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September Surprises

IT WAS the third Friday of September. Bill and I had plans to pack into elk camp the next day. After a morning of scrambling around and packing gear, analyzing each piece for both weight and necessity, we decided to go for a short hike. A shakedown cruise to stretch our legs and get my lungs used to the altitude. Maybe we'd hear a few bugles, but we had no serious intentions of chasing them.

"We probably won't see anything, but bring your bow," said Bill. "Just in case."

The trailhead was just off the highway, a few miles past a subdivision of million-dollar McMansions and the city's small ski slope. I threw on a daypack stuffed with rain gear, a few snacks, a bottle of water, and not much else. Bill grabbed his bugle tube and led the way with a long stride that earned him the nickname Death March Bill. I kept up, barely.

An hour so into the hike, Bill swiveled his head around mid-stride to give me a hard time about my flatlander's physique. It was then I caught sight of the tan rear end of a cow elk disappearing over the rise not 50 yards ahead of us. Dropping to one knee, I whistled to catch Bill's attention. When he didn't stop, I whisper-shouted: "Bill!"

After he belly-crawled back towards me I relayed what I had seen. I'm not sure he 100% believed me, but we made a quick plan anyway. The woods were silent. Surely a cow elk wasn't by itself during the peak of rut. We hoped we hadn't bumped a whole herd.

I tucked deep into pine tree, facing the direction the elk had headed and nocked an arrow. Bill set up 15 yards behind me. Once I gave him the nod that I was ready, he let out a short, but convincing bugle. Before Bill could even finish the call, he was immediately cut off by a guttural roar barreling over the rise, so close I could practically feel it.

This bull was fired up, and Bill responded by raking a wrist-thick branch across the tree in front of him, breaking limbs as he sawed it up and down. He swung the branch like a baseball bat,



cracking it against the bark. A move that was answered by another throaty bugle, just to my right.

I had expected the bull to appear in the same opening the cow had disappeared into. Instead, its rack, then its upper body came into view, not 30 yards to my right and just above me. The problem was, I had tucked myself so far into the pine's branches, I had no shot that direction. The bull made his way past me, heading toward the exact spot Bill was hiding.

For whatever reason, the big 6x6 stopped and flipped ends, coming back my way. It stopped next to a small pine sapling that swiftly took the brunt of the bull's aggression. As he raked his rack against the small tree, sending branches and needles flying, I made the only move I could.

Stepping forward, I pivoted to the right, drawing my bow as soon as I cleared the tree. The bull caught my movement, but instead of spooking, he stretched his neck out in the beginning of the bugle. Most of the next few milliseconds are lost forever to an adrenaline-induced blackout, but I do remember trying to settle the shaking pin on the bull's shoulder before I punched—and I do mean punched—the release's trigger. I was so rattled, I'm still amazed the arrow hit the target, though the bull loomed so large it seemed impossible to miss.

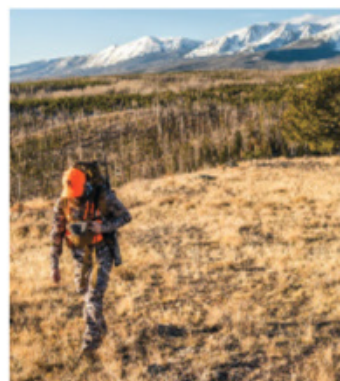
Truth be told, my arrow didn't fly perfectly true, but we did recover the bull

some hours later, after a long tracking job. When I walked up on it, lying dead in a meadow, I was overwhelmed with adrenaline yet again. The size of its body struck me first. How could you kill such an amazing creature with what amounted to a sharp stick? I also soon realized the amount of effort that was required to break down such a large animal. It seemed impossible at the time. Bill showed me the gutless method as we worked quickly against the warm September day. The biggest blessing was the short, downhill pack to the highway just below us, where I could hear traffic passing as we cut the bull up into barely manageable pieces.

It been nearly 20 years since that easy, afternoon hike turned into the hunt of lifetime. The mount of the bull sits in my living room, with the arrow tucked below it. I walk by it every day on the way to my office. I've had a lot of amazing experiences since then. I have killed several more elk and suffered through much worse pack outs. But that was my first. I can still recall nearly every moment, and hope I can remember it just as vividly in another 20 years.

See you around the campfire,

A stylized signature of the author, likely the editor, written in a cursive script.



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OUT THERE

A

A wise man once said: "The fun's over when the shooting stops." After the shot and at the end of the blood trail is when the hard work begins. It's time to honor the animal by carefully quartering it out, placing each piece of hard-earned trophy in a game bag and getting it someplace cool as quickly as possible, lest you lose even an ounce of meat to heat, flies and decay. Only then, once you've packed all the meat, is it time to bring the antlers out of the field.

Despite the pain and suffering, the burning lungs and sore legs, that last load out is always bittersweet. Each step brings you closer to camp, and an end to the hard work that follows once you punch your tag. But that trail home also marks the end of the hunt and, for some, the end of the season. As you drop your pack at the trailhead, and fall to the ground in an effort to regain your breath and recover your strength, take pride in a job well done, but also pause for a moment to recall every step that made the hunt a success. —David Draper



ARGALI CARBON KNIFE

In my mind, knives are one of the coolest tools we get to carry as hunters. I love trying different blades, steels and designs. All of them are unique. They all have different defining attributes, good or bad. The knife that has impressed me the most is the Argali Carbon Knife, a blade I have carried for many seasons now with no intention of ever leaving it at home.

The first time I picked up the knife I was amazed by the weight, a mere 1.8 ounces. I thought the blade wouldn't stand up to the abuse my gear sees season to season, but I was sorely mistaken. The first antelope I field dressed was done with ease, the blade never losing its tactile sharpness.



Throughout the first season the blade saw use on dozens of animals with nothing but a stroke or two across my Work Sharp field sharpener before getting to work. The S35VN stainless steel holds its edge impeccably well and doesn't tarnish even after being laid in snow, caked with mud and blood and just tossed back into my pack for further abuse to come. Even now, after many animals have been cleaned and butchered, the blade requires only a minimal amount of time to sharpen before starting its next job.

CONSERVATION CORNER



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN Elk Foundation continued its long-time support of restoring elk to their historic eastern range by helping the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) expand the state's active elk range.

RMEF provided volunteer assistance as well as \$130,000 for the helicopter service and GPS collars to move 50 elk to Daniel Boone National Forest lands in McCreary County from elsewhere within the state's elk zone where numbers are much higher. To date, RMEF contributed more than \$2.5 million for wildlife management, research and habitat enhancement in the Kentucky elk zone.

"This has been on Kentucky's radar as a priority to benefit its overall elk population for quite some time," said Blake Henning, RMEF chief conservation officer. "The effort creates a new population of elk on publicly-owned land that also provides both future economic boost and hunting opportunity to this part of the state. We greatly appreciate and salute our partners at KDFWR and the Daniel Boone National Forest for making it happen."

KDFWR crews used a helicopter to capture elk and outfit each of them

with a GPS collar. Biologists will now be able to monitor their movement and habitat use as well as simultaneously track and gather information about elk reproduction and survival.

Kentucky's Elk Management Zone includes 16 southeastern counties that span more than four million acres of interspersed woodland, scrub-shrub and field habitats. Elk will now occupy the western-most reaches of McCreary County, which includes about 310,000 acres of the Daniel Boone National Forest, but was mostly devoid of elk before this translocation effort. KDFWR will continue monitoring the new herd in Elk Hunting Unit (EHU) 1 and assess the feasibility for future hunting opportunities.

KDFWR and RMEF's Torstenson Family Endowment provided funding for the effort. RMEF also acquired a grant from Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's Outdoor Fund for additional support. —RMEF Staff



The drop-point design allows for intricate work while removing the hide, but has the strength to easily bust through joints and it just feels comfortable in the hand. For a tool you can't even feel when it's in your pack or on your hip, the Carbon Knife is as tough as they come and is my perfect companion for hunting trips around the world. I can't remember the last time the blade left my hunting kit.—*Joe Ferronato*



BULLET BOARD

BULLET BASICS

Hornady's ELD-X (Extremely Low Drag, Expanding) bullet was the first purpose-built long-range hunting bullet designed from the ground up for accuracy, aerodynamics and terminal performance. It's still one of the best. A streamlined profile and boat tail enable it to flow through air with minimum friction, which translates into minimal wind deflection and maximum downrange energy. Hornady's proprietary Heat Shield tip protects the bullet while in the magazine, resists in-flight erosion for maximum consistency and initiates immediate, dramatic expansion on impact.

TESTING GROUND

The bullet shown was used on a mature mule deer. Shot angle was steeply downhill, from just over 200 yards. The buck was sneaking away; the bullet took it just above the left hip and ranged forward through the vitals.

Hornady 143-gr. 6.5mm ELD-X



FIELD PERFORMANCE

Fired from a 6.5 Creedmoor, the ELD-X exited the muzzle at around 2,700 fps and impacted with an estimated 2,450 fps of velocity. Penetration was excellent, as the bullet was recovered near the front of the chest in the right-side front quarter. The buck traveled 15 to 20 yards and dropped.

STATS

As you can see by the skewed mushroom shape in the picture, the bullet struck the departing buck at a significant angle. Average diameter of the expanded bullet is 0.58 inch, or 2.2 times original diameter. Weight is 103.7 grains, or 72.5 percent of original weight.

NOTES/OBSERVATIONS

Hornady holds the ELD-X to rigorous accuracy standards: bullets must produce 10-shot, 200-yard groups of one-half MOA or less in the test tunnel. As a result, the ELD-X is one of the most accurate hunting bullets on the market. It is quite "soft," enabling it to expand during slow-velocity impacts at very long range.—*Joseph von Benedikt*



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SPECIES: Elk

WHERE: Colorado

RIFLE: Custom 6.5 Creedmoor



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KILL KIT ESSENTIALS

The gutless method of field processing a big-game animal continues to gain popularity, and with good reason. Not only does the gutless method avoid the mess that is often made when gutting an animal, but it initiates quicker heat dispersion in the meat and makes for easier pack outs.

To do the gutless method correctly, you will need a few more items than your traditional pocket knife you have used for years to gut your deer. Hence the need for what is commonly referred to as a kill kit. These kits are simply the items you will need for processing kept together in a single bag for easy access and storage. The contents of a kill kit can vary drastically from hunter to hunter, but the basics remain the same.

Below is a list of kill kit essentials as well as a couple of extra items that, while not 100 percent necessary, can simplify the process. Tailor this list to your needs and enjoy the benefits of a kill kit.—*Colton Heward*



1 SHARP KNIFE/SHARPENER

A sharp knife is stating the extremely obvious, yet many dull blades grace hunters' kill kits every year. The gutless method requires a lot more cutting than gutting an animal does. Despite what the best knife makers in the country say, I am yet to see or use a knife that can make it through an entire elk without needing a touch up on the edge. This necessitates a small knife steel or sharpener of some sort to be thrown into your kit.

If you are using a Havalon or some other form of disposable-blade knife, make sure you have plenty of blades (and Band-Aids).

2 GAME BAGS

For the gutless method you will need four quarter bags and another smaller bag for the loose meat (backstraps, tenderloins, neck roasts, etc.). Game bags have come a long way from their canvas and nylon beginnings with a plethora of good, lightweight, reusable options available today. And for the love of all that is good in this world, stop using trash bags as game bags!

3 RUBBER GLOVES

Call me whatever derogatory name you want but wearing rubber gloves while processing an animal is essential. Besides making clean-up a breeze, they can protect my hands from inevitable nicks and cuts from a sharp knife blade and a resulting infection.

4 OPTIONAL MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

The first miscellaneous item that is nice to have in your kill kit is a lightweight tarp for placing meat on to keep it clean. The other item that is a handy addition is 10-20 feet of paracord to hang quarters when needed. Zip ties are also good to have when you need them.



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The Pack Out

—THE EDITORS

Eberlestock's **Vapor Series** features 2,500-, 5,000- and 7,500-cubic-inch bag sizes that all fit perfectly on the F1 Mainframe, offering maximum versatility for all your hunts. These bags are built to be streamlined and lightweight, with each weighing in under 2.5 pounds. They are made from tough rip-stop nylon, have a polyurethane water-resistant coating, removable Duraflex HD 25mm buckles and YKK Zippers. The bags zip into the F1 Mainframe when the shelf isn't in use and have lengthy straps to help secure your meat and your bag to the frame when it's time for the pack out. **Bags: \$169-\$249, Frame: \$279; eberlestock.com**



You've taken the shot and tracked blood to your trophy, now the work begins. Every hunter should be equipped with high-quality game bags to protect the precious meat from bugs and bacteria. Koola Buck's **Antimicrobial Game Bags** are a cotton/poly blend treated with natural acids from fruits and other bacteria-blockers to stop the growth of meat-spoiling microorganisms. These bags are available in four sizes to accommodate quarters from deer and antelope all the way up to elk and moose—there is even a body bag option to protect a whole deer or antelope carcass. **\$13-\$40; koolabuck.com**



PEAX **Sissy Stix** trekking poles are designed to be rugged and reliable, plus they help take weight off your joints when you need it most. The Backcountry Pro model features upper and middle segments that are built with 3K carbon fiber to keep them lightweight, and the lower section is built from 7075 aerospace aluminum to hold up against abuse in rough terrain. Anodized aluminum QuickLocks hold the three sections together and allow these poles to extend from 24.5 to 54 inches length. Each pole weighs 7.5 ounces. **\$130; peaxequipment.com**



The **Comfort Fit Hunter** may very well be THE pair of all-season hunting boots, and that's taking everything from hunting elk in mountains to upland game on flatlands into consideration. The 9.25-inch nubuck leather uppers provide ankle support, even for packing heavy loads, yet flex comfortably. Gore-Tex membranes provide waterproof, breathable protection and Comfort Fit construction provides more toe-box room and cups heels for a custom-like fit. Vibram's Multigrip 6.0 outsoles have aggressive tread for varied terrain and excel on difficult descents. (Insulated models also available.) **\$310; meindlusa.com**



Whether it is for a midday pick-me-up or for those last few miles at midnight during a rough pack out, everyone needs to replenish precious electrolytes. Primed Nutrition's **Elevate** electrolyte packs are designed specifically for hunters and shooters. The blend of sodium, potassium and magnesium will get you back on your feet and moving towards your destination. Elevate comes in four different flavors to fit your palate and are packaged in single-serving packs for easy use in the field. Available in either 15- or 30-serving quantities. **\$18-\$26; federalpremium.com**

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The Original Hot Pocket

Cornish Pasties Provide A Portable Lunch.



