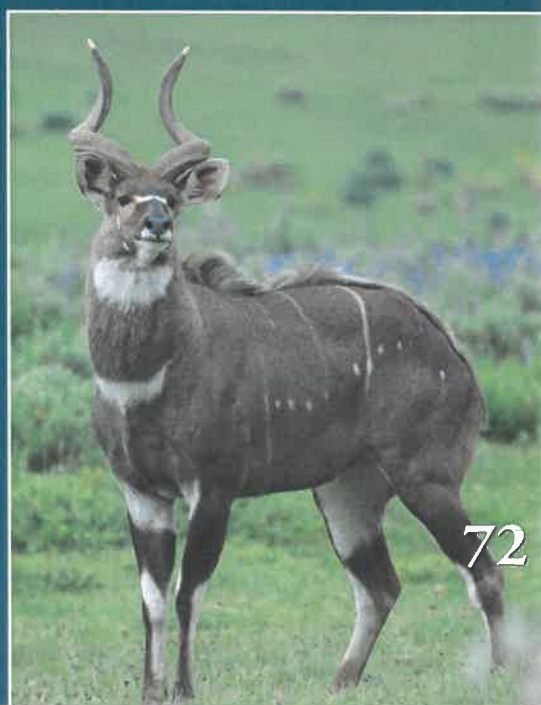
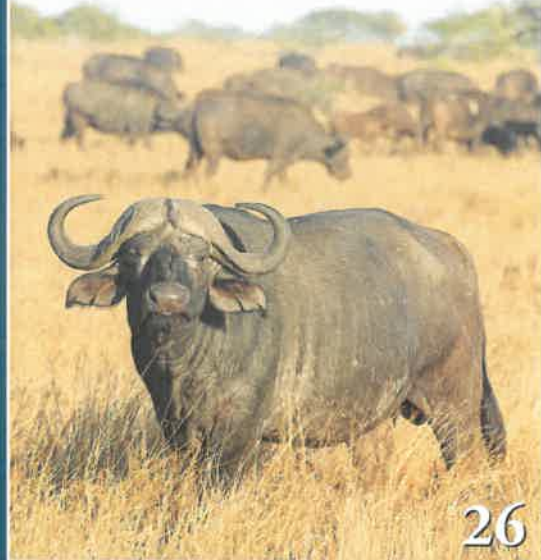


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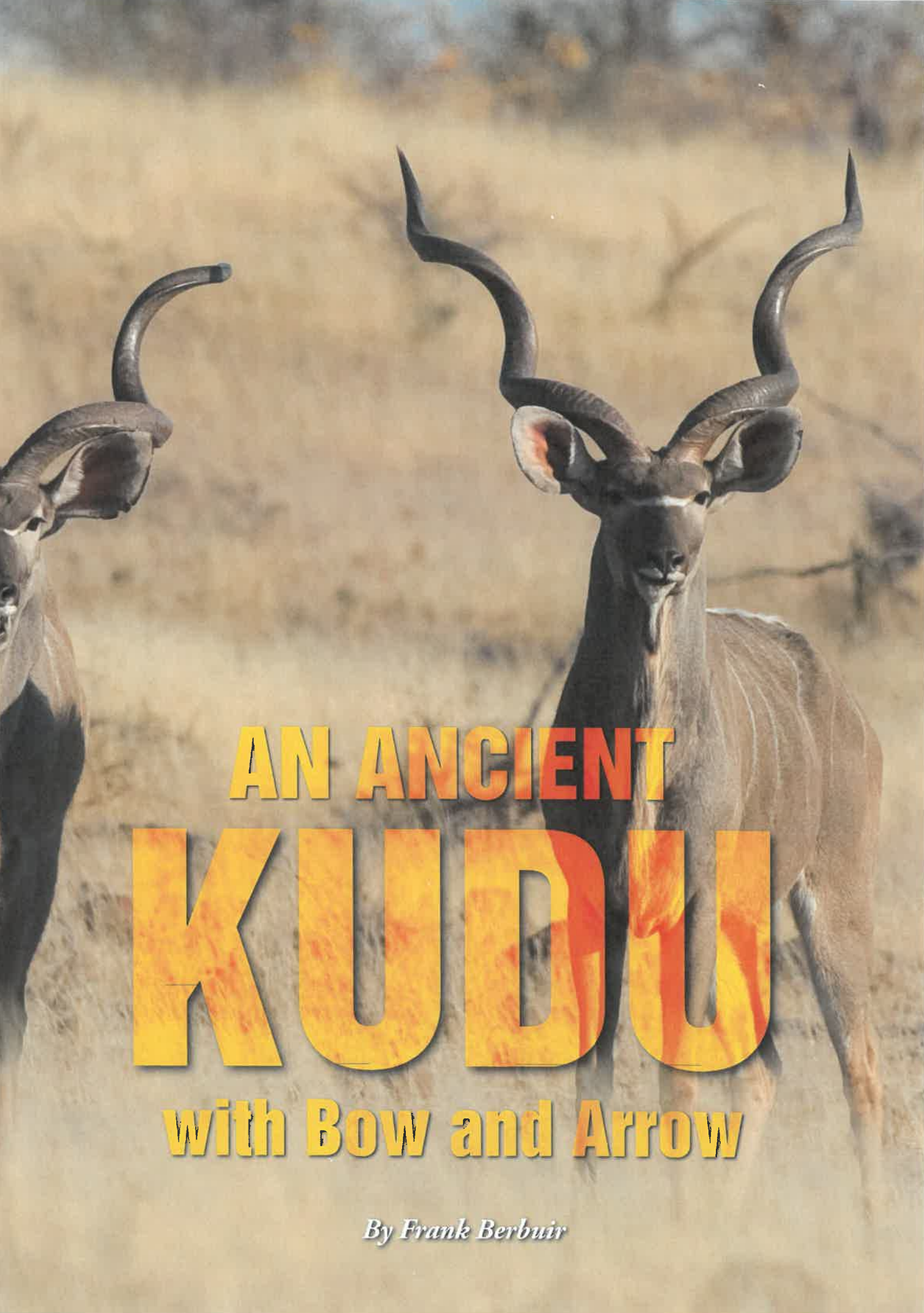
HUNTING THE GREAT CONTINENT OF AFRICA



