

UNIVERSAL HUNTER

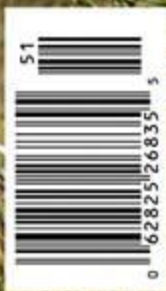
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HUNTING
IBEX IN KYRGYZSTAN
AND SPAIN

Cape Buffalo with Bow and Arrow

MY DREAM CAME TRUE

By Frank Berbuir

All my travels to the different countries of southern Africa for bowhunting and vacation have been so far a fascinating and enjoyable part of my life, and I have to admit that I became addicted to it.

I made it back to beautiful South Africa in August this time and arrived on the Johannesburg airport on a sunny morning where my friend and PH Izak picked me up.

For this trip, my bowhunting journey was very special for me. I travelled for my long sought after dream of a cape buffalo with bow and arrow together with PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris. I know Izak, an excellent and highly experienced Professional Hunter for dangerous game, especially buffalo and elephant and as well for other Big & Plains Game, from former hunts in Mozambique and South Africa where we became close friends. He is the outfitter and PH in person and together with his family gave me a great and hearty welcome.

Our plan for the next days was to walk and stalk on a cape buffalo in the Limpopo province in the northern part of South Africa. For this endeavour, I had exercised, trained, learned, and practiced a lot specifically. With my equipment and bow setup, I felt extremely comfortable and able to do the job.



Frank's Cape Buffalo with PH Izak Vos.

The Elite GT 500 bow at 90 lbs, along with the Easton Full Metal Jacket 250 Dangerous Game arrow and the Muzzy Phantom SS 200 grain broadhead with a total arrow weight of 800 grain, should perform well.

We were just three guys this early and chilly Saturday morning when we stepped out of the "bakkie", a Ford Ranger pickup. My PH Izak, Johan, an accompanying PH with my camera, and myself. We left the car behind some thick brush and walked and stalked roughly two kilometres until we came closer to the scouted area where we spotted a bachelor herd of buffalos the days before and found their favourite grazing area. I realized my upcoming feeling of excitement with every step. The broadhead practice shots on the shooting-butt the days before and early

this morning all went fine, but now came the time for rock and roll – "Africa is not for sissies!"

We could spot with the binoculars the dust cloud the bachelor group produced on their wandering which indicated their direction, and with the wind fortunately in our faces, we sneaked slowly behind some bushes to lie in ambush. It did not take very long before the first buffalo came into visible range.

"Holy smokes, what a huge animal," I thought when I first looked at it from about 50 meters.

"Stay calm," Izak whispered. "This is just a young bull; the bigger and older ones will come at the end of the troop." Wow, my blood pressure was rising up to the high-level motor speed of a race car engine when the crowd of wild buffalo gathered and roamed in front

of us and our sparse cover was just bushes. They could run us over easily. Sometimes a buffalo was facing our direction, but the wind was luckily in our favour; although it swirled a bit from time to time, the buffalos did not get it directly.

It became very risky when one soft bossed younger bull became very interested and headed directly toward our direction, snorting and sniffing to find out what might be behind the bushes.

I became really concerned when he still moved forward and I saw Izak putting the securing lever of his .458 Lott rifle on unsafe and slowly started to lift his gun. Fortunately, the young daredevil lost his interest and turned around when he was at ten metres from us. "Holy cow" that was exciting and gruelling.

Then "the Boss" approached more or less as the last one to join the squad which grazed calmly on a spot of

grass. "Son of a gun, this is an awesome bruiser of a buffalo", was my thought when I saw him. He was big, really big, with a tremendous body size, hard boss, and set of horns, and he looked mean and awkward. Robert Ruark's dramatic explanation of a cape buffalo's stare became reality for me: "A buffalo looks at you like you owe him money." A moment in your life you can hardly describe unless this moment is right in front of you. He made his position as the big shot clear to the others. Each buddy that came up close and personal got hit by his horns or boss which sounded very imposing like smashing a heavy sledgehammer on an anvil. What a magnificent spectacle.

About 20 buffalo were meanwhile in front of us, and I was in a kneeling position when "my buffalo" stood free and nicely broadside. I used my

Nikon Range Finder to locate him at 25 meters. Izak look at me and just nod his head which meant: "Frank, do it – now!" Luckily, I calmed down during the whole exciting scenario and was ready for the moment of truth. I had practised a lot with my bow set up and studied their anatomy as well. At a snail's pace, I lifted my bow with the nocked in arrow, grabbed the Gripwerks quilted maple grip and drew slowly up to a full draw.

Maybe because of my high adrenaline level, it felt easy to pull the 90 pounds of the bow in that situation. The pin of the Spot-Hogg sight was facing exactly on his vital area. A soft touch with my index finger on the trigger of my Scott release and the Easton Full Metal Jacket Dangerous Game arrow went off and silently flew to its mark. The impact was evident by a cracking noise.

First impression was that I made a good shot. I felt relieve when Izak smiled at me and put his thumbs up and whispered: "It was a brilliant shot directly behind the shoulder."

Mortally wounded by the Muzzy Phantom SS 2-blade broadhead, the buff jumped up. When he turned around, we could see that the arrow stuck out on the other side, so it penetrated completely thru the massive chest cavity of this brute. It was so amazing to see that.

He stumped about twenty meters,

stopped, turned back to see what had happened and lay down.

Izak told us to be quiet, calm, and not to move because we wanted to give him time due to the fact that all the other buffalos were still there.

After a short while that felt like eternity, we could hear his death bellow and see all other buffalos rushing to their companion trying to protect him. A picture I will never forget.

He was dead now. No additional bullet from the rifle was necessary.

We radioed the land owner, and when he came with the "bakkie" and shot three times in the air, the remaining buffalos backed off and we could make some great trophy photos and load him on the car.

It was interesting to see how quickly this big 1,765 pounds animal was loaded within a few minutes on the car.

The slaughtering gave 827 pounds of meat and a beautiful trophy.

The spread of my buffalo officially measured 41 1/8 inch—wow! That was impressive as well and it was an outstanding trophy. It had everything a buffalo should have—a big hard boss, nice dropped curls, and a wide spread.

You can never really appreciate the enormous size of these magnificent animals until you get up close to them. He was a mature bull with exceptional horns that would easily qualify him for the Record Books.

A couple of days later on a different location and farm in the Limpopo province, I also shot a nice big common waterbuck and a Limpopo bushbuck, along with a huge feral boar I would harvest before the buffalo. It was a great trip and hunt with a great PH and good friend and a perfect organization, along with serious and well-planned training, preparation, and equipment, which performed excellent on all animals; it paid off perfectly.

All in all, it will be a memory for a lifetime and it was an amazing experience.

One more time, thank you very much to Izak and his wonderful and hospitable family, as well as to all the nice people I had the opportunity to meet during this fantastic time.

"Alles van die Beste."

—Frank UHM

