

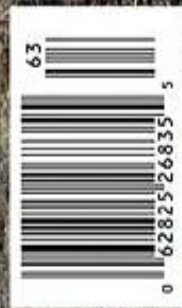
# UNIVERSAL HUNTER MAGAZINE

**BULLS  
OF THE  
NILE**

**Q&A WITH  
SHANE  
MAHONEY**

**FALL BEARS:  
CINNAMON PHASE  
ALBERTA BEAR**

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# UNPREPARED IN COLORADO

# A Passion for Warthogs

## Four Pigs, Three Bows And A Gun

BY FRANK BERBUIR

Honestly, I do not know a hunter that does not like to hunt pigs, regardless of the species and whether it is a wild boar, feral hog, javelina, bushpig, peccary, or warthog. Whenever, wherever, and whichever. In 2004, I discovered the same passion in Northern Namibia when, for the first time, I was acquainted with those martially-looking critters called warthogs.

For some reason, they were fascinating to look at, with their two pairs of huge tusks protruding from the mouth that curved upward, their mane down the middle of the back along their spine, and their wart-like protrusions found on their large heads, which serve as a fat reserve and are used for defense when males fight. Moreover, it was amusing watching them run with their tails standing up straight like an antenna.

One time on a beautiful farm in northern Namibia, I had the amazing opportunity to harvest a fantastic gemsbok with bow and arrow. After that hunt, we headed to the famous Etosha National Park. The following morning, my PH Gustav and I went out at 5:30 a.m. to a ground blind to wait for kudu or warthog. After setting up our stuff in the blind, we enjoyed a wonderful sunrise even though we both were a bit tired still.

At about 6:20 a.m., that unexpectedly changed when a big warthog strolled out of the bush to the natural waterhole. "Frank, there is your boar," Gustav whispered to my ear. What a monstrous creature I thought to myself when I first saw him. He was quite impressive with his tusks and self-re-

liant behaviour as he approached the water source. Now, everything had to go fast because warthogs normally just come to scoop some water and go back to where they came from. Promptly, I grabbed my bow knocked an arrow and was ready while Gustav switched on the video camera. After the drink, the boar was headed directly back from where it came so we blew a short whistle hoping the pig would stop.

Fortunately, the warthog was curious and stopped for a deadly second so I could place a quartering away shot from 28 yards, using a 125-grain Wasp Jakhammer mechanical broadhead-equipped Beman arrow from my 65-pound Mathews SQ2 bow. The "vlakvaark" winced and rushed away like a sprinter from the starting blocks into the bushes to the right. For a few seconds, we heard branches cracking, and then all of sudden, we heard a shattering grunt before it was dead quiet again. "The warthog is down, Frank," Gustav whispered. "Let us wait a while and then go and find him. He is not far," he said. We waited about 15 minutes and then followed its tracks from where I shot it. The blood track was sparse, but the footmarks were visible in the reddish-brown

sand. Gustav was an expert in reading them. Just 70 yards from where I shot the pig, we could see something lying in a bush. Horrido, it was my warthog, and it was a fine specimen of *Phacochoerus africanus*. We both were extremely happy about this amazing morning and the awesome result.

Although the animal string-jumped a little bit, the broadhead hit the upper lungs and cut the aorta as we found out during the slaughtering. Since then, I have become addicted to hunting these bruisers.

For years following that hunt, I always visited and hunted in Namibia. In 2007, I visited twice that year. There is nothing better than traveling to Africa when your hometown is starting the winter season and the weather is cold, grey, and pluvius. For the second time, I hunted deep in southern Namibia close to the Kalahari Desert where the countryside and scenery are different than in the northern part of this beautiful African country. Due to the rough territory and more or less totally open grassland with very sparse cover, stalking was not a preferred option so we decided to hunt from a stone blind.

The first afternoon hunt started at 3 p.m. when we headed to the blind,

and we regrettably flushed a good old warthog out of his bed under a thorny bush. "Damn, why didn't we see it," I thought. Hopefully I will have the luck to meet that buster again.

The next morning pulled me out of my bed at 4:30 a.m., and after a quick coffee and two pieces of cupcake, we were out on the Land Rover and headed back to the blind.

Early that morning, I had the fortune to harvest a fine ostrich rooster with bow and arrow, but that would be another story. At 9:30 a.m. after we had taken trophy pics of the big bird and loaded him on the "bakkie," we decided to walk and stalk for the warthog we spooked the afternoon before.

Deliberate in movement and our ears perked for any noise or action, my PH Christian and I sneaked from bush to bush for about a mile.