Contents

Editorial	10
News & Letters	
Fan Mail <i>By Earl Garcia</i>	8
John Ledger's African conservation column	
South Africa Proposes Far-reaching Policy Position on Wildlife	14
Focus on an Animal	
Thomson's gazelle from "Game Animals of the World" <i>By Chris and Mathilde Stuart</i>	24
On the hunt:	
Day 8 Dagga Boy <i>By Al Banes</i>	26
To Hunt a Lesser Kudu – Follow a Poacher! <i>By Geoff Wainwright</i>	40
A Croc on the Bank is Worth Two in the River... <i>By Ricardo Leone</i>	50
A Most Dangerous Game <i>By Roger Wiltz</i>	60
Ethiopia Part I <i>By Merle Sampson</i>	72
A Case of Rattled Nerves <i>By Chris Chimits</i>	82
Four-Bore Bulls <i>By Cal Pappas</i>	96
My Personel Dream Work <i>By Joseph Crawford</i>	112
Hunting with the Ellements... Fathers and Sons - Two Safaris Twenty Years Apart <i>By Conrad Miller</i>	124
Highly strung	
AN ANCIENT KUDU with Bow and Arrow <i>By Frank Berbuir</i>	142
Taken on the Wing	
Wingshooting in Africa's Hunting Literature <i>By Ken Bailey</i>	154
Hunter Profile	
Archie Landals	162



A photograph of two kudus in a savanna landscape. The kudu on the right is the main focus, facing the camera with its large, spiraling horns. The kudu on the left is partially visible, also facing the camera. The background is a dry, open landscape with sparse vegetation and a hazy horizon.