The British pasty is a dishless pie historically filled with a variety of meats such as venison, beef, lamb and seafood, often brimming with rich gravies and fruit. This hand-held meal has been enjoyed by royalty and peasants alike since the 13th century, and in the 17th and 18th centuries, the pasty reached its height in popularity. The working people of Cornwall, a county in England's southwestern tip, adopted these portable pies as their go-to lunch while they worked. Revered among tin and copper miners, the pasty's densely folded crust could keep its contents warm for hours, eliminating the need to resurface for lunchtime. Today, there are many variations of the pasty in Britain, but the Cornish pasty is the most famous recipe of all.

The Cornish pasty is filled with simply seasoned diced beef, thinly sliced potato, onion and swede (rutabaga) wrapped raw and baked in a shortcut pastry packet. And there can be no variation; the Cornish pasty is protected by law. Like champagne is to Champagne, France, the Cornish pasty has earned

This traditional dish from the 13th century, packed with flavors, is a perfect and delicious way to use wild game.

European Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status—only pasties made in Cornwall, following the traditional method and recipe, can legally be called Cornish pasties. Furthermore, long before gaining this worldwide recognition, Cornish mining families were extremely protective of their beloved hand pie. Up there with mining, fishing was also chief among Cornwall's industries, and despite the county's heavy reliance on fishing, the inclusion of seafood in a pasty was unthinkable, wrote Ben Johnson of Historic UK. So much so, that the presence of a Cornish pasty onboard a ship was considered bad luck among the most superstitious of seafarers. Undoubtedly, this rumor was started by the mining community, who wanted to keep the invention to themselves.

Have pie, will travel: As Cornwall's tin mining industry collapsed in the mid-1800s, workers were forced to make their living abroad. Cornish immigrants brought the pasty to areas up and down North, Central and South America, and elsewhere across

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the world: Consider the Hot Pocket, which is basically a bastardized form of the pasty.

In addition to its specific ingredients, the Cornish pasty's iconic side crimp is also essential. Braided thickly, the side crimp offered a miner a handle while he ate, and when done, the crimp was tossed away, which would've become contaminated by his filthy hands. Arsenic was commonly found among tin ore, wrote Johnson, and therefore, miners sacrificed the crimp to avoid poisoning. Another reason for leaving part of the pie uneaten: Those who believed in superstition, as many Cornish did, would say that it had to do with appeasing the mine spirits, called the "Knockers." Cornish wives often marked pasties at one end with her husband's initials, so that if left unfinished, his fellow laborers would know whom the half-eaten pie belonged to. Also, when the crimp was tossed, the Knockers would know which generous miner left part of his pie for them.

Knockers were believed to be gnome-like spirits that caused random mischief in the mines, such as hiding unattended tools and blowing out candles, but they were also regarded as benevolent. Cornish miners generally thought Knockers were a good omen, drawing miners toward rich veins of tin.



A pasty can be filled with a variety of meat, but this moose sirloin used by the author was tender and resembled a flavor close to lean beef.

VENISON PASTIES

INGREDIENTS

½ to ¾ pound venison loin
(or another tender cut)
¼ to ½ pound waxy potato
¼ to ½ pound rutabaga
Small brown onion
Sea salt and pepper to taste
Half a stick of butter
1 egg, beaten

PASTRY INGREDIENTS

450 grams all-purpose flour, plus extra
1¼ teaspoons of sea salt
5 ounces cold butter, cut into small pieces
5 ounces cold lard, cut into small pieces
2/3 cup ice-cold water, plus extra

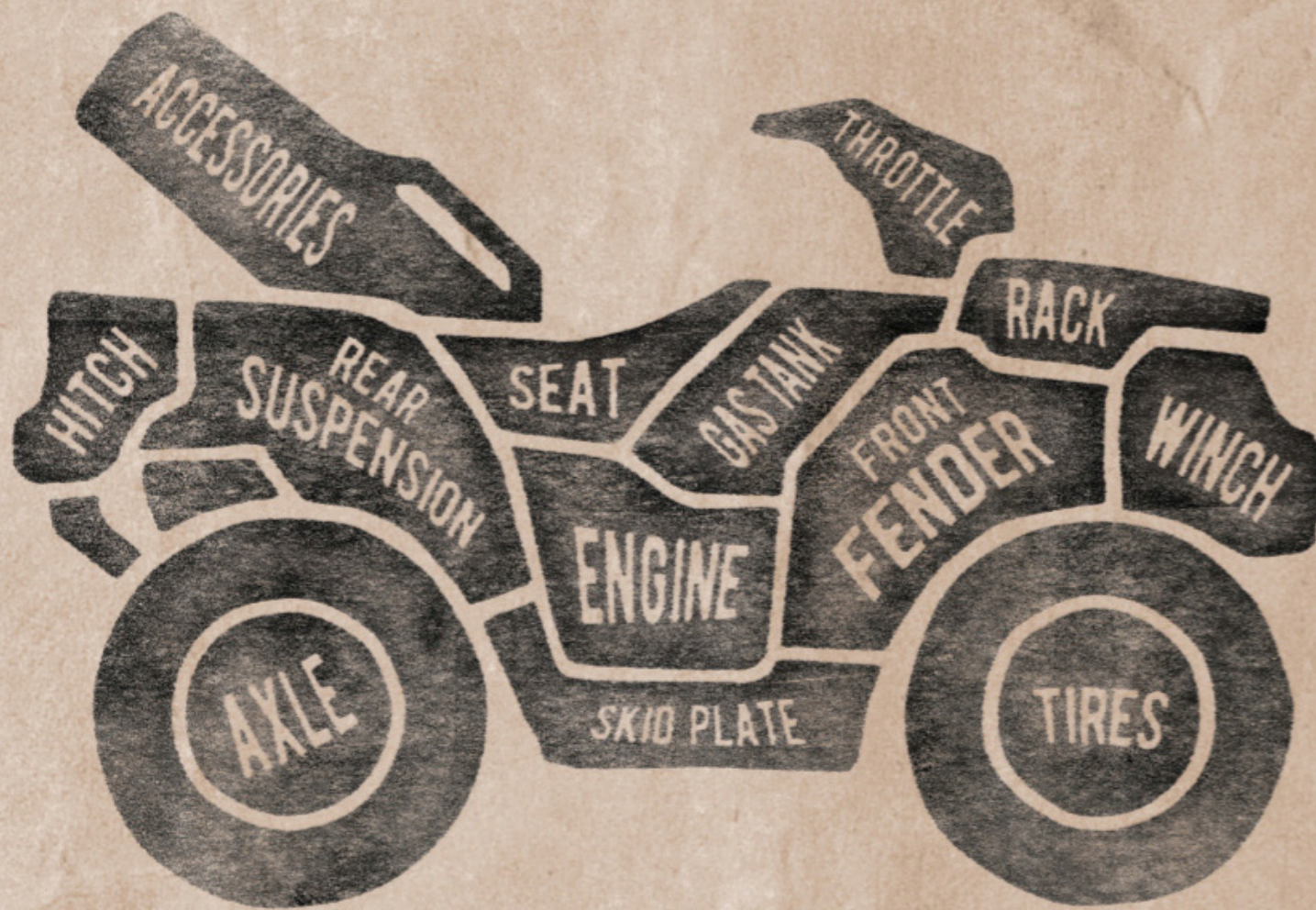
Special equipment: Large food processor
or dough cutter/blender, parchment paper

DIRECTIONS

1. To make the dough, combine flour, sea salt, cold butter and lard in a large food processor. Pulse until the flour looks sandy and butter resembles the size of small peas. Then gradually add the ice-cold water and pulse until dough forms, adding more water if needed; do not overwork the dough. Form dough into a ball, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours; dough can keep several days in the refrigerator. My food processor was too small for the job, so I made the dough the old fashion way: by hand with a dough cutter.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Trim off sinew on venison and finely dice. Peel rutabaga, onion and potato, quarter and slice thinly; place each ingredient into different bowls. Note that peeled potato will turn brown if it sits too long.
3. On a clean, lightly floured surface, roll the dough into a log and cut into 6 equal-size pieces. While keeping remaining dough balls covered in plastic wrap and cold, roll out one dough ball into an 8-inch circle on a lightly floured surface. Use an 8-inch plate to trim crust into perfect circles.
4. Staying away from the edge, layer one side of the circle with onion, potato, rutabaga and meat, seasoning each layer with sea salt. Then add a couple generous pats of butter along with freshly cracked pepper and a scant ¼ teaspoon of flour on top, which will absorb excess moisture and create a little bit of gravy. Moisten the edge with water and fold over the dough to form a half-moon shape; dough might rip if you overfill. Braid to crimp or use a fork. Keep assembled pasties cold and covered while you finish the rest. You may end up with extra filling.
5. Place pies two inches apart on a rimmed cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Lightly brush beaten egg on the pasties and bake in a 350-degree oven for 45-50 minutes on the middle rack until golden. Allow to cool for 10 minutes before serving.

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Later, when the dangers of mining became more of a concern, the knocking sound they supposedly made also warned miners of impending mine collapse. Thus Knockers became a symbol for safety. Some believed they were the spirits of those killed in a mine, and to avoid future peril, Cornish miners took heed to win the Knockers' favor. Offering a part of one's pasty was an appropriate way to do that.

It's clear the pasty is a point of Cornwall's pride, but is this seaside county the place of its origin? It's debatable. In 2006, *The Guardian* reported that the Cornish pasty might have originated in the neighboring county of Devon. Dr. Todd Gray, historian and chairman of the Friends of Devon's Archives, discovered an audit book belonging to the Edgecumbe estate across the Tamar River in Devon dating to 1510. The audit book detailed the financial cost of preparing pasties, probably for a big party, and the main ingredient was venison. Devon's 1510 reference beat Cornwall's oldest recorded pasty recipe, which dates to only 1746.

The Guardian reported that Dr. Todd Gray insisted he was right: "The pasty is a Devonian delicacy and Cornwall stole it. It was also a great joy for him to put one over on Cornwall, one suspects. For those of Cornish origins, however, the discovery has gone down like a cup of cold suet."

Despite the revelation, it's unlikely that anyone or anything could shake the pasty's association with Cornwall. It's too

After the dough is prepped, making a traditional pasty is no chore, and the final product will leave your mouth watering for more.

much a part of the county's identity, one that is known the world over. Cornwall produces 120 million pasties annually, according to the Cornish Pasty Association, and nowadays, not all of them are filled with only beef, potatoes, onions and swedes. Bakers have branched out to include ingredients such as chicken, kale, cheese or curry, and while popular, they'd do well to remember not to call these variations "Cornish pasty"—lest they face public ridicule and a possible fine.

Outside of venison, I've stayed as true to the traditional Cornish pasty recipe as possible. Deer, antelope or elk will work in this recipe; however, I'll mention the moose sirloin that I used was perfect. It was tender and tasted quite close to lean beef. 🍴



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A Sub-Gauge Super Black Eagle

Benelli's new, lightweight offering in the popular SBE3 shotgun series.



Benelli's Super Black Eagle 3 is chambered in a 28-gauge offering that is not only at home in the uplands, but also in the waterfowl blind.

As my friends marched across a small stand of corn stubble, I followed my lab through the marshy bottoms bordering the field, hoping to push any skittish, late-season pheasants their way. As it turns out, they flushed a wild rooster that caught the wind and angled toward me. The shot would be a long one—50 yards or better—but I didn't hesitate. This time of year you take what's given. I pushed the muzzle across the fast-flying bird, made some space between its beak and the barrel and pulled the trigger. As the bird fell stone dead to the ground, my buddies roared their approval from the adjoining field. It was only when I glanced down at the shotgun did I remember I wasn't carry-

ing my usual 12-gauge upland gun. No, this was a downsized version of Benelli's Super Black Eagle 3, chambered in the diminutive, yet surprisingly deadly, 28 gauge.

RISE OF THE 28

Sub-gauge shotguns, and particularly those chambered in 28 gauge, have risen in popularity in recent years. While aficionados will claim the 28 holds some kind of mystical ability to punch above its weight class, the reality of the situation is smaller-gauge autoloading shotguns recoil less. And for modern hunters—whether that's an older upland hunter tired after a lifetime of taking a 12-gauge pounding or one of the new generation of young or female shotgunners—recoil, or lack

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This lightweight, comfortable shotgun allows the shooter to hunt with confidence without fear of recoil.

thereof, is an important part of the argument supporting the movement to lighter-kicking guns.

