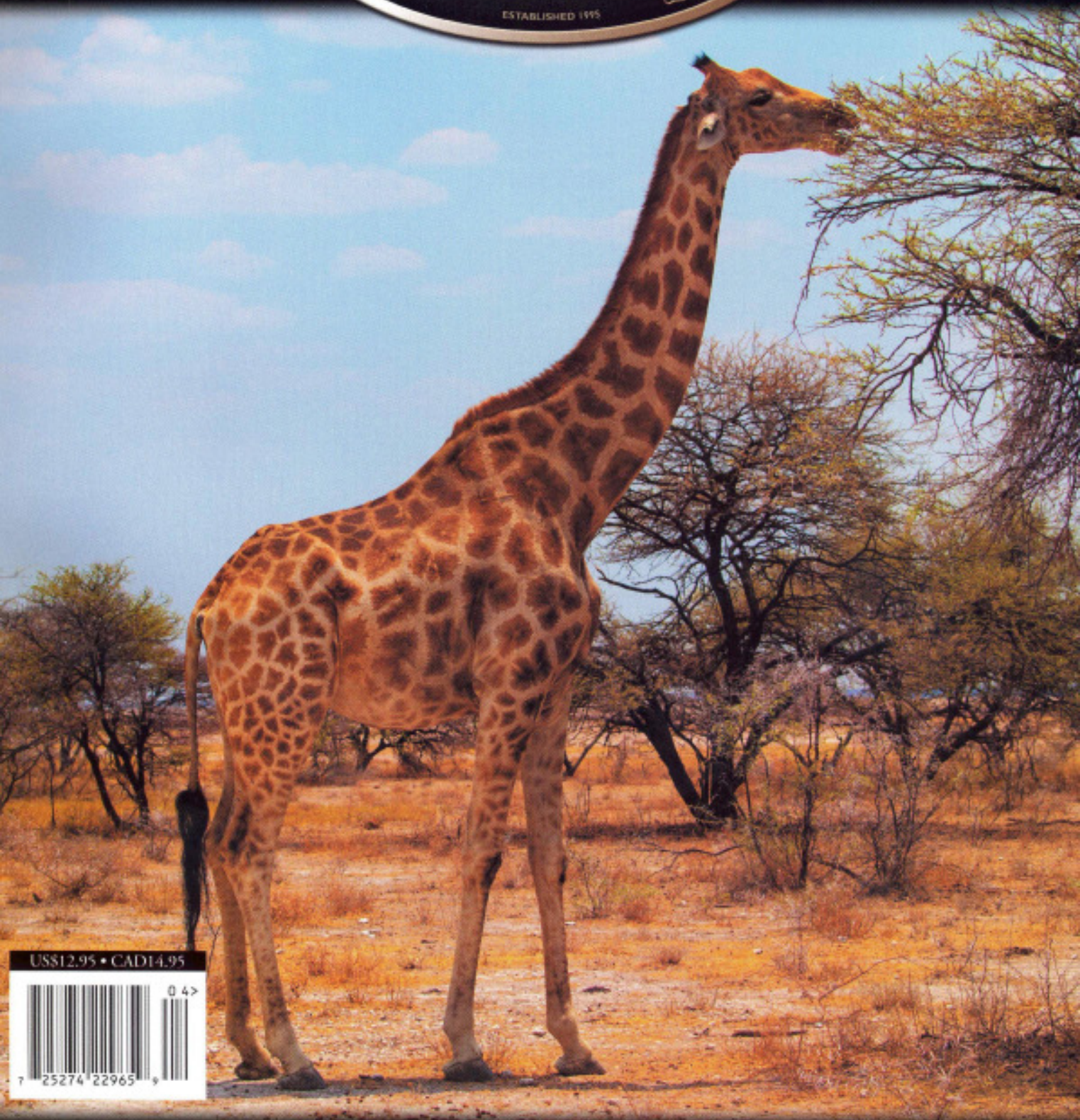


African Hunting Gazette

ESTABLISHED 1995



US\$12.95 • CAD14.95



I'd already hunted successfully with bow and arrow several times in Europe, when a friend of mine and outfitter I'd hunted with in France asked my thinking about an even more exciting and challenging hunt – a bowhunting safari on African plains game in Namibia.

Sounds good, I thought, and after some research and phone calls I told him: "OK, I'll join you!" Immediately the planning, checking, and preparing for this great new adventure started. Several months later, I travelled in April 2004 to the Dark Continent for the first time.

