



Bedfordshire: CWD

Hunters on tour



Paul Childerley welcomes a team of European hunting journos to the UK, with the aim of guiding them into fallow, muntjac and Chinese water deer. The pressure is on...

I was approached by my European hunting agent, Diana Hunting Tours, to organise a Zeiss media tour of my hunting grounds in England. They proposed that 10 hunters plus sponsors would fly in to Heathrow. A big proposition, but I was up for it, and before long the dates were upon us.

The team was collected by a tour bus, with a big sign reading #passionforhunting on one side and Variety Tour 2014 on the other side, with sponsor logos all over. The bus had been previously used for Rihanna's tours in Germany and had been custom-made with bunk beds to sleep 18, a kitchen, lounge and relaxing area. Upstairs was a cinema/music/chillout room.

Day one on the tour saw us head to Bisley Shooting Ground in Surrey, where the journalists were presented with the plan for the next four days. Each journalist was furnished with a Sauer Rifle, Hornady bullets and, of course, a Zeiss Victory V8 2.5-20x56 riflescope. The object of the tour was to test the new V8 in an extreme variety of hunting situations. The first test was to zero the rifles on the 100-metre range ready for some 1,100-yard shooting on day two.

The English weather certainly played its part in putting the scope to test, as the second day dawned cold, wet and windy – not ideal for long-distance shooting, but the rifle-and-scope combination produced some excellent scores and some amazing grouping, really showing the benefits of the versatility of the elevation of the scope. Owing to its 36mm tube, it gives more elevation clicks than any other product on the market.

While at Bisley, the journalists were given the opportunity to make a journey into the past and try a traditional peep-sighted Bisley rifle. This had no scope, only iron sights, which makes us appreciate how far technology has come in 100 years. After dinner, it was back to the tour bus to travel to Bedfordshire to start hunting.



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The team arrived at my main hunting area in Bedfordshire for a briefing on which species we were going to hunt and how. Each hunter/journalist was assigned a guide and a set area to hunt. The guide was given specific instructions to make sure the journalist could test the products to their maximum potential.

The tour was designed to test the products in different hunting scenarios. This evening we were after muntjac and fallow bucks. Some guides would be foot-stalking and some were in high seats, but all were told to stay as late as possible to test the products in poor light conditions and to return before first light to change locations and hunt under different conditions to the previous evening. I was guiding Kristoffer Clausen from Norway, who was after a trophy fallow buck. We hunted hard and walked many miles, saw a lot of animals and could identify them, even in poor light, but there wasn't a good enough buck to shoot. After the team bagged six muntjac and one fallow pricket, it was time for a full English breakfast and to plan the afternoon in Oxfordshire.

The team enjoyed the tour bus to Oxfordshire, giving them all a well-deserved break to rest and freshen up ready for the late afternoon hunt. The bus pulled up into a rural village; the tourists visiting the areas got quite a shock when the journalists exited the bus in hunting clothes with rifle cases. On the cards in Oxfordshire were muntjac, fallow bucks and roebucks. The guides were sent to different estates with instructions, and I took Igor Timmermans to hunt for a muntjac. We stalked through young plantations and managed to call in a muntjac doe to about 20 metres away, but it didn't present a good broadside shot – we were filming as well as shooting, so the opportunity had to be absolutely perfect.

Nevertheless, Igor was really pleased with the hunt as he had been able to see the versatility of the scope in close hunting situations. It had been a bit disappointing for me to not take a deer, but the other guides seemed to be enjoying my bad luck, especially as it was another successful hunt for the team in general.

After another great evening swapping hunting stories and banter, I left the guys partying on the tour bus to get some rest before another early start. Everyone was up and ready for a 5.30am start and was assigned their new areas to hunt. It was a good morning's hunting – I



Happy hunters: The European dream team ready to tackle the best of British game



The stalk begins with fauna clearly in abundance

was with Kristoffer Klausen, who shot an unusual fallow buck with one antler as well as several muntjac.