That lack of recoil, and the fact a sub-gauge shotgun built on an appropriate frame is lighter and easier to carry, creates a more effective hunter, one that is likely to shoot better at the moment of truth. It's not a coincidence the rise of the 28 gauge has matched in lockstep with the exploding popularity of the 6.5 Creedmoor—American hunters want easier-shooting options, whether it's for birds or big game.

I will give those 28-gauge fanatics some credit. The round can be deadly, as evidenced by my miracle shot on that South Dakota pheasant. Much of that can be attributed to recent improvements in shotshells, from new wad designs to buffered bismuth. My long-range rooster fell to a 1 1/16-ounce load of No. 5 lead shot from Fiocchi's fan-favorite Golden Pheasant line. Many ammo manufacturers are now loading 3-inch, 28-gauge offerings, including non-toxic shot, which has given the 28 gauge a growing following among duck hunters gunning greenheads in timber and other tight quarters.

LEGACY OF THE SUPER BLACK EAGLE

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the original Super Black Eagle, which quickly became the shotgun of choice for waterfowlers around the country. The reliability of its inertia-driven action, and ability to accept the then-still-new 3 1/2-inch magnum 12-gauge shotshell, won over thousands of fans in duck blinds and goose fields around the country. Over the years, Benelli has tweaked a few things to make the Super Black Eagle even more reliable and, even more importantly, easier on the shoulder—which the original model was most definitely not.

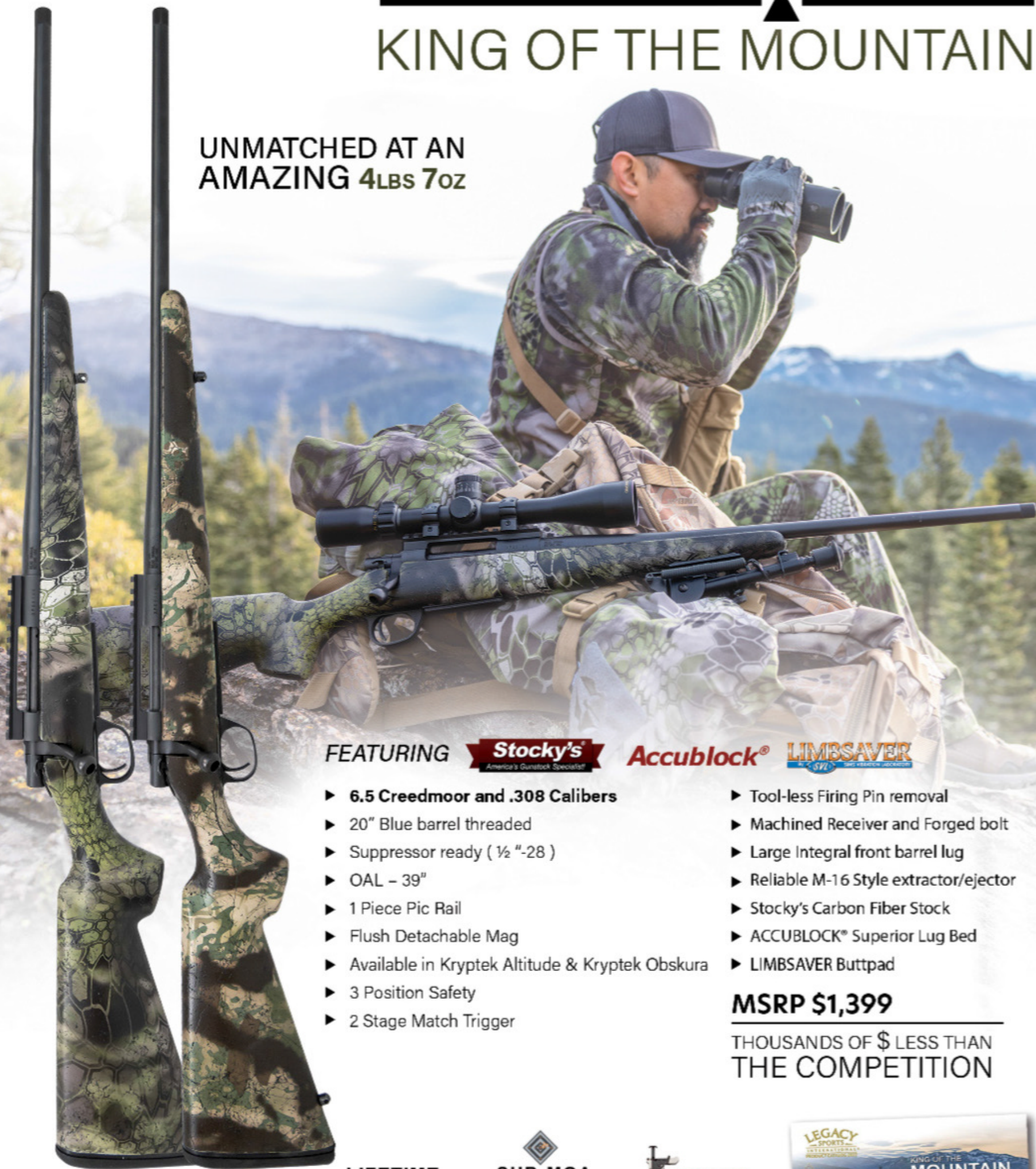
The most recent iteration, the Super Black Eagle 3, was unveiled in 2021 to rave reviews. As they'd been doing for years, Benelli's engineers took a good thing and made it better. The updated Comfortech 3 stock greatly mitigates recoil by absorbing the blow and dispersing the force through multiple chevrons placed along the buttstock. I first tested the original Comfortech stock on a Benelli Ethos years ago, and was so impressed, it became my go-to shotgun for stout pheasant loads. A new Combtech cheek pad also cushions the blow by moving ad-

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ditional recoil down and away from the face.

Of course, in the 28-gauge version, all this recoil-reduction technology is really an afterthought. Yes, it's nice to have, but even without it, the lightweight shotgun wouldn't give shooters much more than an easy push. During my pheasant hunt, and subsequent testing on the range, I barely even registered the SBE3's recoil pulse, but I did immediately notice I was much quicker on my follow-up shots as secondary target acquisition was fast and easy.

As for the action, the inertia-system has been so finely tuned over the years that it would be hard to make it any better. Benelli did make some tweaks a few years back when they first launched the Ethos. Most notably, the company perfected the lock-up system, so the bolt head rotates into battery, reducing the chance of a misfire. Much like the original 12-gauge Super Black Eagle was built to accept 3 1/2-inch shotshells, the new 28-gauge version is designed to accommodate both 2 3/4- and 3-inch rounds. That makes the new sub-gauge SBE3 even more versatile on the range, in the field and in the duck blind.

FAST IN THE FIELD

One thing I was expecting from such a small shotgun, with a heavy bolt-mechanism that slides into the stock to drive the action, was some whippiness or difficulty controlling the lightweight barrel throughout the swing. Surprisingly, that wasn't the case. The SBE3's Crio-treated, 26-inch barrel swung as smooth as a hot knife through butter, sliding across the targets without wavering or jerking. In short, the designers got the balance just right on the sub-gauge frame, giving the shotgun a natural feel in the hands from the very first shot. I'd be interested in how an extra two inches would affect that balance on models fitted with a 28-inch barrel. Note, both barrel lengths do have a carbon-fiber rib which contributes little additional weight to the front of the gun.

Because of the Benelli's light overall weight (just 5 1/2 pounds unloaded), carrying the gun on long days in the field was pleas-



The sub-gauge version of the SBE3 is designed to accept both 2 3/4- and 3-inch rounds, making it a versatile choice for any pursuit.

ant, with none of the sluggish shouldering that I often fight later in the afternoon. The 28-gauge SBE3 was lively, jumping to the shoulder instinctively at the first hint of a pheasant's flush.

DESIGNED FOR DUCKS

Despite all this talk of the Benelli's ability in the uplands, what I'm most excited about is taking it to the duck blind later this fall. And obviously I'm not the only one who sees the 28-gauge as an ideal choice for waterfowling. For the initial launch, Benelli has no plans to offer the sub-gauge SBE3 in a classic, wood-grain stocked version. Instead, we get the choice of black synthetic or three duck-centric camo patterns: Gore Optifade Timber, Realtree Max-5 or Mossy Oak Bottomlands. This obviously isn't intended to be an heirloom upland gun. It's designed to get dirty and do serious work in the swamp.

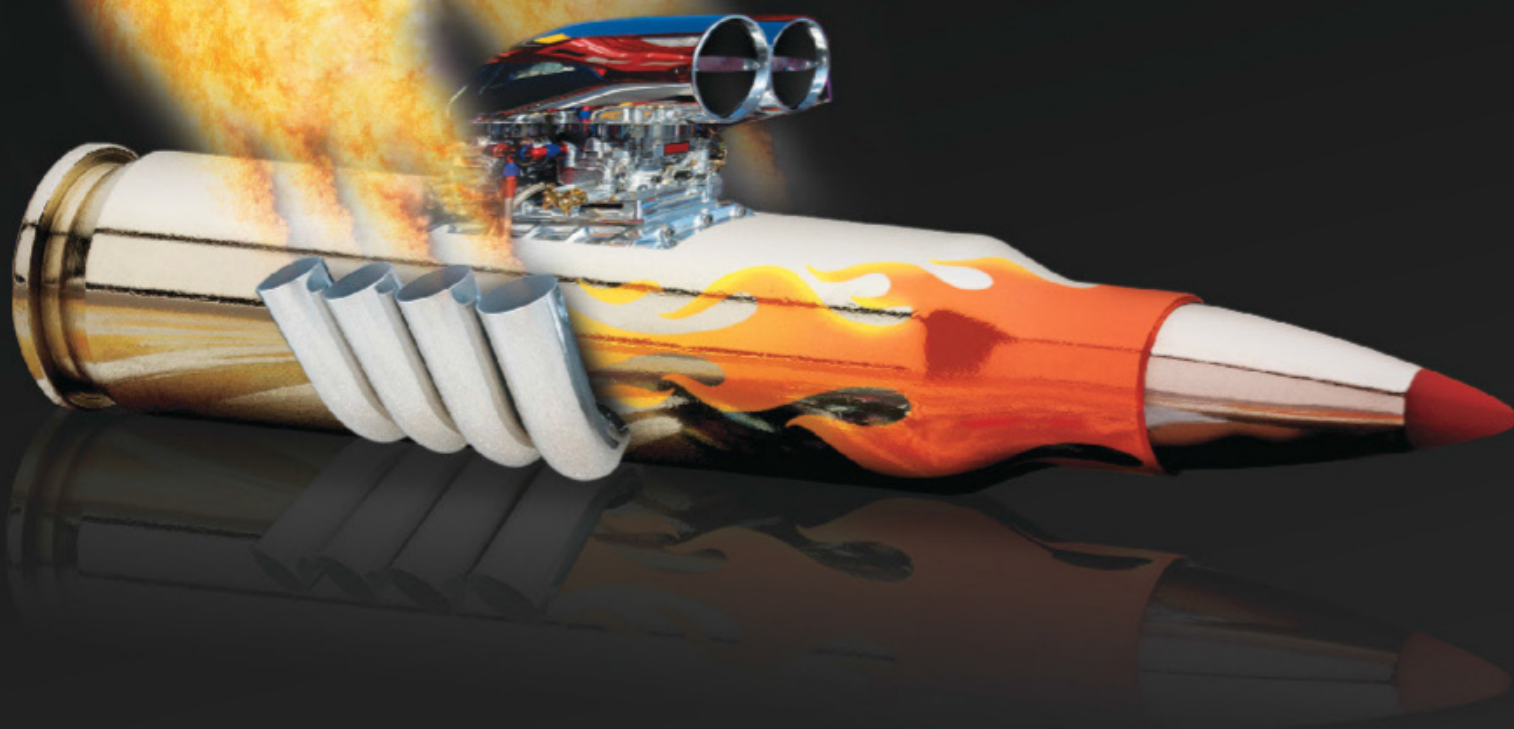
Most of the water I hunt is small: meandering sloughs and tiny creeks, overgrown with willows, Russian olives and cattails. It makes for some fun gunning, with ducks dropping through the surrounding

cottonwoods right into close-range situations—perfect for sub-gauge shotguns. In recent years I've been carrying a 16-gauge and have found bismuth loads to be lead-like in the deadliness. Buffered bismuth loads from Winchester, Federal's non-toxic options and bismuth and TSS loads from small, boutique manufacturers like Boss and Apex have proven more-than-effective on everything from plump, late-season mallards to close-decoying Canadas. I would expect similar performance from the 28-gauge, though I would keep it to headshots on the honkers.

Other field-friendly features include oversized bolt handle and bolt-release button, larger trigger guard to accommodate glove-covered fingers and a bigger, beveled loading port on the bottom of the action. In the polymer hard case, Benelli includes a shim kit for stock adjustment, three standard chokes (cylinder, improved-modified and full) and two extended chokes (improved-cylinder and modified). 



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Battle Of The Fast .30s

Rifle and ammo manufacturers have long fought to create the best performing .30 caliber.



It all started with Ball Cartridge, Caliber .30, Model of 1906. The .30-06 is the most powerful cartridge ever adopted by a major military. Generations of recruits complained about the brutal recoil, but the .30-06 became America's most popular hunting cartridge. Honestly, the great .30-06 is better for elk than deer; its level of power isn't essential for deer-sized game.