During the 390-km drive north from Windhoek airport, I enjoyed the diversified landscape while becoming acquainted with Namibia. For me, as a newcomer to this country, it was stunning, and I soaked up every impression. Our final destination was the Okapunja Hunting Farm, close to Etosha National Park, about 30 km northwest of Otavi. Okapunja, at that time, was managed by the experienced PH Gustav Bauer and his wife Uschi – two especially nice and lovely people – as well as their complete lodge and hunting teams. The warm welcome and hospitality was outstanding, and Uschi's kitchen produced delicious food.

The old, but wonderfully maintained and fully equipped farmhouse, with its big jacaranda tree on one side, looked beautiful, like an oasis in the bush. The vehicles, abattoir, cold store, and additional buildings were all in a good shape, and the inviting pool was enjoyably refreshing after being outdoors – not to mention an ice-cold Savannah Dry or Windhoek Lager.

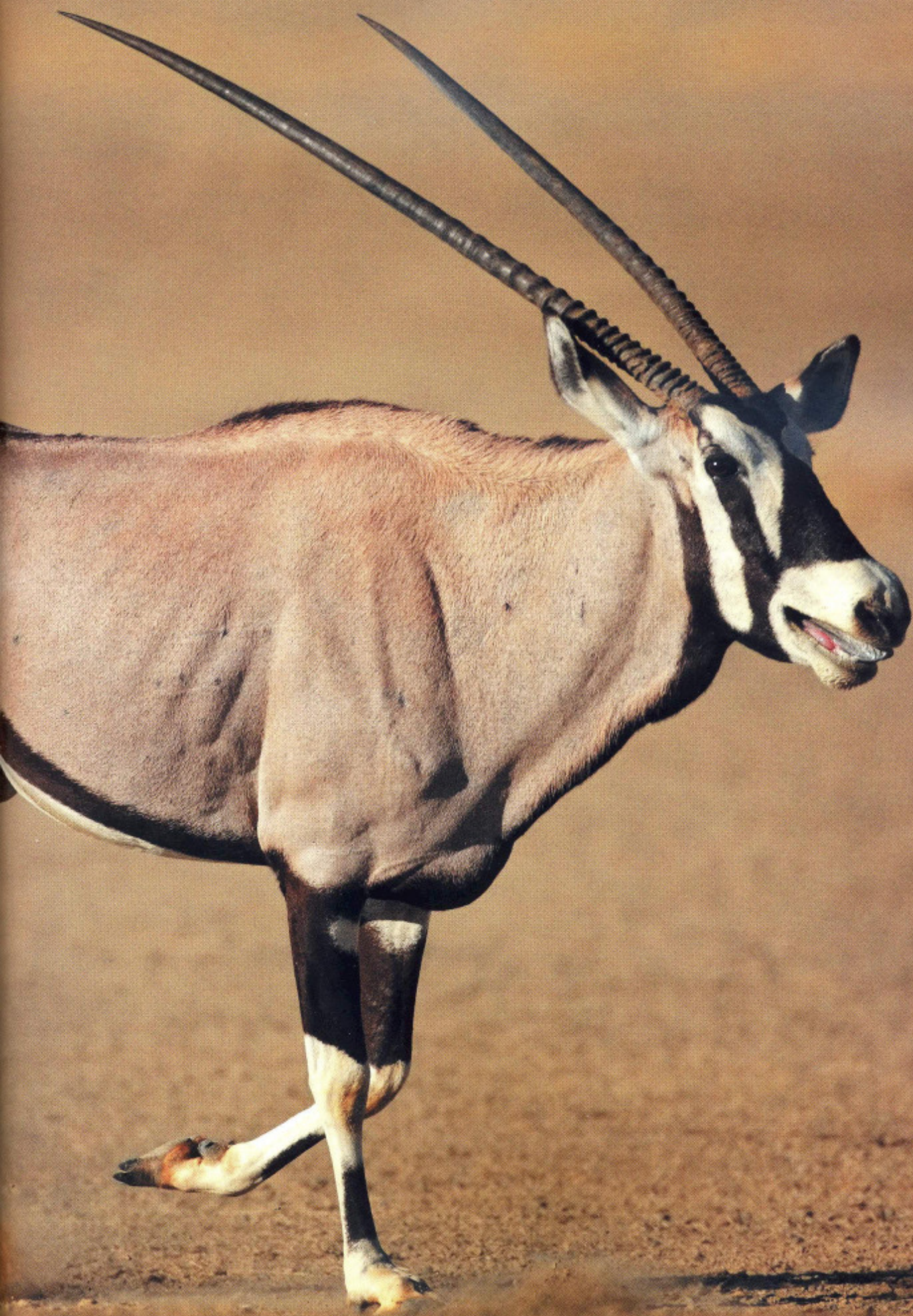
As a novice African bowhunter, we spent the first day on extended game drives over the huge property to get acquainted with the wonderful farm, the beautiful landscape, and the different game species. At this time of the year, the African bush was green and abundant with magnificent wildlife.