Just when we were moving without any cover, the boar from the afternoon before charged out of his bush approximately 25 yards in front of us. "Holy smokes!" Now Christian and I were spooked. Fortunately, the warthog did not take flight. No, it was too curious. After a short sprint, it stopped and stood uncovered in the prairie like us and spied what these humans would do next.

What a scene – two guys and a wild pig rooted to the spot under the African sun in this wonderful landscape waiting to see what happened next.

Christian ranged it at 45 yards

standing left broadside. I stood slightly behind him, and at a snail's pace, I lifted up my Bowtech Tribute and placed my hand around the Gripwerks birds-eye maple grip. Dead slow, I nocked in the Carbon Express Maxima Hunter arrow with the 125-grain G5 Tekan II broadhead. In slow motion, I drew my 71-pound bow and settled the sight pin on the spot of his vitals.

I released my arrow, and within a split-second, it passed through the hog. The boar cut a 90-degree hook to the right and ran up the hill out of sight. Ten yards behind the spot where the warthog stood, we found the arrow and the blood trail. After hard tracking under the glittering African sun on a sparse blood trail, we found the boar dead under a bush. The entry hole of the broadhead showed that the shot was a little far back, but fortunately caught the lungs. Exhausted but happy about the harvest of this South-Namibian Tusker, we took some trophy pictures before we went back to the vehicle to drive to the warthog to load him up. After that, we enjoyed a hard earned Windhoek Lager back in camp.

Two days later, I was asked if I would like to go out to hunt for a "kitchen" springbok or two for some meat, but I would need to hunt it with a rifle for some long-range shots as soon as we would find the right specimen. I said why not; hunting is not just about trophy hunting, and

there is nothing more worthwhile than providing healthy, good meat or food for your dinner plate. We headed out on the vehicle and drove several miles before we walked for a while to get in range of a waterhole where the springbok frequently roam. At about 120 yards, we waited behind a small acacia tree and observed the waterhole. It was early in the morning and not much happened except the always present guinea fowl or pigeons flying in to the water source. After about an hour without any activity, all of a sudden a nice warthog approached. After checking out the situation, it jogged straight to the water. It was a nice old trophy warthog and I asked Christian, my PH: "Can I shoot it as well, or are we just looking for a small springbok for the kitchen?" "You can shoot it if you want; it is good meat as well and a nice trophy pig, too." I slowly lifted the 30-06 rifle, switched the safety off, and set the reticle of the Leupold scope on its vitals when the boar kneeled calm and still at the waterhole. Smoothly, I pulled the trigger and released the bullet on its deadly mission. The impact on the warthog was clear and without doubt because it just turned around, made it five yards, and expired more or less on the spot. It was a great experience as well, and Christian congratulated me on another fine old Southern Namibian Tusker. It made a tasty roast for dinner during our time there as well. By the way, we also luckily shot a springbok for the kitchen in the afternoon that same day at a different location.

During my hunt with Izak Vos and Vos Safaris in early August 2014, my major intent and hunting ambition were not to shoot a warthog, but you never know what will happen.

During the past six days of that hunting trip, we had some very memorable events and occurrences with the wildlife in the beautiful Limpopo area in northern South Africa. We walked and stalked or glassed and stalked and could have bagged some great trophies as well. A massive eland bull was the quarry I was now focused on so I had my reliable 90-pound Elite GT 500 bow equipped with 800-grain Easton Full Metal Jacket arrows and Muzzy 200-grain, two-blade broadheads.

We found several tracks of a group of eland the last few days at two different waterholes and tried to get close to them. However, they always espied us



Lucky hunter Frank with his first warthog

early and escaped, so we decided to sit in a blind for this afternoon. Izak and I were joined by Anton the landowner, who also likes to hunt with bow and arrow and just wanted to follow the action. It was quite cozy and crowded with three people in the small blind that was imbedded nicely in the surrounding area under an old acacia tree. At about two o'clock in the afternoon, we started our sit, and although it was August and South African wintertime, it was fairly hot. For about an hour, nothing happened until we could see a squad of about 25 banded mongoose running fast toward the waterhole to take a sip. What a funny picture to see this band of tiny but very lively carnivores running around for about five minutes before it became calm again. We realized that a breeze has sprung up, and unfortunately, it started to swirl around which would not be good for our situation. Due to our former experiences with the wind the last few days, we were prepared for this and had a bit sun-dried Rhino scat with us. We had picked it up and stored in a bag and now we lit it up a bit. This should work as scent control against the swirling wind. In fact, it worked because when some kudus approached the waterhole, they were not disturbed at all by this special mixture of smell. Only we were affected because after a while it smoked like a chimney inside and we felt like cured meat. With the smoke getting into our eyes, we were all close to crying and Anton had to cover his eyes with a handkerchief. We all had to discipline ourselves not to laugh about what was going on, especially when a big "pig of the plains," better known as "vlakvark" in Afrikaans or a warthog, suddenly came out of the bush and approached the waterhole from the right side.