We Americans tend to believe "if a little is good, then a lot must be better." It wasn't long before cartridges increased .30-caliber velocities. Charles Newton's .30 Newton was probably first, in 1913. Using a fatter unbelted case (sound familiar?),

it kicked a 172-grain bullet up to 3,000 fps. Even though his rifle companies failed, Newton was ahead of his time.

In 1925, Holland & Holland necked down their .375 H&H to create their "Super .30," the .300 H&H Magnum. It got a major boost in 1935 when American Ben Comfort used it to win the 1,000-yard Wimbledon Cup. Two years later, it was an inaugural chambering in Winchester's Model 70. Accurate and fast, the .300 H&H propels a 180-grain bullet at about 2,900 fps.

Still not essential for most deer hunters, the H&H shot flatter than the .30-06 and delivered more energy on larger game. It became the world-standard "fast .30," but if a little is good, more



In February 2022, Boddington used a .300 Win. Mag. to take a fine ibex in Tajikistan. One 180-grain CX did the job.



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We can split hairs among them, but with good barrels and ammo, all of the many fast .30s are capable of excellent accuracy.

is better, right? American wildcatters created several versions of the “.300 H&H Improved.” Best-known is Roy Weatherby’s .300 Weatherby Magnum, introduced in 1945. Roy Weatherby was a marketing genius, and his timing was perfect. In the post-war era, globetrotting Americans took over international hunting, and guys like Herb Klein and Elgin Gates used the .300 Wby. Mag.

When comparing velocities, loads matter. Weatherby cartridges have long been aided by Norma ammunition. I have trouble getting handloads to equal the velocity of Weatherby factory ammo, but the .300 Wby. Mag. pushes a 180-grain bullet to around 3,200 fps.

This level of power generates recoil. Not everybody needs it but, if you can handle it, fast .30 performance can be handy, not just for larger game, but for hunters going into unfamiliar situations. The beauty of the fast .30s: There isn’t much they can’t handle.

Weatherby’s fire-breathing cartridge has been a sound option for 75 years, and still is. I’ve used one or another since 1980; it’s awesome for elk, mountain hunting and the full run of African plains game. The same can be said of any other fast .30 calibers. However, the .300 Wby. Mag. could be, and perhaps should be, more popular than it is. During Roy Weatherby’s lifetime, the larger manufacturers respected his propriety, and nobody else chambered to Weatherby Magnums or loaded ammo. This has changed, but in the 1950s Weatherby scared the big boys and many developed their own fast magnums. Winchester led the way in 1958, necking down their .458 Win. Mag. case to create the .264 and .338 Win. Mags. Odd choices, because neither diameter was common. They could have used the same case to create a fast .30 and been done.

Wildcatters seized on this, creating the .30-338. This was probably the real start of the .300 battles. The .30-338 stayed a wildcat and, in 1960, Norma introduced the similar .308 Norma Mag. Initially, only .308 Norma cases were available, almost precluding commercial success.

In 1963, Winchester introduced their .300 Win. Mag. This should have killed the .30-338 and .308 Norma, but didn’t quite. The .300 Win. Mag. was intended to replace the .300 H&H, angering its fans. Also, the .300 Win. Mag. was caught up in Winchester’s sea of change from pre- to post-1964. In that year, nothing Winchester could do would please traditionalists.

In order to maximize velocity in a standard-length action, the .300 Win. Mag. uses a 2.620-inch case with a very short neck. Pundits insisted that the .30-338 and .308 Norma (with longer necks) were better. Time has proven the .300 Win. Mag. to be a great cartridge. Time is what it took. Against such adversity, the .300 Win. Mag. started slow, but it caught on. The .30-338, .308 Norma, and .300 H&H passed into history. The .300 Weatherby Mag. remained an alternative, and the .300 Win. Mag. became not just the standard fast .30, but the world’s most popular magnum cartridge.

In the 1990s, John Lazzeroni created dual lines of short and long cartridges, fat-cased, fast and unbelted. As Weatherby did 50 years earlier, “Lazz” scared the majors. Remington led the way in 1998 with their .300 Remington Ultra Mag (RUM), with full-length (2.850-inch) case.

The .300 RUM has found some favor, as has the big Lazzeroni 7.82 (.308) Warbird, among shooters who want absolute maximum .30-caliber performance. But, to be complete, Weatherby’s huge-cased .30-378 (wildcatted in 1959, standard-

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MOMENTUM ELITE



A big Gobi argali, taken with a .300 Wby. Mag. barrel on a Blaser R8. Boddington has too much history with the Weatherby cartridge to abandon it but has at least partially shifted to newer cartridges.

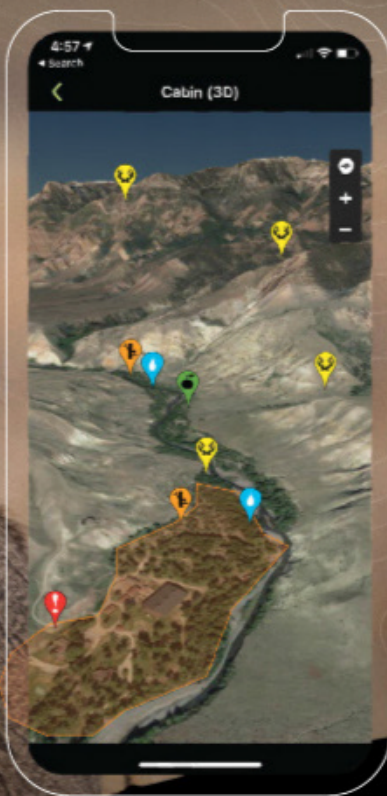
ized in 1996) is the fastest .30. Many find there can be too much of a good thing. Recoil of the fastest .30s is severe.

Remington soon added 7mm, .338 and .375 RUMs, all on the full-length case. In 2001, Winchester introduced the .300 Winchester Short Magnum (WSM) in a fat, unbelted 2.1-inch case, sized to fit short actions. Winchester would soon follow with .270, 7mm and .325 WSM, and Remington countered with their own 7mm and .300 Remington Short Action Ultra Mags

(SAUMs). More would follow, but Winchester either guessed right or got lucky by striking first. The .300 WSM is by far the most popular of the short, fat, unbelted magnums.

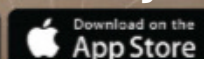
In part, that's because Americans still love their .30 calibers—because they work. The .300 WSM and .300 Win. Mag. are about equal in performance, sending a 180-grain bullet a bit past 3,000 fps. This is not what larger-cased .30s can do, but it does everything anyone needs to do with a fast .30 caliber.

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The .300 WSM does it from a short action and, with the efficiency of its shorter, fatter case, does it while burning about 10 percent less powder. The only drawback to the .300 WSM: Bolt actions weren't designed for cartridges shaped like fireplugs; there will be occasional feeding stutters with many actions.

Recent cartridge design has shifted again. Instead of the search for raw velocity, we are now looking for down-range performance with the new "low-drag" projectiles, which are longer and heavier. This means they cannot be pushed as fast. It also means that they cannot always be housed in existing actions—or in standard-twist barrels. Enter the .300 PRC. Based on the unbelted .375 Ruger case necked down, case length is 2.58 inches, like the .300 Win. Mag. However, specifications give it a longer overall length, so longer bullets can be used without intruding into powder space. It was designed for use in full-length (.375 H&H) actions, essential if you intend to use



Boddington used an AllTerra Arms in .300 PRC to take this Georgia whitetail in 2021. This level of power isn't really needed for deer hunting but there are few things that can't be done with a fast .30.

it with the new .30-caliber bullets up to 250 grains. You'll also probably need a 1:8 twist barrel, rather than the 1:10 twist barrels long-standard for most .30-caliber cartridges.

Again, heavier bullets cannot be pushed as fast, but as Ballistic Coefficients go up, the race isn't always to the swift. Hornady's 212-grain ELD-X hunting load for

the .300 PRC is rated at 2,860 fps; that's fast enough. The .300 PRC isn't yet as popular as the .300 WSM or .300 Win.

Mag. It may never be, but it seems folks are "getting" the concept of the new low-drag bullets, and it's catching on.

Dinosaur that I am, I haven't given up on the .300 Wby. Mag., there's too much history there. However, in recent years I've pretty much shifted to the .300 Win. Mag. Its popularity is unassailable and, with newer powders, the velocity gap between it and the Weatherby has narrowed. The .300 Win. Mag. is the clear winner of the fast .30 battles. However, if I wanted to start over, I'd take a hard look at the .300 PRC. 

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Getting Them Started

Kick a kid's hunting career off right with a rifle that fits.



A kid's first deer rifle should be a significant thing. It's an event. It's a much-anticipated initiation. It can nurture and shape a passion. If chosen tastefully and set up properly, it will be an heirloom.

A first big-game rifle should be comfortable and capable, too.

When it comes time to pick your young'un a shiny new hunting rifle, several considerations should come into play: Quality, fit, cartridge and optics.

It's important to recognize that if your child is starting very young, it's best to wait until they've grown a bit to give them their own gun, so it will fit them for the long haul. Meanwhile, temporarily set them up with a suitable hunting tool of the right size and with the right features.

Let's unpack each characteristic, starting with fit.

A youth or beginning hunters' first big-game rifle should be of good quality, should fit, should be chambered in a capable cartridge and should be properly set up.

SIZE MATTERS

Many new hunters struggle to shoot effectively because the hunting rifle they've been loaned or given doesn't fit them. Stocks are often too long, rifles are too heavy and most common of all, eye relief with the scope is too long.

If a trigger is hard to reach and the bolt so far out it's hard to lift and cycle, it's frustrating to a kid. If the rifle is so heavy a beginner must heave it to his or her shoulder, it's daunting. And if all they can see through the scope is a hazy tunnel, finding the target is a near-impossible task.

As a side note, if your child is left-handed and/or powerfully left-eye dominant, start them with a left-handed rifle. Such



rifles are hard to find, but later in life, your kid will thank you.

Compact youth rifles make great family guns that can be passed down to little brothers and sisters as they come of age. Several companies make them, including Browning, Ruger, Winchester and others.

I've started most of my kids with the same Browning X-Bolt Micro Composite. It weighs 6.3 pounds, has a 20-inch barrel, and is just 38.5 inches long. Length of pull is 13 inches, and can be managed by most kids. It's not a budget rifle on purpose: instilling an appreciation for nice hunting tools in my kids is important to me.

When a kid outgrows a youth model, it's time to get them their own hunting rifle. Something that will last their lifetime—which brings us to quality.

QUALITY COUNTS

In my early teens, I requested and received a certain side-by-side 12-gauge shotgun for Christmas. It was cheaply built. I still have that gun, and always will because it was my first shotgun, but I don't cherish or respect it. Later in life, I realized that a kid's first .22, first shotgun and first big-game rifle should always be of high quality. Good guns will provide a lifetime of use and pleasure and become heirlooms.

Young hunters serious about their sport deserve better than budget-grade tools. Audrey von Benedikt made a perfect one-shot kill on this buck from 448 yards with a Springfield Waypoint in 6mm Creedmoor.

If you, the mentor, are a serious hunter, and if your son or daughter has the fire in the belly for hunting, buy or help them buy a quality rifle. If they're just dabbling, and you're not sure whether a passion for hunting will take root, they're not ready for their own rifle yet.

A CHOICE CARTRIDGE

Young or new adult hunters should start with mild but capable hunting rounds. It takes years of practice to master the discipline and technique necessary to shoot heavy-recoiling cartridges.

That doesn't mean kids should shoot cartridges that are underpowered for the task. It's easy to inadvertently set a kid up for failure in an effort to give them a pleasant shooting experience with a mild cartridge.

A close friend recently relayed a conversation he had with a Texas blood-tracking-dog owner. The handler gets called out on hundreds of deer every fall, and his dogs track down otherwise-unfindable wounded bucks. He's a student of cartridge performance because he keeps track of what hunters use. He stated that historically, most "lost" deer were



Ruger makes several compact hunting rifles, including this lovely blued-steel-and-walnut Compact Hawkeye.



Compact rifles such as this Browning X-Bolt Micro Composite are perfect starter rifles for kids.

shot with .243s. The past several years, it's been 6.5 Creedmoor by an exceptionally large margin.

Does that mean the 6.5 Creedmoor is an incapable killer? Not at all. Rather, it indicates that beginning hunters and recoil-sensitive shooters are choosing it. Those deer are being poorly hit because of inexperience or flinching. A light-recoiling cartridge does not always result in good shot placement. Don't go overboard with your young or new hunter, but get them a cartridge with a bit of wallop. A deer hit through the edge of the vitals with an authoritative cartridge won't go as far as when hit with a mild cartridge.

Let's talk specifics: Although thousands of deer are taken every year with .22 centerfires, in my opinion, big-game cartridges start with the .243 Win. and 6mm Creedmoor, and even those can be marginal. Better are the .25-06 Rem., 6.5 Creedmoor and other cartridges in their class.

If elk are on the menu, a step up into .270 or 7mm-caliber rounds is worthwhile. Traditional easy-shooting options are the .270 Win. and 7mm-08 Rem. Top-notch choices that make the most of modern advancements in aerodynamic bullets are the 6.8 Western (also a .270 caliber) and .280 Ackley Improved. Both perform like a 7mm Rem. Mag., but recoil less than a .30-06.