AN ANCIENT KUDU

with Bow and Arrow

By Frank Berbuir



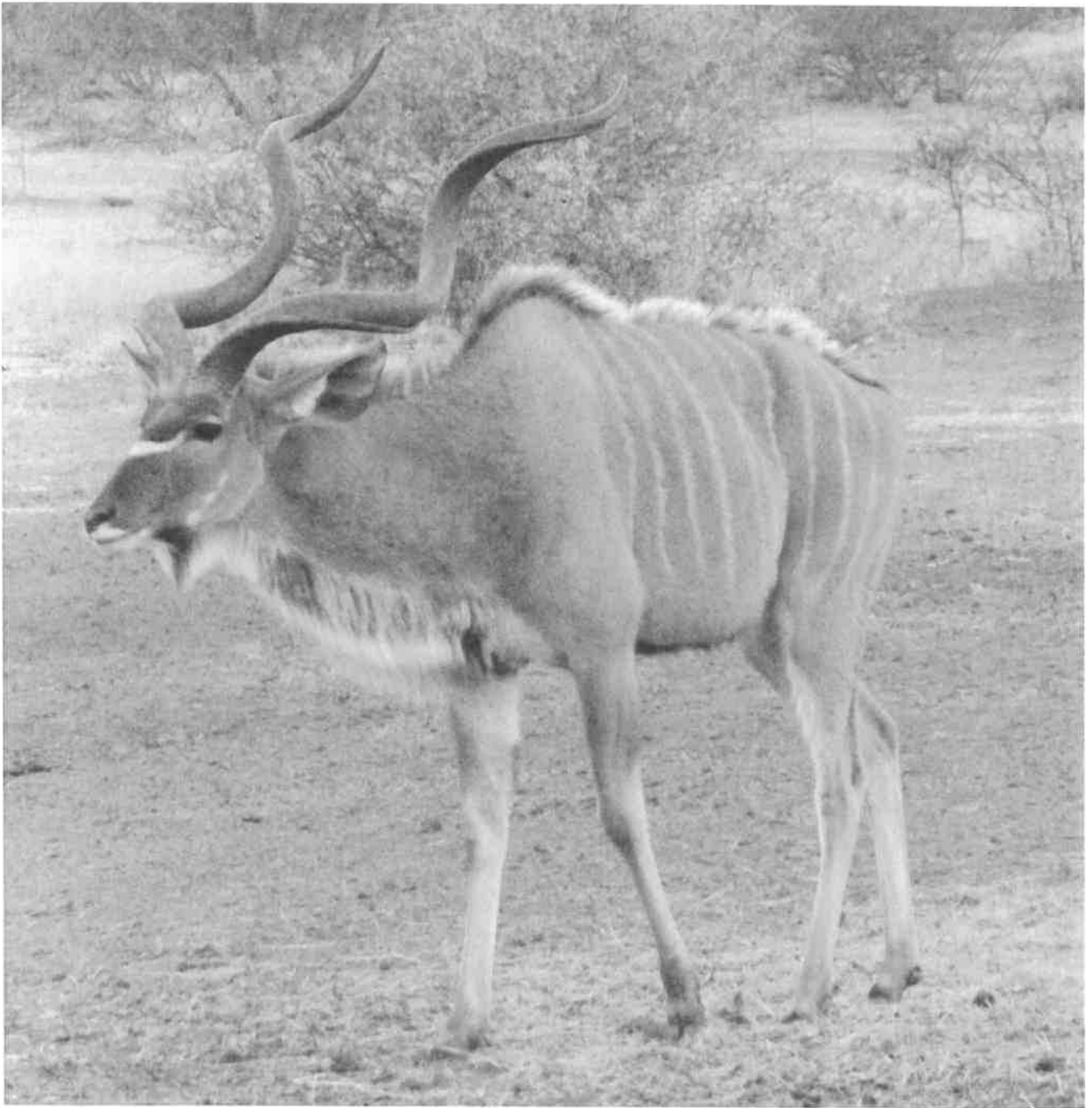
*A Kudu is not just one of the largest species of antelope in eastern and southern Africa it is probably also one of the most sought after game and trophy animal for an African hunter, whether it is with bow, rifle, muzzleloader, handgun, crossbow or whatever hunting weapon. Like that, it happened and behaved to me as well when I saw this majestic animal, which is nicknamed the grey ghost of Africa, in 2004 the first time in Namibia on a bowhunting trip. My eyes were shining with joy about this beautiful large animal with their large impressive horns with two and a half twists, its coat ranging from brown-grey to reddish-brown, the vertical white stripes along their torso, the manes running down the throat, these large round ears and the small white chevron between the eyes. That time it was close to sunset, daylight was fading away quickly, and my PH recommended not shooting on that fine bull we spotted and were close to 35 meters now. Unfortunately, we never saw a kudu again during that trip. The year after I was back again in Namibia and could bag this time to my great delight with bow and arrow my first magnificent specimen of *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* or *Koedoe* as named in Afrikaans.*

In early August 2014 I followed my continuous addiction of traveling and hunting in Africa for meanwhile a decade and was back again one more time in South Africa to hunt once more again with Izak Vos from Vos Safaris. Not only that he is a great outfitter, guide and highly experienced professional hunter for rifle and bow hunts, we also became close friends too during all the past hunts together. Never change a winning team.

We hunted several locations in the past days of this trip and had some great encounters with giraffe, steenbok, zebra, nyala, kudu, warthog, wildebeests and more. One day we had an encounter with a probably one and a half meter long monitor lizard that found our rural accommodation very interesting and wanted to get into it. One night we could also hear some roaring lions. What a great experience. Luckily, they were not interested in us but rather in their kill of a young giraffe that night as we could observe the next morning when we found it. Essentially, we were looking after eland why I took along again for this hunting adventure my reliable and trusty Elite GT 500 bow, set at 90 lbs draw weight with the Easton Full Metal Jacket 250 Dangerous Game arrows and the Muzzy Phantom SS 200 grain broadhead with a total arrow weight of 800 grain. I felt comfortable last times with this equipment and bow set up and all the

