

# The SPANISH MONTERIA

— LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #283 —

Most hunters in the United States have likely never heard of a Monteria, the Spanish word for their traditional driven big game hunt. Drives are a popular method of hunting, and game management in Spain—and very traditional in most of Europe - for at least the last 500 years. There’s nothing quite like it in the United States, though in many places, whitetail deer are hunted in a somewhat similar manner—however, on a much smaller scale.

It was our daughter Sara who got Brenda and I involved in this hunt; she had participated in a Monteria two years earlier and wanted us to try it. We arrived in Spain and shot driven partridge for three days, then drove a bit farther southwest for the Monteria. Interestingly, for this event,

we were part of group of 24 hunters, from several different countries. Of course, English, by necessity, was the common language.

With a group of hunters this large, safety is

always the number one consideration. We had a safety briefing each morning, hammering on “where the bullet stops—in the dirt.” All shooting blinds or stands were strategically located to keep each hunter out of the line of sight of the others. Also, each hunter had a guide, to help spot game and provide for additional safety. Interestingly, many of the hunters were shooting Blaser rifles.

The most exciting and surprising part of a Monteria was the dogs. There were nearly 500 involved in each drive.



*I borrowed this Blaser R93, in 9.3 x 62 for the hunt; worked quite well.*



*It's mid-afternoon, the Monteria is over, and I've peeled my jacket and vest—from the cool morning. These three red stags and one female was my harvest for the day.*

Each pack of 20-24 dogs had a dog handler, who took the hunt and the performance of his/her dogs very serious. After the hunters had been delivered to their stands/blinds, half of the dogs, with their handlers, started from each end—at about 10:30 am. In a couple of hours, the dogs met in the middle;

“...the game went in all directions...”

then returned to their starting points. They chased every track they crossed, and the game went

in all directions, sometimes squirting across open fields, but sometimes holding up in the thickest cover.

The shots were almost exclusively at moving animals at distances from 50 to 200 yards. The dogs were always many yards behind; but caught up quickly. Certainly not a recipe for precision shooting. The harvest on the best day was: 47 red stags, 26 hinds (female red stags), and 10 wild boar. My contribution that day was three red stags and one hind.



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El Zumajo  
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*This pack of dogs pushed a wild boar up the drainage to this waterhole. He is laying dead, just behind the guide.*