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MAY 2011

VOL 12 - ISSUE 05

SOUTH AFRICA

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Bow hunting a small game bird on Mauritius

Frank Berbuir tells how he hunted a pheasant during a combined holiday and hunting trip to Mauritius.

Hunting on Mauritius? What can one hunt there, you might ask.

Quite a lot, actually. Hunting has a long and important tradition on Mauritius. Mainly one hunts the Rusa, also called Java deer – a big stag. It is a rather scraggy but nevertheless Gracious stag with strong and heavy six-point antlers. You can also hunt wild boar, hare, pheasant, quail and helmeted guinea-fowl.

I hunted with Le Chasseur Mauricien (www.lechasseurmauricien.com). Lionel Berthault is the director and organiser, the professional hunter and outfitter in person. His entrepreneurship, attitude and approach to hunting and customer satisfaction is outstanding.

After a successful stalk with bow and arrow on the big Java deer stag, I had the opportunity to bow hunt wild boar, hare, pheasant, helmeted guinea-fowl, and a yearling Rusa deer on my last hunting day. We drove to hunting grounds called “Case Noyale”, which are located west of Bel Ombre within a 20-minute drive.

Here also I had wonderful stalking opportunities in a breathtaking landscape. The vegetation was less subtropical and the climate was more arid and a little warmer. Yohann, my guide and PH, told me also that in this area coffee was cultivated – and it tasted very good, by the way.

While stalking I got a chance to approach to within 27 yards of a hare, and I got a shot, but unfortunately the arrow hit a small branch in front of the animal and was deflected. It flew clear over the hare – both hare and arrow were safe.

With the wind in our favour we stalked together a small wild boar of about 25 pounds in the thick bushes. We approached to 18 yards. I did not shoot it, although there was a perfect shooting window because we were hunting for a big bruiser. These hogs we saw, but they were smarter than the young ones and gave us no opportunity to get closer.

My first attempt on a pheasant ended at 55 yards distance when the bird spotted me and got airborne into the clear sky of Mauritius. Second try – same thing again.

At five in the afternoon I got a last chance when we heard and saw two pheasants yelling at each other, fighting over whose territory it was. There was about 35 yards distance between them and I stalked with Yohann towards the bird at the lower end. I was hiding beside a bush at about 14 yards when the bird turned towards me, his chest swollen with pride. My left hand clasped the Gripwerks quilted maple grip of my Elite GT 500 bow and I drew it slowly to full draw.

I let go the trigger of my Scott release and sent the Carbon



The author with his pheasant. It was killed on impact, not moving or even quivering.

Express Maxima Hunter arrow with the field point and Adder head on its deadly mission. It hit the pheasant hard in the middle of his chest. He was dead on impact – no movement, no quivering. Horrido – waidmannsheil – congratulations! What a great finale to another nice hunting day.

The combined hunting and holiday trip on Mauritius was a wonderful and challenging experience. It was a great combination of exciting bow hunting combined with sight-seeing, beach visiting and shopping. I would do it again, any time. Thank you very much to everybody who made it happen – especially Lionel and his wife from Le Chasseur Mauricien.

Waidmannsheil, always good hunting and *Alles van die Beste!*

EQUIPMENT:

Bow: Elite GT500 - 70 pounds with Copper John drop-away rest, Spot Hogg sight, and Trophy Ridge stabiliser

Arrow: Carbon Matrix Maxima Hunter arrow with 125-grain field point and adder head

Optics: Zeiss 10 x 40 binocular and Nikon Archer's Choice Rangefinder

Camo: Sniper Africa