Highly strung

shootings and practices went very well the months before. We had tried to stalk the elands for some days without success because one of the group always spotted us before we could get closer and our chances were gone. Therefore, we had set up a trail camera at a waterhole where the elands frequently roamed and found out that they mostly came in very late at night close to midnight or even later. Nevertheless, over the last three days, their behavior had changed and they came in always earlier probably due to the changing weather conditions and an upcoming wind at night. Therefore, our hope was that they would come in before sunset. Beside this group of elands with two impressive bulls, we also saw a bunch of kudus on camera. Due to that, this afternoon



Ancient kudu coming in

hunt we agreed to ambush ourselves at a waterhole. The day before we had erected a hide made of natural building materials like branches and bushes, which blended in quite nicely in the unique landscape. The first two hours this afternoon in the hide it was calm and quite. We enjoyed the flying in and drinking birds, the warmth of the August sun and a pair of tiny squirrels running around in front of our concealment. Then all of a sudden, a single young female kudu sneaked in silently to the water followed by a young bull. As always, they were extremely cautious approaching the waterhole. The wind was excellent for us and after a couple of minutes we could see that they felt safe and calm and started to drink. We observed the scenery and the beauty of these magnificent two antelopes when little by little more and more kudu came in. We could not believe it but after about half an hour, finally we counted 53 kudu ranging around the waterhole. What a stunning picture. Izak leant over to me by pointing on an old bull and whispered that the landowner told him that there is somewhere a really old kudu bull of more than twelve years tramping around and that we could shoot this grandpa if we want as a special bargain offer. The one Izak was pointing on was this elderly gentleman and he was still a characterful personality. You could see his high age on his horns, skin and attitude. He had probably fought a lot in his life and did not

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The natural waterhole

struggle with the younger bulls anymore. How many exciting experiences he for sure had and how many interesting stories he could tell. On the one hand perhaps a pity to shoot him but then on the other hand for sure I should not hunt at all. Bowhunting is my passion - so come on. I nodded my head and whispered to Izak: "Let's go for him. He is a characterful kudu bull."

Due to so many kudu around, we had to wait for a situation when he was standing free without any other animal in front or behind him. The hunting gods were in our favor when after a while he was drinking alone, relaxed and as well nicely broadside at about 25 meters.

Although highly excited I had nocked in the arrow quietly and pulled my bow calm and smooth to full draw. I had to turn left and stretch my upper body a bit for a clear shooting window and aimed with the related pin of my Spot Hogg sight on the thoracic cavity, the area where heart and lung are located. My aiming focus was on the heart when I finally squeezed the trigger of my Scott release to let go the arrow on its determined mission. A second later we could see the kudu jumping up, doing a half turn on its hind legs and running to the left into the bushes close to the waterhole about thirty meters from where he stood and got shot. "Good shot my friend, the arrow went through, it is laying there in the sand and it is full of blood", Izak whispered. I breathed a sigh of relief and slowly but surely my blood pressure when back to normal when I sat back.

We stayed in our hide due to the fact that, beside the one I shot most of the others kudu were still there or came slowly back. Maybe the elands would also come - you never know and could not tell? When finally the daylight was gone, no eland had showed up and as well most of the kudu had left we stepped out of the rear of our ambush and went slowly to the spot where my arrow was laying. The remaining animals did not see us but had heard our noises and trotted slowly but surely away. The blood track was visible nicely with the flashlights and roughly 80 meters from where I had shot the kudu we found the bull laying in front of a bush. We radioed the landowner and told him about our harvest. He joined us about twenty minutes later with his Landcruiser. After the heartily congratulations we took a minute to honor the old boy before we set him up for some honest pictures. Although an earnest situation when he was taking the pictures with Izak and me kneeling behind the kudu we all had to laugh when he stated in Afrikaans: "Here, de koedoe is platt!" It sounded somehow funny. Then we enjoyed a tasteful South African beer before the three of us loaded the animal on the bakkie and drove it to the abattoir. The slaughtering afterwards brought up that it was a heart shot, an additional nice topping on an exciting hunting experience and this great trophy.



Our ambush natural blind





Happy Hunter and PH with the ancient kudu

One more time thank you very much to Izak for the great organization, his experience and company and all the nice people I had the opportunity to meet during this fantastic time.

Always good hunting, shoot straight,

Waidmannsheil and alles van die beste.

German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 22 years. Although he's bowhunted in several countries, he's become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

EQUIPMENT:

Bow: Elite GT 500 @ 90#

Arrows: Easton Full Metal Jacket 250 Dangerous Game with heavier inserts

Broadhead: Muzzy Phantom SS 2-Blade @ 200 grain

Optics: Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder

Release: Scott

Camo: Sniper Africa