It was time to get back on the bus and head back up to sunny Bedfordshire for some more muntjac stalking through mixed woodland and plantations. The weather was warm and sunny, in contrast to the beginning of the trip. By the end of the day the bag total was 12 muntjac and two fallow bucks. It was another hard day's hunting for me – luck was not going my way, and everybody apart from me was loving it.

Excitement was starting to build in anticipation for the next morning, as it would be the opening day to the Chinese water deer season. It was definitely the time to celebrate the day's success and everyone was in great spirits.

The final day was 1 November – time to get hunting CWD. Most journalists had not hunted Chinese water deer before, so it was a

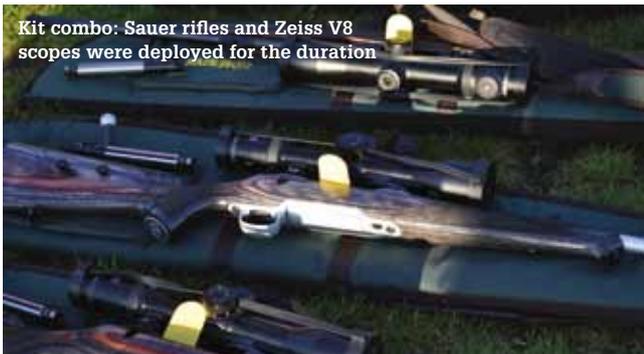


Bedfordshire: CWD

Day one on the range – a chance to put the Zeiss optics to the test



CWD chance: Paul's luck finally came good at the end of the hunt



Kit combo: Sauer rifles and Zeiss V8 scopes were deployed for the duration

new experience, one that they greatly appreciated. With this species you often take longer shots over arable fields – providing a great opportunity to test the scope and its abilities once you start to push the ranges. On the morning briefing, Kristoffer Klausen expressed an interest in taking a medal CWD so I assigned him to Scott, my head gamekeeper. But I needed an extra guide for this morning – so I asked my ‘northern monkey’ friend, Peter Carr, as he has hunted with me for many years and knows the species very well.

Peter soon arrived, and the time came to take out the sponsors to give them the opportunity to hunt a CWD. Peter took out Alena Steinbach to a high seat in a wood, which he has hunted in many times before, which he successfully got a CWD within the first 30

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minutes. Alena was thrilled with his guiding skills. Meanwhile, I took two journalists out and my luck finally returned. I managed to take two cull animals in under an hour.

Once we met at the larder, there were several journalists that hadn’t managed to get a CWD, so I had to make a quick plan for them. Peter was a hero, though it pains me to say it, as he took out Jens from Hornady and David Capp from Denmark and managed to get two more animals on the ground.

I set myself the task of taking Kristoffer Klausen out for a medal, as the morning stalk hadn’t gone his way. It would be a difficult proposition as by this time it was late morning, the deer were jumpy, and I had a camera operator and Alena as a spectator

along with Kristoffer and myself. Peter had put the pressure on, too, declaring to all who would listen that he was the ‘best guide’ of the bunch.

We hunted hard for over an hour to get the right animal, but they weren’t playing ball. The animals were in the middle of the fields and were so jumpy. I made a plan that we’d wait on one side of the field and sent Alena, as the beater, to walk the deer round. It worked perfectly – two does came running past and the buck came to 100 metres and stood perfect broadside.

We stood up and Kristoffer took the buck by resting on my shoulder. A great shot under pressure with excellent teamwork, and all captured on camera. I could return to the larder with my head held high with a very happy Kristoffer.

We laid out all the game for a presentation and as a mark of respect for the animals taken over the tour. It was an excellent hunt, and I was so impressed with the Zeiss Victory V8, I am now a proud owner of one. ■



Star guide? Pete sees six deer grassed from six outings



Must try harder: Paul finally tasted success... on the ninth attempt