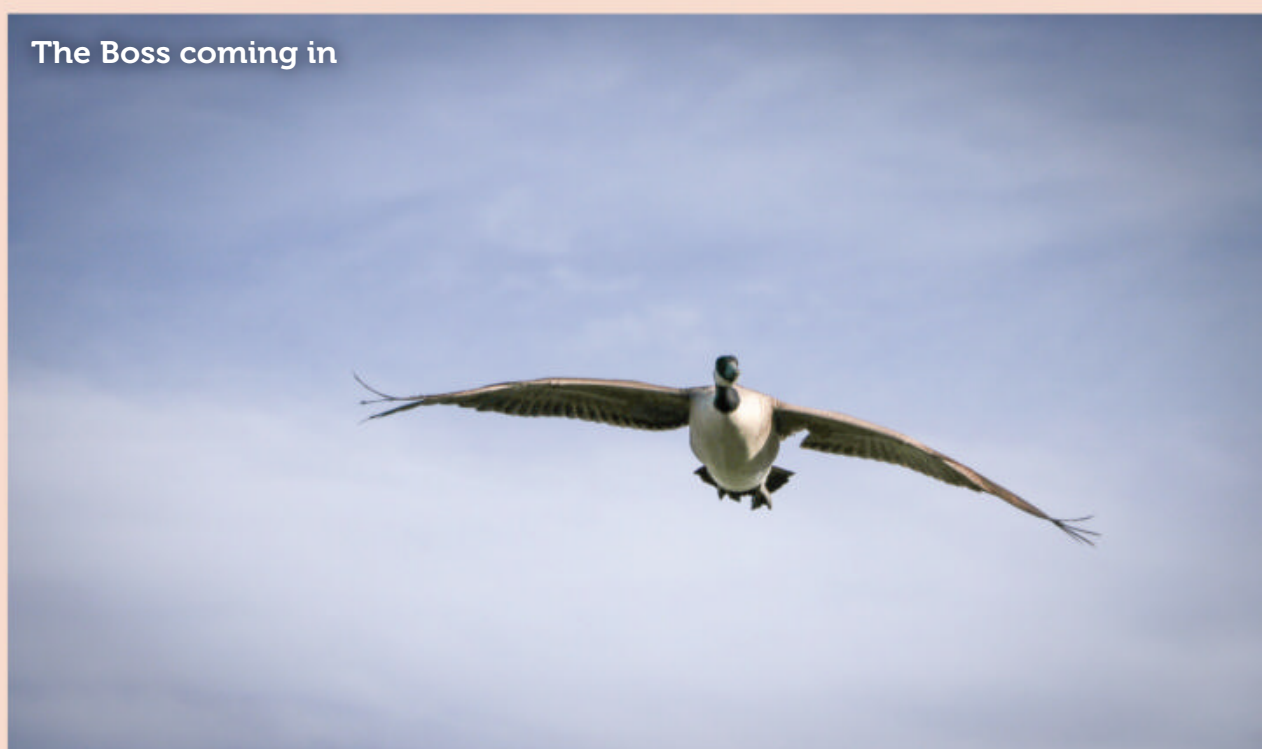
Amongst the great sheets of hazy dust, a group of seven birds suddenly appeared and moved toward us. At this spot the birds seem to magically just appear on the horizon having lifted off the lake edge below us. Coming in low they held up beautifully in the wind, I could sense the excitement from the three shooters a blind or two away. Again, the birds veered out to the eastern side and Andrew took



Grassing up seems to take forever but a job well done makes all the difference.



