



IT WAS IN THE CARDS

By Jeff Schlachter

Rod Schlachter of Calgary, Alberta, kneels beside his massively palmated 7x6 bull elk taken in 2005. Top circumference on the right antler is a jaw-dropping 11 6/8 inches!

My eyes practically popped right out of my head and my dad's jaw dropped to the ground as we stared at the absolute GIANT bull elk that stood in front of us at less than 50 yards. We felt completely helpless as neither one of us had a draw tag for elk, so I turned the video camera on to capture as much footage as I could of this brute of brutes. This bull was not only one of the widest we had ever laid eyes on, but sported insane mass and palmation like we had never seen before. We were

hunting sheep as I had drawn a once-in-a-lifetime November archery bighorn tag in the Alberta Rockies, but at that precise moment would have given anything to trade my tag straight across for a bull elk tag. I'm sure anyone in our shoes would have wanted the exact same thing as this enormous bull stood directly in front of the two of us. We watched this monarch of the mountain until it was too dark to see. We were flabbergasted and completely stunned.

I instantly thought of my uncle Rod and cousin Scott, who had both been fortunate enough to draw the “suddenly” coveted bull elk tags for the zone we were hunting. Bull elk tags that were even going to become more desirable to them as we played the footage back that night over a few drinks, deciding on a game plan for the morning. Scott was out as he had work commitments that he just couldn't get out of, so it was all up to Rod to make it all happen. My biggest problem was that Dad and I had also spotted a bachelor herd of rams that were working their way into my area, which for me was top priority as the tag in my pocket was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Rod studied the map as we showed him the exact spot where the huge palmated monarch had stood, hoping it would be in the same area the next day. They headed home and we turned in for the night, with visions of full-curl rams and giant bull elk dancing in my head.

Morning came early and we ventured out, into the area we hoped our rams had headed since we had seen them last. We spent the morning scouring the basin and surrounding mountainside, but the sheep seemed to have vanished into thin air as rams so often have a tendency of doing. All the while we glassed for these rams, we wondered how Rod was making out and if the gagger bull had stayed where we had put him to bed the night before.

Rod had started out early that morning, heading to the precise spot where we had seen the bull. He was there for first

light, but there was no big bull to be found. Slowly he crept in complete stealth mode along the trail, hoping at any moment he'd see the set of GIANT antlers he'd seen on our video. Nothing. He went all through the areas where we'd hoped the bull would hang, with no luck. Well, maybe it was all too good to be true, he thought, and turned around to make his way back through the way he had come.

All of a sudden, just like his wildest dreams, the GARGANTUOUS BULL magically materialized out of nowhere. He was about 100 yards down the trail, looking in the opposite direction. Immediately Rod dropped to one knee and his .300 Weatherby broke the early morning silence, dropping the monster in its tracks. When Rod arrived beside his fallen monster, he couldn't believe his eyes; the bull looked even bigger on the ground and there was definitely no shrinkage this time.

Now what to do? He was all alone and this bull's body equalled his impressive antlers. Rod had no choice but to leave his trophy behind, walk out, drive down the mountain to where he could get cell range, and call for help. Quick to respond was Nick, my uncle, and Rod's brother and good friend Kevin. As they drove up to help Rod with the huge bull, they all wondered how we were making out. Meanwhile, Dad and I were thinking the same thing about Rod and his morning hunt.

We finally had enough of glassing for the elusive rams, and with sore eyeballs we turned back to see what had transpired with the elk hunt. When we got back to where we had parked



The three happy Schlachter brothers – (left to right) Lorne, Rod, and Nick – are all smiles as they pose by Rod's enormous Alberta bull. This gigantic bull grosses a shade over 359 inches B&C.

the night before, Nick and Kevin were just getting there and we instantly knew that Rod had connected on the bruiser bull. We arrived at the side of the fallen bull and just stood there, all completely stunned and in awe of this incredible animal and what an absolutely amazing trophy Rod had been fortunate enough to put his tag on. This complete PIG of a bull had six points on the left antler and seven on the right with insane mass, palmation, and a huge bladed royal point. Just one extremely eye-catching bull that ended up with an inside spread of over 54 inches and circumferences over 12 inches, putting the score well into the 350s B&C!

So I guess you could say that in Rod's case, "It Was in the Cards!" 🍀

Check out the amazing spread on Rod's gorgeous bull. The staggering width of over 54 inches on this giant bull is what Jeff and his dad, Lorne, couldn't get out of their minds.