SETTING IT ALL UP

A quality rifle deserves a quality scope. An old adage is to spend as much on your optic as you do on your rifle. I don't think that's as applicable now as it once was, because good rifles can cost upwards of \$1,000, yet a great scope can be had for around \$500. My top pick for a combination of optical quality, cutting-edge features and



Young or beginning adult hunters challenged with left-eye dominance should be set up with quality left-handed rifles. They'll experience less frustration at the range and be more effective in the field.

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When Audrey and William grew out of the family X-Bolt Micro, each earned a full-size big-game rifle tailored to their tastes.

versatile capability is Leupold's VX-3HD in 3.5-10x40 with CDS-ZL dial-up turrets.

Whatever scope you select, mount it in quality rings, on sturdy bases. For an unbeatable combination of strength, manufacturing quality, and affordability, pick Talley Lightweight Alloy one-piece scope mount/rings, which generally sell for under \$50. That's less than you'll spend buying most cheap bases and rings separately, yet Talley provides mountaineering-level quality.

For a sling, pick something practical. The Cobra-type padded slings so popular 30 years ago don't qualify. They're bulky, inflexible and awkward in field positions. Simple nylon webbing straps—with a rubbery non-slip inner surface that helps keep the sling in place on your shoulder—are comfortable, light and practical. Blackhawk (known for quality tactical gear) makes one called the Mountain Sling that's just about perfect, and costs 22 bucks.

Aside from a scope and sling, avoid tricking out a hunting rifle for a beginner. Too much stuff just adds complication. Strap-on cheek rests, ammo sleeves and bolt-on bipods just add weight and bulk.

Keep a beginning hunters' rifle light, well balanced and comfortable to set them up for success and a lifetime of practical, effective use. ⓘ




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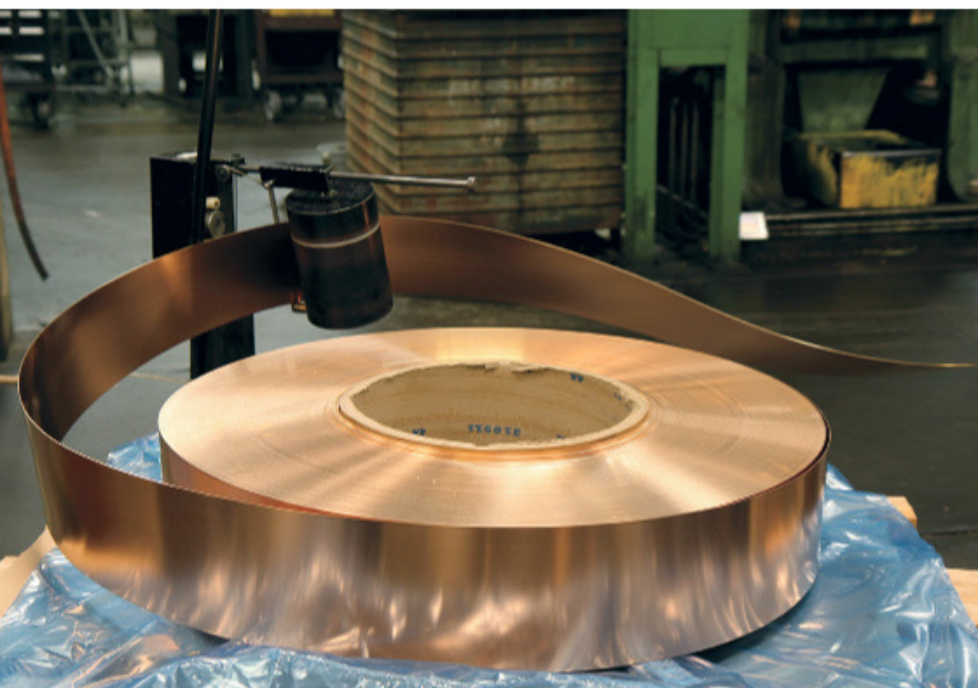
I bought a used rifle off a preacher last winter, and I probably should've paid more for it. It was a Marlin 336, JM stamped, in .35 Remington. I didn't particularly need another deer rifle, and had I even been looking for a lever-action, I would've preferred a .30-30. But that's not the gun the preacher had for sale. Maybe I should've felt guilty about the deal, but he named the price, so I brought the gun home with the full intention of hunting with it in the fall.

I replaced the old see-through rings and scope with a new Weaver base, rings and a Maven RS.2 2-10x38 scope. It looks good; modernized with classic lines. Sometimes I take the rifle out of the safe, just to shoulder it, look at it and cycle the action—but I've yet to fire a shot through it

The Core-Lokt has long been a favorite of deer hunters. With this newest iteration, a green ballistic tip improves ballistic performance.

because I've yet to see a single round of .35 Remington ammunition for sale since I bought it.

I'll lay odds you've had a difficult time finding ammunition of some sort over the past couple years, too. While rimfire ammo, and the high-volume centerfire range calibers like 9mm and .223, have been back on shelves in much of the country for a few months now, it's mid-May as I write this, and a lot of hunters are still seeing a dearth of their favorite deer-rifle rounds available for sale.



After an untimely end, the Remington factory, now under new ownership and stacked with fresh raw materials, is operating at full capacity.



Centerfire and rimfire ammunition, as well as Remington shotshells, are being made around the clock at the Lonoke, Arkansas factory.

There is bright news on the horizon, though, which I can tell you firsthand because I toured the revamped Remington Ammunition factory in Lonoke, Arkansas back in March, where I not only saw ammunition being made by the thousands, but also had my eyes opened as to why certain calibers might be easier to find than others.

Although the factory has been in operation since 1969, the Remington brand has suffered hardships in recent years due heavily to poor leadership at the head of the investment group that, for a while, owned them. The Remington Outdoor Company filed for bankruptcy in July of 2020—the second time in two years—and auctioned off its assets, including Marlin firearms. The ammunition business was purchased by Vista Outdoor, the same group that owns brands like Federal, CCI and Speer. Ruger bought Marlin, and Remington firearms are still being produced by RemArms in the Ilion, New York facility.

If there was any initial concern at the ammo plant over being bought out by a competitor, it went away quickly when Vista invested heavily in the plant with new tooling, raw materials and some 500 new employees. Now, the factory is running 24/7, and there's even a new facility dedicated to making the products in highest demand (they were cranking out 9mm FMJ when I was there). But rimfire and centerfire-rifle ammunition and shotgun shells are all made from scratch right there in Lonoke, too.

A CLASSIC DEER KILLER

Core-Lokt bullets begin life as raw materials: Spools of lead wire and rolls of copper are formed to approximately the correct size before being mated together into a jacketed soft-point bullet. Brass is formed here, too, and eventually it all comes together with powder and primers (also made on site) to become a cartridge. They're checked for quality control and boxed up for sale.

Thirty years ago this fall, I was sitting against a big swamp oak in the river bottoms of Ballard County, Kentucky next to my dad, and that's where I shot my first buck: A nice 7-pointer that fell in his tracks at 70 or so yards to a single 100-grain Core-Lokt bullet out of a .243. After 82 years in production, that bullet is still preferred by some of the best whitetail hunters I know. There's nothing fancy about it, particularly given the other bullets on the market today. It's simply a jacketed soft point with a deep lead core that expands rapidly but still penetrates well from run-of-the-mill calibers like .270, .308 and .30-06.



CORE-LOKT TIPPED

In addition to restocking the classics, Remington has several new products available and for whitetail hunters. None is more exciting than the Core-Lokt Tipped which replaces the traditional lead soft-point bullet with a polymer-tipped version—green polymer, of course. The polymer tip gives the bullet a higher ballistic coefficient for better long-range accuracy, while retaining the original Core-Lokt's jacket for the expansion we expect.

Maybe you don't plan to shoot a whitetail at 412 yards (don't), but at 100 yards, the 165-grain Core-Lokt Tipped shoots better out of my .30-06 than did the classic soft point. I haven't tried these on a deer yet, but I expect good things. They cost about 30 percent more per box than standard Core-Lokts, and are available in .243, 6.5 Creedmoor, .270, .280 Rem., 7mm Rem. Mag., .30-06, .300 Win. Mag., .308 and .300 WSM. — W.B.

With a flat base and that soft lead point, the Core-Lokt is not especially suited for long-range accuracy, at least compared to the competition, but nobody who hunts with them gives a flying damn about that. They use them because they're hellfire on whitetails at whitetail ranges, reliable, economical and easy to find (at least when the State of the Union is normal) in about whatever caliber you need.

THE HUNT FOR HUNTING AMMO

Conventional wisdom has long held that buying a new rifle in a classic caliber is always safer than buying it in the hot new thing because, if for some reason you find yourself missing ammo on a hunt in BFE, you can likely run to the hardware store and get some stand-in stuff if you're shooting .30-06, .270 or something equally as common.

Ironically, though, the most popular deer-rifle calibers have been some of the most difficult to find during this most recent ammo shortage. Still, if your primary deer gun is as boring as my old .30-06, know that relief is coming. As I learned on the Remington tour, centerfire-rifle cartridges are mostly all made on the



For whitetail hunters, the new Core-Lokt tipped should only increase the popularity of this traditional big-game bullet.

same machines, just like at your home reloading bench. Switching calibers means switching tooling and dies. Although, on a production scale, a full change of tooling might require a full shift of work or more, during which time nothing is coming off the line. That's a move that plant managers don't take lightly, and since calibers like .270, .30-06 and .30-30 must have production runs in the millions to meet demand, rest assured they're making a lot of it. All three calibers were pouring off the line when I was there.

What about the .35 Remington I need to feed the old lever gun I bought off the preacher? They'll get around to

making that one, too, and probably with a Core-Lokt, since it's a safe bet that .35 Remington shooters use that bullet as much as any. But with an annual demand that's only in the hundreds of thousands of rounds, satisfying the need for the more popular calibers is the priority.

What does that mean ahead of deer season? Well, I'll keep watching the shelves for some .35—and take comfort knowing I can always use my .30-06 if I need it. 🍷



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CLOSING THE DISTANCE

COLTON HEWARD

HOW TO HANG YOUR TAG ON A DOMINANT HERD BULL.

GROWING UP, one of the things I looked forward to most about Christmas morning was the new Primos “Big Bulls” DVD that Santa Claus always conveniently left in my stocking. They made it look so easy, sweet-talking screaming bull after screaming bull into range after just a few short mews from one of the many elk calls the company made. The first time I ventured into the elk woods my skewed sense of reality in terms of elk hunting came to a screeching halt. In fact, the lack of elk encounters and unpunched bull tags pushed me to pursue my passion for hunting mature mule deer across much of the West for most of my adult life. However, my decade-long tenure

as a hunting guide in the heart of some of the best elk hunting in the world has opened my eyes to the very real addiction of archery hunting these love-struck giants.

Every now and again a big bull will read the script from the scenes we see on TV with a little coercion from your trusty cow call. However, it is generally the satellite bulls that are the most susceptible to the classic cow-calling sequences. If it is the boss herd bull that you want, punching your tag can require some out-of-the-box tactics to narrow that gap between you and the king of the hill. Below is a handful of tips that have resulted in the demise of many a big bull for hunters I’ve taken into the woods.

B

BEAT THE BUSHES

Flashes of ivory-tipped tines tantalized our imagination as the impressive bull dogged a cow in the vibrant-yellow aspen grove 150 yards across the grassy meadow. Despite my sleaziest, hot-cow calling efforts, the bull would not leave its estrus-stricken harem. With no cover between us and the bull, the only option was to get desperate. While my hunter stayed tucked on the edge of the clearing, I slipped 50 yards back into the pocket of aspens to create some chaos. I found a baseball-bat-sized limb and proceeded to terrorize a tree with everything I had. A guttural bugle tore across the meadow as the now extremely agitated bull made its way into the arena looking for a fight. One other bout with the poor tree and I heard the whisper of the string followed immediately by the unmistakable *THWACK!* of my client's arrow punching through the bull. I rushed down to my hunter just in time to see the bull tip over in a cloud of dust not 100 yards from where we were standing. Wide-eyed, we just stood there and shook our heads, soaking in the incredible events that had just transpired.

When a bull rakes a tree it is asserting its dominance. Oftentimes, a herd bull that is hung up will not allow its rank to be tested and will come looking for a tussle when it hears the commotion of another bull in its domain. There is no secret to this technique other than grab a limb and go to town impersonating a bull raking a tree as best you can.



When raking, make an extra effort to be loud. Use a large limb to break branches and simulate a bull's antlers on the tree.

GO SILENT

One of the most common mistakes that archery elk hunters make is over-calling. There are times when you can catch a bull in the mood and get away with harping on it, but more often than not, less is more in terms of calling. Also, keep in mind that an elk's ability to pinpoint your location based on your vocalizations is uncanny. If you call at a bull and it is within two or three hundred yards of your position, it could probably walk right to the tree you are standing under without another call being made. Going silent is the perfect way to take advantage of this ability.

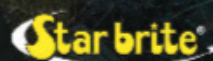
Biologically speaking, a herd bull bugles to let cows know where it is, and the cows typically go to it. This is why it is so common for a bull to respond to your calls, but never close the distance. Once you get it fired up with a few of your dirtiest cow mews, go silent. If the herd bull is interested, it will continue to bugle in hopes that its wayward lover will come looking for it. When the cow ghosts it, that bull will oftentimes let ego get the best of him and come looking for her at the last known location. Play it right, and you'll be there waiting for a shot.

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Over-calling is a common mistake. Use your calls to entice a bull, but then go silent and wait for him to come.

