

ALABAMA 2010



Over the radio Brian says: "There's a giant one laid up over in the corn field not far from the lodge. We need to get over there as quick as we can before he gets up. Right now he's bedded down and thinks no one can see him."

With that we climbed down the steps from the blind just in time to meet Brian in the Polaris. The other deer that we had been watching slipped away into the woods.

A short ride back toward the lodge brought us to a bend in the farm road and we slowed to a crawl as we rounded the curve. We had only gone a short distance when we spotted the buck settled in next to a row of dried corn. Now the problem was to get in position for my wife Greg to get a position from behind the Johnson grass lining the road.

It all started at the annual dinner of the Georgia chapter of SCI. I had spotted a donation that looked promising and, when it came up I managed to win. It was for a management hunt for white tail at the Extreme Whitetails in Oneonta, Alabama. This side of Birmingham just t two and a half hour drive from Atlanta.

Extreme Whitetails is 2500 acres, totally enclosed by high fencing that keeps their deer in and all other deer out. The lodge consists of four bedrooms, with baths on the main floor and a bunk bed area on the lower floor. The lodge overlooks a lake that boasts a beautiful view of the hills of Alabama. A roaring fire facing large sofas keeps things cozy and warm. A large dining room table will seat eight with lots of elbow room. Nearby, another building houses the meat locker and skinning area.

There are blinds set up in strategic spots all over the area, providing many choices for the guides to set up. All the blinds are large, roomy and thoroughly insulated. There are eight windows that provide a 360 degree view of the food plots alongside which the blinds are located. All movement to and from the blinds are in Polaris ATV's.

In addition to deer hunting they provide quail hunting over their dogs, and Continental pheasant shoots in which hunters are positioned around a tower and the pheasant are thrown from there and fly over the hunters.

We were met at the gate by our guide, Rodney Floyd, who guided us through the woods to the lodge. Once there, we moved into our room and after meeting Brian Wood, the manager and his wife Jenna we settled down to a good lunch. We waited until 3:00. to head out to the stand to look for a good deer. We were driven out by Brian, who dropped us off and headed back to the lodge.

We saw only three deer that afternoon and they seemed spooked by something which we later found were two puppies which had gotten through the fence.

The next morning we moved to another stand. The ATV left and we were still bumping around in the stand when two deer eased out of the woods and began feeding. At first they were all does of various ages. Then the young bucks appeared. After feeding a few minutes two of the four pointers would lock horns, then would break off and go back feeding. More deer appeared - none were shooters but it was exciting just to see them feeding, never knowing that we were watching. Later they were joined by a fine looking buck, much larger than the others. Only one problem - he had six points - all on one side of his head. Next year's shooter for sure if he will just stay out of fights.

He was the best that showed up that morning so we came down in time to join a group from Birmingham in a Continental pheasant hunt. We were given a shotgun and shells since we had not expected this "extra".

In a Continental Shoot the guide stands in a tower and throws the birds out, one by one in different directions to the waiting hunters who are arrayed around the tower about forty yards away. Very exciting, fast action. At a signal each hunter moves from his stand to the next one around the tower. That way if a particular stand is "hot" everybody gets a chance to shoot. And shoot they do. The birds don't always fly straight and there is lots of shooting and lots of missing.

After lunch and a nap we headed out for the afternoon hunt. This time in a different stand. This time the deer didn't wait for us to get into the blind before two appeared in a patch of corn in front of the blind. As we sat there more and more deer appeared. All sizes, male and female. At one point Greg counted twenty six arrayed around the blind, calmly feeding and totally unaware we were there.

I was on the left hand side of the blind and looking mostly to the left over a field of cutover corn, a hedgerow of briars and another field beyond that. About mid morning I saw a

buck at the far end of the far field a good 500 yards out. He was ambling toward us but he was in no hurry and at that distance, with no binoculars I couldn't count the antlers, but he did look nice.

As he continued in our direction he approached the hedgerow and I thought he might stop, but he walked to the end of the brambles and continuing in our general direction.

By this time Rodney had gotten a good look at him and was getting more excited as the deer walked toward us. The buck was beautiful. His rack was wide, very symmetrical and tall. He stopped at about 200 yards and I thought he would never move any closer. He began feeding and occasionally move in our direction. By this time there was no doubt that he was a shooter and it was my duty to take him. He moved closer but, facing in our direction, he was not presenting a very good target. Finally, at about 100 yards he turned slightly to his left presenting me with a better shot. As the bullet struck he continued turning left and I thought I had made a bad shot. He walked a few steps to the left and fell dead

We waited a few agonizing minutes to be sure he was dead, then rushed from the blind to where he lay. He was beautiful. The antlers were very symmetrical and long. I was delighted, to say the least. Later, at the skinning shed he green scored 152.

We celebrated that night but the best was yet to come. It was Greg's turn in the morning.

Daylight, and we headed out to another blind and another viewing of deer which surrounded us in the blind. The guides are equipped with walkie-talkies but they also have cell phones which they use to text each other. giving them a silent way of communicating when in the blind. The call from Brian came over the radio not subtle , showed no caution at all. The deer was bedded down and we needed to get over to him right away.

The Polaris moved us through the woods road as fast as it could until we came to a corner and there we slowed to a crawl and rounded the corner cautiously.

There he was. Through the tall weeds we could barely see him laying next to some of the standing corn. By the time we stopped we could see him clearly. He seemed to be looking right at us but never moved. With all the shuffling to get ready for Greg to take a shot I was sure he was going to jump up and disappear into the corn.

Greg struggled to get settled for a shot, rolling up jackets and trying to settle the rifle.

Now there was that silence when the bystanders are waiting for the hunter to fire and hoping the deer will stay still just a little bit longer and wondering why the hunter hasn't pulled the trigger and what's keeping the hunter from shooting and **IS THE DEER GOING TO JUMP UP RIGHT NOW** and disappear for **GOOD. HURRY !**

The rifle cracks and the deer rolls over dead.



Everybody yells. We know he's dead. It was a flop shot. No movement at all. We struggle through the weeds and the downed corn to see him.

He is a giant. He is huge. Laying the on his side he looks as big a a pony. His antlers are a mass of bone. Points going everywhere. I have never seen so many points.

We don't have room in the Polaris to carry him so we go back to the lodge while Brian and Rodney get a bigger truck to carry him to the skinning shed.

Greg has shot a huge deer. Later the guides measure him.- 235 points green scored. and weighed 310 pounds Huge.

Want a really big deer? Planning to go to Texas or some other place out west ? Scrap those plans. Drive two and a half hours west to Extreme Whitetails near Oneonta, Alabama and get exactly what you want - guaranteed.

Ricky Cleveland and Joe Hollis have a operation that produces huge trophy whitetails. They have over 2500 acres managed for pheasant, quail and trophy whitetail deer. The accommodations and the equipment and facilities are first class. The guides are very knowledgeable and know the property like the back of their hand. You will not be disappointed.