After being familiarized with the hunting blinds and hides, the anatomy and behaviour of the various animals I was seeking, and the surroundings at different spots I'd be spotting from, plus some nice stalking for two days, we settled in a blind

First African Bowhunting Safari

By Frank Berbuir







Berbuir spent the first days of the hunt driving around Okapunja Hunting Farm with his PH to become familiar with the hunting blinds, the different game species, and Namibia's beautiful landscapes.

"Good things come to those who wait, and finally the gemsbok stood slightly quartering away at 22 metres."



After two days of driving around the hunting area, studying the game and the different kinds of cover, on the third day, the hunters settled into a blind.



*"I heard the charge. I heard the PH say shoot.
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Berbuir used Beman ICS Camo Hunter arrows tipped with 125-grain Muzzy Broadheads to hunt his gemsbok in northern Namibia.

on the morning of the third day.

Birds and butterflies gathered in throngs at the waterhole, and a tortoise made its burdensome way from the nearby bushes through the grassland. A young kudu bull showed up for a quick sip. Then, at 9.00 a.m., a trophy gemsbok bull – this amazing Namibian heraldic animal – came into sight around 100 metres from our location. Gustav and I checked him out with the binoculars, and he whispered: "That is a real good one." Oh yes, I thought by myself, and the next second I felt my heart pounding like a sledgehammer.

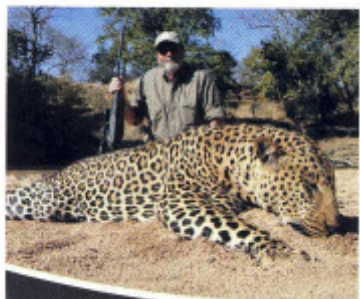
"OK, Frank stay calm and get ready," I mumbled to myself as this magnificent antelope continued to approach. My adrenaline level accelerated like a rocket into the sky when the bull came within shooting distance.

The gemsbok was nervously checking the situation and walking around the waterhole and salt stone. Thanks to Gustav's patience and experience, I stayed calm, and we kept so quiet that you could have heard a pin drop. Good things come to those who wait, and finally the gemsbok stood slightly quartering away at 22 metres. I pulled my 65 lbs. Mathews SQ2 bow with the Beman ICS Camo Hunter arrow tipped with a 125-grain 3-blade Muzzy Broadhead to full draw, and aimed with my pin sight onto the vitals. It was deadly silent when I released the arrow for its lethal mission.

The arrow was placed well and hit both lungs of the



Gary Phillips • Assegai Bush Game Reserve • Po Box 136 • Grahamstown 6140



US mobile number: 2146017610 • SA Mobile Number: + 27823742643
Email: gary@gamehuntingsa.com • Website: www.garyphillipshunting.co.za

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Bowhunting: Namibia (2004)

animal. But the gemsbok pulled up like an aircraft and disappeared into the bush. After the shot I felt all my tension melt away and, together with Gustav's appreciation of the shot placement, I felt safe that the flight of the bull would end not too far. We waited for half an hour, which felt like eternity for me, before we followed the tracks and the blood trail.

Luckily, the gemsbok had gone down only 200 metres from the shot, and when we found him, I felt like the luckiest guy on earth – I had become an African Hunter.

I had a fascinating, exciting, and challenging time on my first African safari, and the decision for me to come back the next year was crystal-clear. And again. And again. But those are other stories.

Shoot straight!

German hunter Frank Berbuir is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 15 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 supply chain risk manager in the automotive industry.



A trophy gemsbok bull appeared at 100 metres and slowly approached to where the hunters were hiding in their blind. When it was within 22 yards, Berbuir pulled his 65-lb Mathews SQ2 bow, and the animal expired only 200 yards farther.

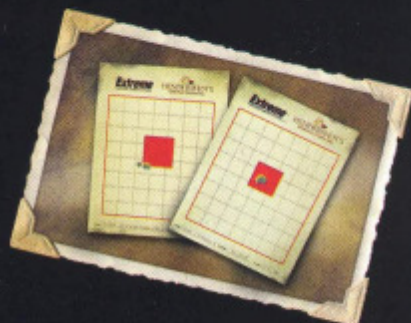
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