CHALLENGING DOMINANCE

Ripping a challenge bugle to entice a bull to come investigate sounds easy enough, but there is some method to the madness. The key to making this tactic work is to get close. Get within a hundred yards or less of the herd bull and let out the gnarliest challenge bugle you can muster. Once you do, get ready. A challenge bugle inside close quarters incites a fight or flight reaction. In the peak of the rut, hormones are raging and more often than not, that bull will come in crazy-eyed and looking to kick some tail.

There are two big mistakes hunters make when bugling. The first is busting the herd when attempting to get in close. Obviously, keep the wind in your face, but keep in mind that it's the straggling cows that will bust the gig. Approach the herd at a snail's pace and with your head on a swivel. The second mistake is not getting close enough before letting out your bugle. In areas with a high bull-to-cow ratio, that herd bull

is running itself ragged trying to keep its harem of cows. If you let out a dominant bugle before getting inside its comfort zone, there is a good chance that bull will round up its cows and get as far away from that bugle as possible.

SNEAKING IN

After trailing the herd bull and its harem up one side of the mountain and down the other for several hours, I was ready to give up. I had thrown everything but the kitchen sink at it with absolutely zero interest paid to me from the love-stricken bull. Finally, as the shadows shortened and the temps began to rise, the bull made a fatal mistake. It bedded on the backside of a ridge in a sparse pocket of aspens with its dozen or so cows bedded below it. My archery mule deer hunting instincts kicked in and a plan to slip within archery range of the sleeping bull was formulated. My client gave me a funny look when I told him what I was



When waiting on a bull to come in, make sure to set yourself in an open lane that is hidden but open enough for you to take a clear, ethical shot.



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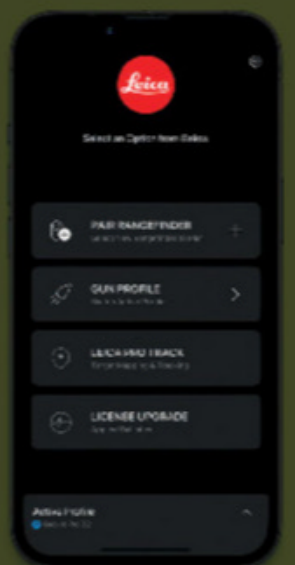
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scheming, but skeptically agreed to give it a go. Fast forward an hour or so and we were situated 27 yards above the oblivious bull. We were so close we could hear its labored panting from the September heat. At one point, the bull even put its head on the ground and passed out for close to an hour before one of its cows finally stood up for a mid-day snack. The bull followed suit. A second later, a perfectly placed arrow sliced through both lungs and out the other side. I will never forget my client's response, "I can't believe that just worked!"

This is not a tactic that works in every situation, but it is one that you should have in your bag of tricks and not be afraid to pull out when the opportunity arises. Keep the wind at your face, approach with a high degree of caution, and make the most of the opportunity that is given. My one tidbit of caution: don't push it. If the bull is bedded in the middle of its cows or in a thicket that will be difficult to squeeze an arrow through, just wait and try again in the afternoon. Everybody dreams of a hard-charging bull coming into the calls, but the reality is this is often not the case. Whether you sneak in on the unsuspecting bull or call it in, the result of a dead bull and a freezer full of meat is the same.

WAIT AT THE WATER

This tactic seems blatantly obvious, but hear me out. Personally, I struggle sitting over water or in a blind for any amount of time. My A.D.D. tends to get the best of me and I have to get up and move. However, I have seen many bulls killed by spending the midday lull tucked under the cool shade of a pine bough within striking distance of an active wallow or pond. The easy thing to do is head back to camp, take a siesta, and enjoy a nice lunch from the comforts of your reclining camp chair. If you need the mental break then fine, go do that. But during the heat of September, elk will regularly get up in the middle of the day and slurp up a refreshing belly full of water. Take advantage of this biological need by spending your afternoons relaxed in the shade of nearby tree munching on your favorite mountain snacks. Don't even be afraid to lay down and take a nap, chances are you could use a little shuteye after a long morning. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by staying in the field. Waking up to the splashing sound of a bull wallowing below you is sure to spike the adrenaline meter.

No two bulls are the same, and what works on one may not work on the next. It is this fact that necessitates having a



In the heat of the day, options are limited. Either sneak in close or sit a water hole. Many bulls will get up in search of a midday drink.

Having a bull within bow range can make your nerves go crazy. Slow your breathing and go through your shot process.



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bag full of tricks to close the gap on a mature herd bull. Like most things, elk hunting has a steep learning curve to it. You are going to mess up, blow opportunities and foil even the best-laid plans. But, when it all comes together and you send a broadhead through the airbags

of a fired-up bull, there will be few hunting experiences that can top it.

The sights and sounds of the elk rut in September is one of the most incredible phenomena that Mother Nature stirs up each year. It is no wonder that thousands of eager hunters gear up and trek into the

elk woods with hopes of witnessing a screaming bull. Keep a few, or all, of these tactics in your skill-set repertoire and employ them next time that elusive herd bull hangs up just out of range. You never know what might flip its trigger and bring it within range of your arrow. 🏆



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THREE HUNTERS. ONE NEW RIFLE FROM CZ-USA.

IT WOULD BE an understatement to say CZ firearms have a loyal following. Rabid might be overdoing it, only slightly, but fans of the Czech-based gun maker are definitely passionate about their rifles, pistols and shotguns. And it's worth noting that fervor spans the globe, as Česká zbrojovka is truly an international gun brand, with sales channels in nearly 100 countries around the world.

So, when CZ execs unveiled their newest bolt-action rifle, the 600 series, to an international press corps huddled in a hotel conference room in the city of Olomouc, Czech Republic, the multi-lingual chatter among the group wasn't hard to translate. All of us in the room registered excitement, and no small bit of skepticism. With a truly modern design and several unique features, the CZ 600 was not only a departure from the traditional, proven design of CZ's popular Brno Mauser-based

bolt-action rifles, the new 600 was also going to replace all the centerfire rifles in the CZ catalog.

Though incredibly bold, the move was not without warrant. The old rifles were expensive to make, having not caught up with modern manufacturing methods. Today's consumers have moved on as well, with many preferring newer stylings and, just as importantly, a good value. The new CZ 600 offers both, with some very unique features offered at a very competitive pricing (\$750-\$1,200, depending on model).

The staff of *Petersen's Hunting* were among the first Americans to handle the new CZ 600. Since it was first announced nearly a year ago, we've had it on the range and in the field. And while the 600 is a departure from the classic CZ rifles we know and love, the new series retains the accuracy and performance that built CZ's worldwide following of hunters and shooters.



CONTINENTAL KEILER KILLER

HUNTER: KEVIN STEELE—PUBLISHER

Combining stylish flair with 21st century manufacturing and feature improvements, CZ's new, Model 600 Lux bolt-action, centerfire rifle is the most traditional of the four variants. It will interest those hunters who appreciate blued steel and quality walnut. My rifle was chambered in our most versatile of big-game cartridges, the .30-06, and topped with the excellent Predator 4 scope from Steiner.

Built in the traditional Continental style with its Germanic "*schweinrucken*" or hump-back butt with a sharp, gracefully angled cheekpiece and a flowing Schnabel forend, the 600 Lux sports a short twenty-inch barrel that is popular in driven-game circles. I decided to find out if this rifle could hunt in the pursuit of a species for which this rifle's heritage shined, *Wildschwein*,

or more specifically a *keiler* or wild boar. After a quick call to my friend and neighbor Jaime Smith, who operates Wild Country Hunt Club, we were off to the races.

Shortly after first light, Smith and I parked the truck and carefully stalked down the two-track that bordered the barley fields. We had not gone more than 100 yards when I spotted the top of a big gray hog off to our left about 300 yards away. Raising my new Leica Geo Pro Compact RF binos to my eyes it was easy to confirm that the hog was a lone boar that deserved our attention. The wind was in our favor. Making use of a slight rise in the terrain for concealment, we slowly closed the distance.

When we got to within 160 yards, I planted my standing sticks. With the forend of the rifle in the stick's V, I pushed down the safety button and waited for the hog to turn.

At last, the boar presented me with a quartering-away shot. I lined up on what I believed to be the back of his shoulder and sent the Norma 150-grain Eco Strike bullet on its way.

The rifle's report was followed by a solid "*thwaaak!*" Rather than dropping at the shot, the boar turned on his afterburners and raced to cover.

Smith went back for the truck as I slowly walked the 300 yards to the base of the hill where the boar had retreated into a thicket of chemise and California buckwheat. This was going to be tricky. I know from experience that a wounded boar is nothing to mess with, but we didn't have an option.

Smith drove up and dismounted with his rifle. We have done this many times before and made a good team. He went left and I went right.





A wild boar that was taken by Kevin Steele with the CZ 600 Lux. The traditionally styled rifle was a perfect choice for the classic hog hunt.



“Do you hear that?” I asked.

The boar’s labored breathing was audible from 30 yards away. Ragged, wheezing exhalations were followed by heavy snorts as the boar inhaled. Our situation was getting worse, not better.

I moved far right, attempting to get some height and visibility over the pig’s position. Smith somehow managed to scramble atop a large boulder and had a better view than I did. Suddenly he shouted the boar was moving in my direction, but that he didn’t have a shot.

As would be expected, that little tidbit of intel amped up my heart rate.

I could hear the boar moving, but I could not see him. As I climbed higher for a better view Smith’s rifle roared. Shouldering my rifle, I caught a glimpse of a shadow slipping through the chemise, but before I could positively ID the boar, Smith fired again.

“He’s down!” he shouted.

Suddenly I felt a whole lot better.

We discovered that my first shot, perfectly aligned with the heart, had struck too far forward. The boar had plenty of fight left in him.

Why did my shot not hit where I thought it would? This can happen often on quartering animals, especially at distance. The angle of your intended target is considerably more acute than it appears in your optic. This is one reason it is always best to wait for a broadside shot when possible.

All’s well that ends well. The boar topped out at the 200-pound mark and his “*wapens*” on top and bottom were big enough to do some real damage had it come to hand-to-hand. The CZ Model 600 Lux performed well, and I appreciated its short barrel in the thick cover. I give it my seal of approval.

ALPHA IN THE VINEYARD

HUNTER: JOE FERRONATO—MANAGING EDITOR

I pulled into Steinbeck Vineyards to a warm welcome from Manager and Guide Ryan Newkirk, *Petersen's Hunting* publisher Kevin Steele, and Jason Morton from CZ-USA. I tossed my gear into our quarters for the next few days and immediately headed to the range to check zero on our rifles. Upon arriving at the range, Morton unveiled the newest iteration of hunting rifles from the legacy company, the CZ 600 Alpha.

At first glance, it looked to be following suit of the modern synthetic-stocked rifles. The fiber-reinforced stock is graced by serrated soft-touch inserts in key areas for a superior feel and a solid handle on the gun. On the bench, the Alpha repeatedly put the 150-grain .30-06 Norma EcoStrike on target with lethal accuracy through the cold hammer-forged barrel—a good outcome to start the hunt with confidence.



On the bench, the CZ 600 Alpha performed flawlessly. It consistently place sub-MOA groups on target at both 100 and 200 yards.



Jason Morton of CZ-USA with an amazing blacktail buck that he took in the vineyard with the Alpha.

The bolt throw was quick and smooth; a 60-degree throw with an oversized polymer bolt knob made for simple cycling. The single-stage patented adjustable trigger broke cleanly and could be adjusted easily with an Allen key. Simply turn the screw to one of four set positions to adjust the trigger from 1.3 to 3 pounds.

After checking zero, it was time to taste Steinbeck's famed wines before retiring for the night before the next day's hunt.

Hunting in a vineyard is far different from the hunting I am used to. Is it easy? Far from it, but it is more of a mental game of cat-and-mouse rather than a physical back-breaking hunt in remote wilderness. That first morning, we jumped into Newkirk's pickup and proceeded to check row after row of grape vines, hoping to catch a glimpse of a shooter buck.

Morton was up first, and we spent the morning in pursuit of a wide 3x3 with eye guards. Several failed stalk attempts proved that this hunt was going to be difficult. The deer moved through the vines with ease, disappearing in seconds only to



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be found hours later in a completely different section of the vineyard. Although the deer seemed plentiful, stalk opportunities were slim and fleeting.

The big 3x3 finally made a mistake. We found him in a great position to make a stalk. As we closed the distance and came over a rise, Newkirk placed the sticks and Morton was able to capitalize on the opportunity with two perfect shots that were fired within mere seconds of each other due to Morton's quick cycling of the 60-degree bolt.

After a brief hiatus from hunting at the skinning shed, we were back in the vineyard combing the rows for another big buck. Earlier we had seen one buck in particular that stood out—a deer that Newkirk had been keeping tabs on all summer. He had a tall, narrow frame that forked perfectly to make him a 4x4, with massive bases, and mass that carried well through to the tips.

As the hot California sun moved through the sky, the deer shifted bedding positions throughout the afternoon, following the shade cast by the grape leaves. Though the deer were plentiful, the tall buck did not show himself until late that evening.

Traveling to a younger stand of grapes, we caught a herd of bachelor bucks moving gingerly through the vineyard wires. He was with them. The deer headed in the perfect direction for us to make a stalk, although the ripping coastal winds weren't in our favor.

We decided to pursue them from the less-ideal direction. We followed row by row. Although the shooting sticks were presented multiple times, no shots were offered.