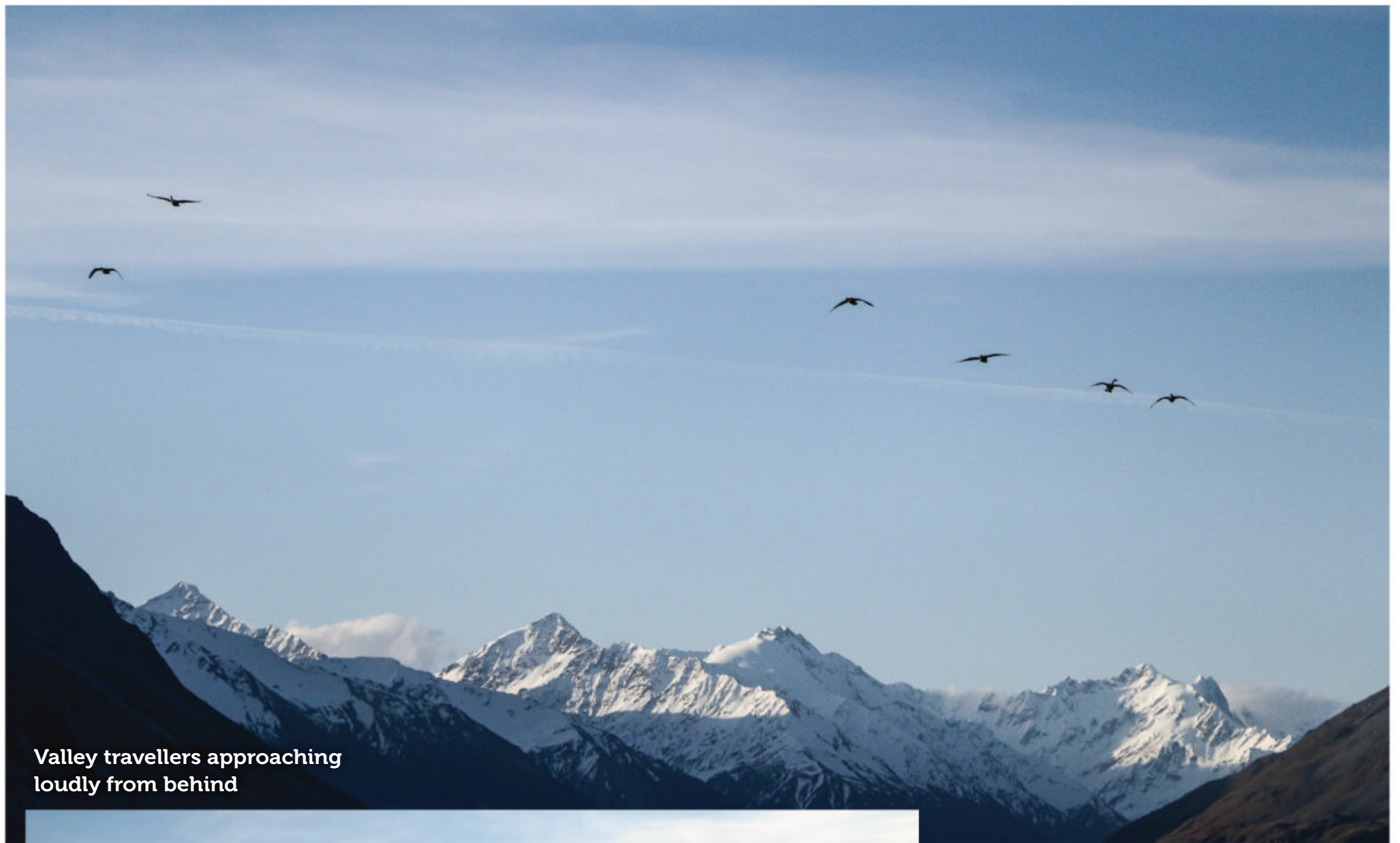
Grand views hunkered down in the dust haze



The Boss coming in



Andrew and Paul, head down butt up, cleaning up the lucerne paddock



Valley travellers approaching loudly from behind



Paul cleaning up a stealthy pair off the lake edge



The prettiest thing you ever did see in a spring sky

two, Brett and Paul out to the right took three, with the two back birds moving into high gear, and quickly leaving the scene. Retrieved birds were set into the decoy spread as extra feeders.

As afternoon moved into early evening the relentless wind started to really bite. You realise how even a

relatively innocuous wind can chill your core temperature when it's constant. Brett headed back to the truck to pick up another layer of jackets and Andrew headed off to pick up a bird that had blown a long way out into the field. **As Paul and I sat and caught up on the year's news four geese turned up straight off the lake and over the fence like a pop-up show.** I don't think there was even time to pull the blind doors shut or for me to disguise the camera before Paul had all four with five shots. Fast, furious and skilled shooting - talk about a buzz!