Izak, Anton, and I were utterly excited.

"Frank, do you see this monster," Izak whispered and pointed to the right side on the tip-tapping pig.

"Holy smokes; that's a bruiser," I thought. "Do you want to shoot it," he asked. What a question. "Sure, let's go for it; this is a whopper," I mumbled. Generally warthog have a clear attitude and pattern when they approach a waterhole. Their procedure is normally to go straight to the water, kneel or bend their head down, scoop some water, turn around, move back

the way they came in, and disappear again. And all that normally happens rather quickly. Exactly like this the old warrior behaved, so everything had to go quick and fast. Izak looked through my rangefinder when the big boar arrived at the water and he showed me with his left hand four fingers followed by a clenched fist and another 4 fingers, which meant it was standing at 44 yards.

I was sitting on a small plastic chair and had my bow ready with a nocked arrow in my left hand. Nicely broadside, the warthog was standing with its head bent down for a drink. My heart rate and blood pressure was peaked when I drew my bow in slow-motion and settled the 40-yard sight pin slightly higher above the spot of his vitals.

I slightly pushed the trigger of my release, and a second later, the arrow nailed deeply into the hog's chest. We could clearly see the impact. The boar turned to the right and ran up the way it came. After about 30 yards, it staggered, and after another 25 yards, we saw it fall



Bowhunting a South African bruiser



Male *Phacochoerus* tusks can reach a length of 25.5 to 63.5 cm (10.0 to 25.0 in.)

to its left side, lying on the ground of the savanna.

What excitement. The shot placement seemed to look good and Izak and Anton held their thumbs up. They whispered: "Die vark is plat," which means "the warthog is dead," but we did not celebrate because some kudu were still there and we did not want to spook them and maybe eland would show up later as well. We kept quiet for another hour until the sunset started, and it quickly became dark. We left the blind even though there were still three kudu females around, but it was dark and with the noise we made by leaving through the backside of the blind they jumped off without realizing what really spooked them.

We walked to the waterhole and



On the "bakkie" with Danger the brave hunting dog

about five yards behind the spot where the warthog stood we found the arrow full of blood. There was a good blood trail as well, and we followed it up to the point where we saw the warthog fall down. But to all our surprise and astonishment, the warthog was not lying there anymore. We could see it made it back on his feet somehow, and we followed the tracks and blood trail before this also disappeared. Because it was late and dark Anton called one of his trackers to bring along one of his hunting dogs. I was a bit concerned and nervous because of the situation. Anton and Izak both stated: "With that shot, the boar is dead. We will find it; don't worry." When the tracker arrived with their dog named "Danger," we started at the point of the last tracks and blood spots. With flashlights, we tried to illuminate the surrounding area that mainly consisted of knee-high grass, some bushes, and acacia trees. Meanwhile, it was nine o'clock at night, totally dark and "Danger" was not really motivated or convincing. She looked at us with an impression that said, "Guys, it is late. I am off work now and want to lie beside the campfire." After an hour of intense searching, we stopped and drove back to camp. For me, this was a more or less sleepless night, and early in the morning, we all gathered again at the point of the last tracks and blood spots. Now, "Danger" seemed to be awake and dedicated and picked up the spoor. After about 150 yards, we

heard her barking. Quickly, we walked to the place where she was and could see the "vark" lying dead under a dark thorny thicket where it slipped in last night before it died. It was really hard to see it lying there. After tracking hard last night, we finally found it this morning under the clear African sky. My feeling of relief was immense, and I could not resist cuddling the brave dog that finally found my "next morning warthog." Later in camp, she got one of our delicious "Boerewors," or Afrikaans for "farmer's sausage." The placement of the shot and the broadhead hole showed that the shot was good and cut both lungs, but these critters are tough as we realized once again.

Exhausted but happy about the harvest of this South African Tusker, we took some trophy pictures before we went back to the pickup, loaded the warthog, and enjoyed a hard-earned cold Castle Lager even though it was early in the morning. Once more, I want to genuinely thank Izak for their great organization, his experience and company, and all of the nice people I had the opportunity to meet during this fantastic hunt. As always in Namibia or South Africa, I experienced excellent hospitality and greatly enjoyed my time in these wonderful African countries with lovely people.

Take care, always good hunting, "Waidmannsheil," "Baie Dankie & Alles van die Beste." UHM