The tall buck fed ahead of the group and posed perfectly in the center of a row 160 yards from our position. With the Alpha settled on the shooting sticks—well as settled as it could be in the stout crosswind, I clicked the safety down with my thumb and let the trigger break. At impact, we were certain he was hit good, but he lunged forward with impressive power. Two rows over he lay dead.

Walking up on the buck was surreal, the culmination of years of waiting had ended with a unique hunt and an exceptional trophy. The CZ 600 Alpha performed flawlessly and allowed me to make a perfect shot. In my opinion, that's a great first impression.



THE CZ 600 SERIES

The heart of any rifle is its action, and the 600 action comes in two receiver variants—steel or aluminum, depending on the model. The aluminum version is fitted with Weaver- or Picatinny-style scope bases, while the steel gets drilled and tapped in a more traditional manner to allow the owner to scope the rifle as he or she sees fit. The action comes in three sizes: mini, medium and long.

The bolt is of a six-lug design—three lugs each in two rows. The mini action drops that to a three-lug action, but all are unique in that they lock up directly to the barrel, not via an extension, and work with a 60-degree throw. Before the hardcore Mauser fans bemoan the loss of the classic, controlled-round-feed action, it's worth noting the CZ 600 boasts a new, proprietary design that acts as a controlled-push feed with a manual plunger ejector. The company boasts the bolt head will feed the cartridge no matter what position the rifle is in as the shooter works the action. A bolt-release button allows for moving the bolt while the rifle is on safe.

And while we're talking about the safety, we better bring up the unusual design CZ opted for the 600. It's tang-mounted, but instead of sliding forward or back, it actually pushes vertically through the wrist of the stock. And does so silently. I expected it to be awkward, but it's surprisingly intuitive, and makes visually checking the safety possible, even with the cheek firmly welded to the stock.

Most rifles today come with trigger adjustment capability, but only the CZ 600 makes it truly idiot-proof. A hex screw in the trigger guard clicks through four pre-set trigger weights, from 1.3 to 3 pounds, with one through four dots marking each.

Here in the States, the CZ 600 is offered in four different models, from the budget-friendly Alpha model to the classically European Lux version, along with a benchrest-ready Range model and the modern Trail rifle, which is destined to be my new favorite truck gun. - David Draper

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THE 600 ON STAND

HUNTER: DAVID DRAPER—EDITOR IN CHIEF

I couldn't have asked for a more traditional setting to put the CZ 600 to its first test, or a more traditional game animal to pursue. The location was rolling hills of oak in Moravia, along the Czech-Austrian border. The game was a mouflon ram, with the possibility of adding a red deer hind to the larder at the Lesy České hunting club. Of the four models available, I opted for the 600 Lux. I was in Europe, hunting European game, so the classic, Schnabel-stocked rifle, complete with walnut bolt knob and chambered in .308, was a natural fit.

Before the sun rose over the Old World forest, I could hear animals crunching acorns in the dark. The game ranger, who spoke no English, put his fingers to his lips and then pointed to a spot below the wooden hunt stand we sat in. Peeking over the edge of the window, I could just make out a medium-sized boar feeding its way through the woods. Soon, more shadows appeared and as it became light enough to see, and shoot, I counted more than 30 deer, both red and fallow spread across the field. But a mouflon ram would have to come first.

I soon picked out three rams feeding in the forest, far to the left of the high stand. My heart rate ticked up as they turned and, one by one, entered the field in front of us. That excitement was quickly tempered when the ranger, through pantomime and broken English, conveyed that those particular rams were off limits, unless I wanted to add a trophy fee to the price of the hunt.

A few moments later, a fourth ram appeared just across the field. In this Yank's eyes, the ram looked similar to the other three, but the ranger pointed at me, then curled his fingers into a pistol shape and pulled an imaginary trigger. No translation necessary.



Mouflon rams are a very traditional game animal in Europe. The 600 Lux offered more than just classic styling to this hunt, its performance was a key to success.

I got behind the 600 Lux just as the ram climbed to the top of an embankment. I centered the shoulder, silently pushed the safety button down, and pulled the trigger. The ram buckled, but didn't fall. As it sprinted across the field, I quickly worked the rifle's short, 60-degree bolt throw and, leading the mouflon just a bit, punched a second round through its front shoulders, sending the ram tumbling to the ground.

As my guide placed an oak branch in the fallen ram's mouth, offering it a last meal, and handed another to me, a thought came to me. Though the 600 Series marked a new beginning for CZ, it also continued that tradition of excellence the legendary gunmaker is so well-known for. 

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ROAD MARK KAYSER RULES

PLAN AHEAD TO MAKE YOUR NEXT HUNT A SUCCESS.

TRAVELING TO HUNT stirs inspiration. But don't get lost in the enthusiasm. Calculated planning and organization ensures you have everything accounted for as a road-warrior hunter. Regardless if your sortie tackles whitetails, pronghorn, elk or another species of your choosing, you need to be prepared for more than pulling the trigger.

That hit home for me on a previous DIY, public-land elk hunt. Every article of hunting gear was accounted for and even backed up. Eleven days into the hunt, a mature six-point bull stood a bit too long in a forest opening. My shot was true and sud-

denly I was staring at a task of monstrous proportions. In my haste to plan for the kill, I had overlooked what happens after the shot.

Hours from home and alone, I struggled with the gear I had in my pack to modify the massive critter into the protein portions I hoped would feed my young family. Fortunately, the mountain coolness assisted me in keeping the meat from spoiling, but had I the prudence to plan like a road warrior, the undertaking would have been less stressful. Avoid the chaos and have a plan to succeed on your next hunting trip. Here are some things to consider.







GEAR TO GO THE DISTANCE

What you use for hunting gear is a personal choice, but even that requires scrutinizing each piece. If the gear item is important to the hunt, it is critical to have a backup or tools to fix any common field issues. I follow the warrior rule of two is one and one is none. In plain language, if you have two of an item and one fails, you have a backup. If your only item fails, you have none.

When I drive to a hunt, I typically take two of everything that will be in my pack. Flying predicably cancels that option due to cost, but try to back up where neces-

sary. Think optics, rangefinder, knives, game calls, navigation, communication, headlamp, spare battery power for all, prescription eyewear and clothing items. How often have you lost gloves or hats on a hunt? Back them up.

Certain items, such as first aid, survival gear, water bottles and others may only require one, but think ahead and evaluate what items would be critical if lost or damaged. In a backcountry situation you may only need one first aid kit, but packing multiple ways to spark a fire is always a good idea for survival.

In the case of a firearm or bow, two is a better option. Again, that is easier if driving, but at the very least pack along a repair kit and tools to address common problems. Riflescopes may come loose or a bow sight may see abuse. A spare bow sight is much easier to pack than a complete bow and having a gunsmith tool kit may prevent a migraine in the middle of any hunt.

PACKING OUT

Even before meat preservation becomes an issue, you need to be able to recover the animal. Research access rules, terrain difficulty and the long-range weather forecast. Recovering a whitetail from an oak draw in Illinois can become a fiasco if it dies in the bottom during a downpour. Last fall my buddy killed a whitetail in the bottom of a Kansas Flint Hills coulee. We decided to winch the buck out instead of quartering it. In hindsight, the quartering job would have been simpler. It took us more than an hour to find enough strong rope to winch the buck up from the vertical, rocky slope. We now have a better plan.

If you care to tow a trailer (or burden your truck bed), ATVs and side-by-sides can be used on traveling hunts for both access and recovery. Some areas will be off limits to motorized vehicles. In those situations, you may need to utilize a high-quality game cart. Review models rugged enough to tackle your intended terrain.



Be prepared to recover game in steep or rugged country where a truck or ATV cannot access. You may need to break an animal down and pack it out.



An ATV is a great tool for animal recovery, but some areas may not allow access, so plan accordingly.

Some models may not be up to a Western rodeo recovery, although they might handle a whitetail in an Iowa cornfield. If a cart seems bulky, consider a sled, especially in grassy or snow-covered landscapes where the plastic will slide easily. A tarp can also double as a sled for short drags out of cover.

And, of course, there is always the option to pack an animal out on your back. Before departing, study how to quarter and debone your quarry to reduce it into packable portions. Purchase a pack capable of hauling elk quarters, even if you just plan to deer hunt this season. A 150-pound buck will result in approximately 75 pounds of boned meat and a 100-pound doe will result in approximately 45 pounds of boned meat. Pronghorn are lighter and elk are obviously larger. Pack along enough meat bags as you will want to skin the deer to reduce weight and the bags will protect it from contamination.

THWARTING THEFT

I have lost count of the times friends have told me about having firearms stolen from their vehicles. Traveling to a hunt will



require you to stop, whether for fuel or an overnight rest. And once you arrive at a hunting destination, you could be in unfamiliar territory. All these factors may result in losing your gear to thieves. Be proactive and make a list of every item you are transporting and analyze any theft

possibilities presented. This includes your vehicle, ATVs, trailers and all your gear sitting around camp after arrival.

If your vehicle has an alarm system, check to see if it is in working order. Next, consider how to hide or obscure all the valuables in your vehicle. Items left in

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plain sight invite break-ins. Even a quick stop at a convenience store could result in a smash-and-grab while you are getting rid of those last three cups of coffee. Never leave windows rolled down and if you are traveling with a partner, have one watch while the other hits the head.

In a motel situation, hide everything in your vehicle and better yet, move valuables into the motel room. Park in a well-lit area and consider additional safeguards such as steering wheel locks, wheel locks and locking lug nuts. Trailers should be secured with a hitch locking system and enclosed trailers need to be locked securely.

Bolt cutters and various other high-tech tools can clip most small locks and chains in a matter of seconds. Look into heavy-duty cables or log-style chains, too large for a bolt cutter to snip. The best are manufactured with an alloy or boron steel and hardened inside and out. Spend extra on locks that cannot be cut as well. Master Lock, the leader in locks, has a variety of options available.

Once you arrive at camp and unload and unhitch, follow all the rules above, especially by locking trailers and even chaining ATVs to trees. Everyone is a trail camera junkie. Pack extras to monitor

camp. Hide one that can survey the entrance to camp for capturing license plate numbers and set several in high areas pointing down to snatch images of thieves. A mere sign posted at any camp that surveillance is onsite also goes a long way in making thieves think twice. Again, if traveling with friends, consider having one stay in camp while others hunt. A non-hunting friend or relative who loves to cook makes the perfect campmate and serves as a built-in security guard.

MAKING MEAT

You now have a plan to recover an animal, but what will you do with the meat once you get back to camp? Warm conditions and the possibility of waiting for your friends to fill tags could lead to spoiled meat. You may have the option of taking a deer straight to a meat processing business. Explore all options and check hours of operation. If you score on a weekend, you will still need a plan to keep meat cool until Monday morning.

If DIY is your plan, you might also serve as the meat processor. Plan accordingly. Either bring necessary items or have a plan to procure them onsite. You



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ROAD RULES

will need knives and a knife sharpener. You will also need Ziploc freezer bags, meat-wrapping paper, tape and a maybe meat saw to at least carve an animal into transportable portions. Before carving that animal up, check regulations on transportation and evidence of sex. Also check on meat transportation regulations regarding chronic wasting disease.

Few states allow the transportation of intact carcasses any longer.

Now get busy. Wash all meat as you prepare to store it before cooling. I also advise you to use a Sharpie and make a note on the outside of each bag. When you arrive at home and want to grind burger or grill a backstrap, it makes identifying the hunks of deliciousness easier.



CWD AND STAYING LEGAL

Regulations regarding chronic wasting disease are becoming stricter. Brush up on your destination rules and the rules in your ZIP code for bringing game home. The disease kills 100 percent of infected whitetail, mule deer, elk and moose. That fact aside, according to the Centers for Disease Control, there still are no connections between CWD and human infections. The main worry is that you will bring an animal or animal parts infected with CWD to your state and spread the disease to a possibly unexposed ungulate region.

As a rule, nearly everything inherently dangerous about CWD resides in the animal's brain and spinal column matter. That means you will not be able to travel with a raw skull or skull plate that includes any of those portions. Plan for this chore. You have several options. One, like meat processing, find a local taxidermist who can clean your skull immediately or ship it to you later. Next up is the DIY option. Boiling and pressure washing your skull, or plate are the two best choices for legal transportation.

Confirm beforehand if your hunting destination has a pot and portable stove to simmer the meat from a skull, or plate. If not, remember to add that to your checklist. A canning pot fits most deer or smaller skulls. A 55-gallon drum cut off at the bottom third handles elk-sized animals. Remove hide, eyeballs, the lower jaw and all meat possible. Simmer the skull and scrape meat intermittently until clean.

I prefer to pressure wash my skulls using a machine producing 3,000 psi and equipped with a rotating nozzle. Do the pregame removal of all extras and then secure the skull to a fence or board, and wash away the nastiness. I still simmer it for a brief period to loosen stubborn meat or cartilage, but in approximately an hour, I can have a skull clean enough for legal transportation, and it could possibly go straight to the wall.

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Quality coolers and lots of ice can solve meat-storage problems and keep camp food cool.

In all camp considerations, remote or town based, consider ways to keep meat cool. Quality coolers, like those available

from Mammoth or Coleman, stocked with ice, easily keep meat at an ideal aging temperature until you can get home. Con-

sider a couple of coolers for meat and a couple more for ice storage to replenish.

The latest trend in meat preservation is bringing along a chest freezer. Innovative hunters are loading or securing full-size chest freezers on trailers. Once at camp, they either plug them into available electricity or power them on a generator throughout the trip. Freezers double as a place to keep your food cool and really become handy when meat needs preservation. If left outside, be sure to secure them with a theft-proof cable or other locking device.