The next couple of hours proved

consistent with geese turning up in fours and fives, mostly from the south but also a big group of eleven from behind us. Shooting in blustery conditions is always slightly more challenging when factoring the wind into each shot, and there were definitely a few birds that slipped by. **All in all, it was a tidy afternoon/evening shoot with 29 birds on the deck.** Nothing remarkable but totally respectable given the lack of birds around and the conditions.

We left the blinds in the field overnight ready to return for a morning shoot. Feeling blown to shreds, it was back to the cottage for a beverage and food. Brett quickly processed birds while they were still fresh, rinsed and into the chilly bin for transport back to the home freezer. Enjoying a nice single malt I listened to the howling wind outside and quietly wondered to myself if the blinds would be still there in the morning.

We woke to an overcast and eerie morning with mass lenticular clouds forming. **The blinds were still there and I was very quick to get into mine with the wind still blowing like a bastard straight into the back of it and into me.** Sunday was to prove a complete dud. Not a bird was seen or heard for hours except for the ever-present skylarks. The only positive thing about sitting there that morning was an insanely futuristic sunrise. Mountains behind us were lit eerily blue while out to the east all was aglow and on fire. At



My favourite cap, perfect sentiment for a windy weekend on the geese 'Get Down - Cover Up'



DedDux Boyce in full goose mode



Spud and friends - just blowin' in the wind!

one point the cloud formation looked just like a bird in flight while toward the west a massive lenticular cloud was forming the famous nor'west arch. **All in all it was an ominous weather warning.** As daylight arrived it was clear that all birds were hunkered down elsewhere away from the impending bad weather. We headed back to coffee, comfort and a cooked breakfast befitting the weather before packing up and heading home. I had only been away less than two days but it felt like a week. I think that's one of the seriously satisfying aspects of a trip away into the outdoors is that

time travels so much slower and you really feel as though you have taken time out. I'm also incredibly appreciative of the opportunity afforded me via invitations from friends to join their hunts, considering that I only shoot pictures. **The privilege of being in the elements observing these birds is always quietly acknowledged, if even only to myself.** Paul and Andrew are a couple of good buggers with countless hunting stories to recount so it's always an entertaining weekend. Hunting ducks is great fun, but hunting geese is a great adventure. There is

something quite incredible, sitting, watching these magnificent avian specimen sit bolstered by the wind at their chests, heavy kites on an airstream with no strings attached. Those big bodies perfectly balanced by a wingspan of biblical proportions, paddles out behind, necks a-swivel. It's at that moment, while looking through the camera eyepiece in awe, that I cringe a little at the thought of them being shot. **They certainly are the unchallenged boss of waterfowl and a sight to behold in our great southern land.**



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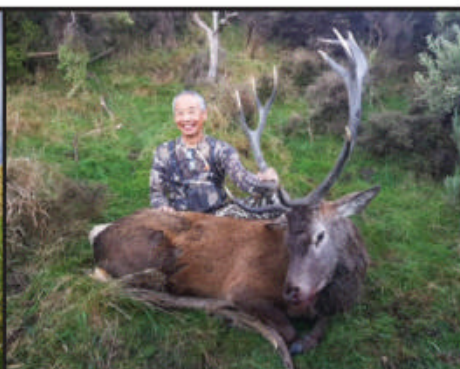


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SEARED GOOSE WITH FERMENTED CARROT SALAD AND CELERIAC PUREE

— WRITTEN BY ~ RICHARD HINGSTON —

Fermented foods and beverages are becoming increasingly popular

You can now find kombucha on tap in bars, not to mention all the fridges in Cafes are full of the stuff. Sourdough bread in restaurants and cafes and more varieties of yoghurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi in your local supermarket

People have been using the natural process of fermentation all over the world for thousands of years. So, chances are you have been eating some form of fermented foods, maybe without even realising it. So many of the everyday staples we take for granted such as wine, tea, cheese bread and chocolate – are all made using different fermentation processes – not to mention beer as this fits into this category as well.

