

Brenda's MONSTER MOOSE

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #72 —

"He's got big palms or paddles -- whichever you call them --, but he's not very wide." "There are lots of points on top, but they aren't very long". "Look at his front tines, it's a shame he doesn't have good palms". These are the words a moose hunter hears and says during the long hours and days of slugging through moose country while glassing for or studying bull moose. Ultimately it's almost always a compromise, as there aren't many 'perfect' sets of moose antlers.

The first thing I look for is mass -- how big are the paddles; then I look at the number and length of the points. The brow tines or fronts are of less importance and of course width is last. Some hunters only want width -- it has to be a 60" moose, or bigger. For me, balance is the key; I

would rather have a well-balanced set of antlers, with big paddles and lots of points, with reasonable fronts -- than something that was very wide, but weak in the other areas. A

70" moose is fine, but there are a lot of 55" moose that I would rather have on my wall.

Several days earlier, Brenda and I had both shot mountain goats, spotted from base camp (Short Story # 22), and had since taken a pack string several miles west to a spike camp set up just for moose hunting. The camp was on the side of a hill, overlooking a very large valley, with mountains not far to the rear. This was moose country at its very best.



For a perspective, Brenda is about 70" tall. This is a pretty nice set of moose antlers.

Brenda shot her moose on the last day; they had spotted him from a distance, with a cow, and made an approach before starting to call. The bull would leave the cow and make an approach, then back off. The problem was that the willows were very thick. The bull sometimes got close, really close, but neither guide nor hunter could see him as he thrashed around in the willows. This went on for 45 minutes.

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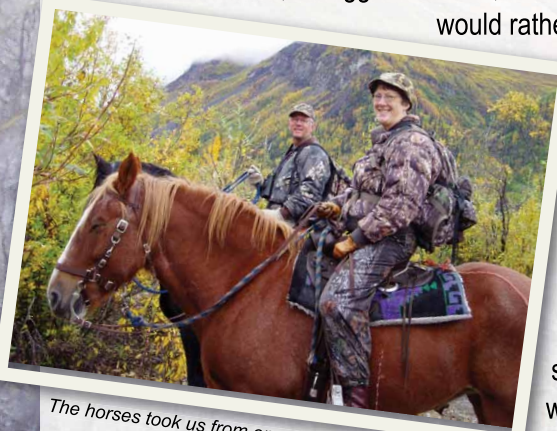
Finally the guide saw movement, at about 30 yards, and figured out which end was which. The shot was through the brush with a 300 Win. Mag. 180 grain Nosler Partition. The bull exploded out of the brush, ran a few yards and fell. The hunt was over!

Midway^{USA}

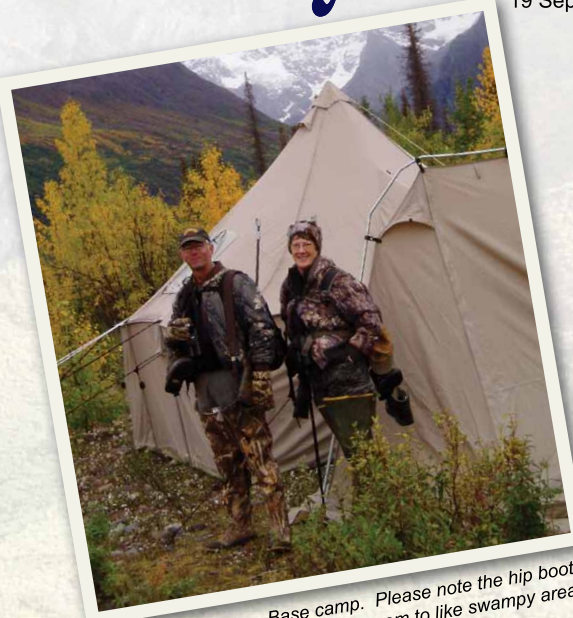
Larry Potterfield

The Wrangell Mountains
St. Elias National Park,
Alaska

19 September 2006



The horses took us from one glassing location to the next. The backpacks held our rain gear and lunch.



Base camp. Please note the hip boots; moose seem to like swampy areas.