Meat on ice can be stored for up to two weeks and provides a quality way to age meat for ideal palatability. Wild game ages best between 32 and 40 degrees. Bring a small thermometer to monitor temperatures in a cooler or meat hanging in a shed at camp.

Being a road warrior is more detailed than hunting from home. The rewards will be the same, but if you plan accordingly the stress will be minimized and memories will be profound. 📌

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Biblical Bush Shuts Down Joint Discomfort in 5 Days

Amazing plant “prescription” gives new life to old joints without clobbering you. So safe you can take it every day without worry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 54 million Americans are suffering from joint discomfort.

This epidemic rise in aching joints has led to a search for alternative treatments—as many sufferers want relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Leading the way from nature’s pharmacy is the new “King of Oils” that pioneering Florida MD and anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

Biblical scholars treasured this “holy oil.” Ancient healers valued it more than gold for its medicinal properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And Ayurvedic practitioners, to this day, rely on it for healing and detoxification.

Yet what really caught Dr. Sears’ attention is how modern medical findings now prove this “King of Oils” can powerfully...

Deactivate 400 Agony-Causing Genes

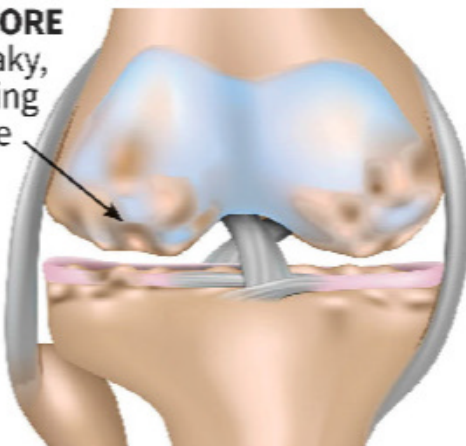
If you want genuine, long-lasting relief for joint discomfort, you must address inflammation. Too much inflammation will wreak havoc on joints, break down cartilage and cause unending discomfort. This is why so many natural joint relief solutions try to stop one of the main inflammatory genes called COX-2.

But the truth is, there are hundreds of agony-causing genes like COX-2, 5-LOX, iNOS, TNK, Interleukin 1,6,8 and many more—and stopping just one of them won’t give you all the relief you need.

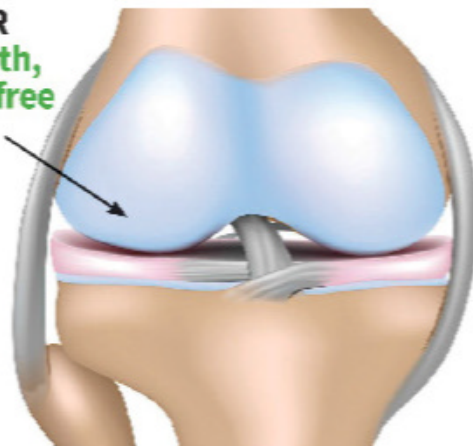
Doctors and scientists now confirm the “King of Oils”—Indian Frankincense—deactivates not one but 400 agony-causing genes. It does so by shutting down the inflammation command center called Nuclear Factor Kappa Beta.

NK-Kappa B is like a switch that can turn 400 inflammatory genes “on” or “off.” A study in Journal of Food Lipids reports that Indian Frankincense powerfully deactivates NF-Kappa B. This journal adds that Indian Frankincense is “so powerful it shuts down the pathway triggering aching joints.”

BEFORE
Creaky,
aching
knee



AFTER
Smooth,
ache-free
knee



Relief That’s 10 Times Faster... and in Just 5 Days

Many joint sufferers prefer natural solutions but say they work too slowly. Take the best-seller glucosamine. Good as it is, the National Institutes of Health reports that glucosamine takes as long as eight weeks to work.

Yet in a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian Frankincense “significantly improved joint function and relieved discomfort in as early as five days.” That’s relief that is 10 times faster than glucosamine.

78% Better Relief Than the Most Popular Joint Solution

In another study, people suffering from discomfort took a formula containing Indian Frankincense and another natural substance or a popular man-made joint solution every day for 12 weeks.

The results? Stunning! At the end of the study, 64% of those taking the Indian Frankincense formula saw their joint discomfort go from moderate or severe to mild or no discomfort. Only 28% of those taking the placebo got the relief they wanted. So Indian Frankincense delivered relief at a 78% better clip than the popular man-made formula.

In addition, in a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled study, patients suffering from knee discomfort took Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for eight weeks. Then the groups switched and got the opposite intervention. Every one of the patients taking Indian Frankincense got relief. That’s a 100% success rate—numbers unseen by typical solutions.

In addition, BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal) reports that Indian Frankincense is safe for joint relief — so safe and natural you can take it every day.

Because of clinically proven results like this, Dr. Sears has made Indian Frankincense the centerpiece of a new natural joint relief formula called **Mobilify**.

Great Results for Knees, Hips, Shoulders and Joints

Joni D. says, “**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness and mild temporary pain. The day after taking it, I was completely back to normal—so fast.” Shirley M. adds, “Two week after taking **Mobilify**, I had no knee discomfort and could go up and down the staircase.” Larry M. says, “After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness and minor aches went away... it’s almost like being reborn.” And avid golfer Dennis H. says, “I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried.”

How to Get Mobilify

To secure the hot, new **Mobilify** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-252-5274** TODAY. “It’s not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Mobilify**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I’ll send you all your money back.”

Call NOW at **1-800-252-5274** to secure your supply of **Mobilify**. Use Promo Code **PHMB0822** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!

Adventures In The Selway

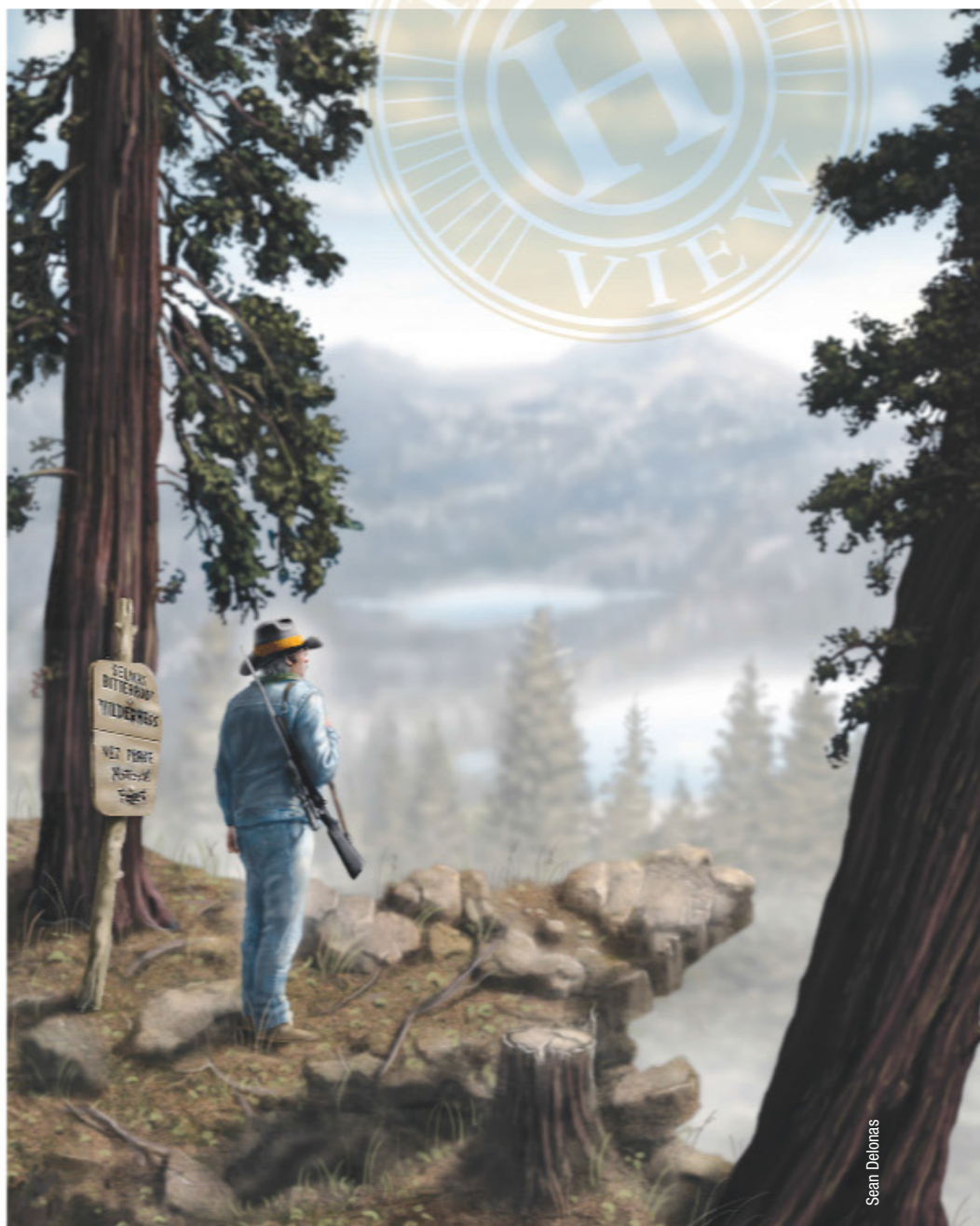
WHEN THE fresh elk rubs glared at me from destroyed saplings and the area reeked of pungent elk odor, I knew I was in a bull's backyard. I motioned to Bruce Scott, my outfitter who was a few dozen yards away. We were bushwhacking through heavy cover in a deep canyon. "Let's try a call here," I whispered. "I've got a good feeling." Bruce agreed.

When Bruce let go with a bugle, a bull immediately answered and exploded from thick timber. I barely had time to shoulder my Pre-64 Winchester Model 70 when he crashed through a blowdown and suddenly stopped when he saw us. I sent a .30-06 bullet into his ribs and the six-point bull thudded to the forest floor. With only an hour of daylight left, we field dressed him and started the long hike up the mountain to where our horses were tied. Then it was a two-hour ride back to camp in the dark. That's when you trust your horse's night vision on treacherous trails.

We were hunting in Idaho's famous Selway Wilderness, an area tucked far away in the backcountry. Every Western mountain range is rugged and tough, but this one has a special appeal. Craggy cliffs, dense forests with thick underbrush on steep mountain-sides are its trademark. It is definitely not hunter friendly, and that's why the elk love it.

On another hunt in the Selway, I was with the late Jack Wemple, a tough, likable outfitter who ran one of the best guide schools in Montana's Bitterroot Valley. A long horseback ride put us in his tent camp during the peak of the rut. It was just breaking light when we heard a bull bugle in the distance. We dismounted, tied our horses and headed toward the bull. We'd have to descend the mountain, cross a creek and climb again to where we last heard the bugle. As we waded the creek, we heard another bull bugle from where we'd just left. The first went silent, but the one behind us bugled nonstop.

Changing plans, Jack and I ran back up the steep mountain. Breathing hard and gasping for air, we forged ahead. The bull had not stopped bugling. "We gotta hurry and get to the contour he's traveling," Jack said. "That crazy bull will walk right to us." I willed my weary legs and tortured lungs to continue the climb. I don't think I had another couple yards left in me when the bull bugled so close, we hit the dirt face down in the pine needles and leaves. I slowly turned, raised up to where I could ease the '06 stock to my shoulder and in three seconds the bull appeared, still bugling. It was a no brainer shot at 30 yards. When Jack and I looked closely at the dandy 6x6 bull, we saw a deep gouge between his eyes, which probably accounted for his incessant bugling. We figured he'd recently been in a fight.



Sean Delonas

When I signed on with outfitter Ken Smith for another Selway elk hunt, I wondered what kind of wild adventure I'd be facing. True to form, it started with a near terrifying bush-plane flight from Orofino, Idaho to a wilderness airstrip. The pilot had to make some severe twists and turns to get into the bottom of a canyon where he landed on a gravel runway. Though I'd been on my share of near-death bush-plane experiences, the sight of wrecked planes in the canyon didn't help my white knuckles. When we landed alive, we hustled our gear onto waiting horses and rode 14 miles to Ken's camp.

After several days of seriously hard hunting, we'd come up empty. Then, late one afternoon, we spotted a big six-point bull feeding in an old burn. He was too far away to stalk before dark so we made a morning plan. Just after daybreak Ken and I spotted him. We eased within 300 yards where I was able to take a shot. The Winchester scored again, and the bull slid several dozen yards and free-fell off a cliff 30 feet into a thick stand of saplings where he landed belly down. Ken and I had to saw away trees and roll the bull around to where we could field dress him. Transporting the quarters back to camp was a major triumph.

When you think about it, it's always a triumph when you survive a wilderness elk hunt and finally ride out to the trailhead, reaching your waiting pickup with not only a sigh of relief, but a wonderful memory. Especially when you hunt the Selway. 



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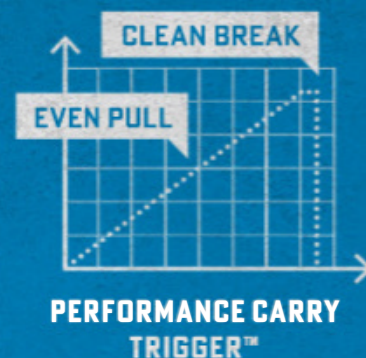
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