

# Last ELK HUNT

## at Trinchera Ranch

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #185 —



*The biggest elk I ever shot and certainly at the highest elevation (11,200 feet). My shot was from the flat below.*

The experience started for me in 1994, when my good friend Tom Fruechtel suggested that the Forbes Trinchera ranch would be a good place for Brenda and I to go elk hunting – so, we booked a hunt there that fall. Then, unexpectedly the old Blount Sporting Goods company invited me to be their guest at the same ranch, a few days before our scheduled hunt. I did both hunts, shooting a mule deer on the first, with Blount – then Brenda and I both shot elk a few days later.

That was the first of many trips there; but it was more than the hunting that brought us back. The ranch was nearly 200,000 acres, divided into several sections, with a different guide laying claim to each section – knowing it like the back of his hand. Over time, I got to hunt all of those sections more than once and developed a real love for the

Trinchera ranch, as well as the guides and the staff.

My most memorable hunt was probably the one in which the truck got stuck in deep snow in the creek bottom,

as we were going after a nice bull. I ran the rest of the way up the hill through knee-deep snow to get a shot at the elk. For reasons I'll never know, he stopped in a small patch of pines and gave me the shot. Then there was the bull that came into a small clearing just at dark. He was with cows and they made us; we never had/took the time to look him over, just saw that he was big and took the shot. He was a great trophy, but all broken up from a long season of fighting.

Ranch headquarters are about 8,000 feet, but the elk are all the way to 11,000, early in the season. That was Bubba's area and he took me there a time or two in the later part of the season. I commented that I would sure like to hunt the early season there; Bubba's comment was "sure, you and everybody else." Finally I got the chance, and shot my biggest elk ever.

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"...first of many trips..."

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Unfortunately, all good things come to an end; so they say. The Forbes family sold the ranch; the new owner rightfully made several important changes to the mission. That was my last elk hunt at Trinchera ranch; perhaps one day I'll go back.



Larry Potterfield

Trinchera Ranch  
Fort Garland, Colorado  
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*Transportation around the ranch was in pickup trucks or Suburbans, using well-maintained logging roads.*



*Visiting the ranch each fall was like coming home. The lodge was magnificent and seemingly never changed.*