So, what is Fermented food?

In short fermented foods are foods and beverages that have undergone controlled microbial growth and fermentation. Fermentation is an anaerobic process in which microorganisms like yeast and bacteria break down food components (e.g. sugars such as glucose) into other products (e.g. organic acids, gases or alcohol). This gives fermented foods their unique and desirable taste, aroma, texture, and appearance. Fermentation promotes the growth and life cycle of good bacteria to transform the flavour and shelf life of ingredients.

Keep in mind that cooking destroys those good-for-you probiotic bacteria. Try chopping the fermented carrots and adding them salads, or simply as a salad ingredient with other, non-fermented vegetables. If you decide to add them to a cooked dish add them at the last minute after you have turned off the heat.



FERMENTED CARROT SALAD

- 2 teaspoons salt (kosher or other non-iodized salt)
- 750ml water (filtered)
- Carrots, either just plain orange ones or a mixture of baby carrots of different colours, white, yellow, or purple

Method

In a medium bowl mix the filtered water and salt to dissolve.

Wash the carrots and peel, cut to length of the jar you are placing them in.

Cut the carrots lengthways into 1/4ers or if using baby carrots then keep whole.

Place the carrots into the jars, adding any flavourings as you go make sure they are paced in real tight.

Pour the brine over the carrots and make sure it is covering the top of the carrots and there is a space at the top to allow for any gasses or fermentation to overflow.

Cover the jars loosely with lids.

Leave the jars at room temperature for 24 to 48 hours.

After the first 24 hours, remove the lids and check on your ferment. You should start to see some bubbles and it will begin to develop a mild, refreshingly sour smell (like light version of sauerkraut).

Once you see and smell signs that the carrots are actively fermenting, transfer the jars to the door of your refrigerator. This is the warmest part of the fridge but still cooler than room temperature—perfect for your carrots to keep slowly fermenting.

Fermented carrots are ready to eat 1 to 2 weeks after you make them.

Tips

Its important to use filtered water because the chlorine and other chemicals can interfere with the fermentation process

The vegetables will shrink but packed tightly in the jars will ensure they stay immersed in the brine.

Load the carrots into the jar when it is on the side as you will find this easier to fill.

If you plan to store the carrots for longer than a month then store them in the coolest part of the fridge.

You may also add some flavourings such as garlic cloves, dill, thyme, bay leaf, cut ginger and chilli etc.

Sterilise your jars by placing them into a hot oven at 180 deg C for 15 min, remove and allow to cool

Wash the lids in hot soapy water and allow to dry

To finish the salad

Thinly slice a combination of the coloured carrots add sliced red onion, chopped chives toasted sunflower seeds, semi dried cranberries, black sesame seeds and chopped flat leaf parsley, mix with a vinaigrette.



GOOSE BREAST

With a neatly trimmed and skinned breast, lightly oil and season it with salt, cook in a hot pan with a knob of butter and some fresh thyme approx. 3 to 4 minutes on each side turning after 2 min of cooking, rest for another 8 to 10 min in a warm place before slicing against the grain, the cooking time will vary depending on how big the breasts are and your personal cooking degree, but I would recommend a med rare to med.

Alternately for those who use a sous vide then 58 to 62 deg C for 2 hours and seal in a pan with butter and fresh thyme, rest for 5 min then carve against the grain.

CELERIAC PUREE

- 1 brown onion peeled and finely chopped
- 2 clove s garlic peeled and crushed
- 150gm butter unsalted
- 1 celeriac head peeled and rough chopped
- 450ml chicken stock
- 50ml cream

Method

In a pan sauté the onion, garlic, and celeriac in 75 gm butter without colour.

Add the chicken stock and cook and simmer gently until the vegetables are soft and the stock has almost evaporated, try not to get any colour on the vegetables at this stage as you want a white puree to finish.

Place the ingredients into a blender along with the other ½ of the butter and the cream, process until smooth, taste and season accordingly.



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