



OUR OWN PIECE OF *Hunting Heaven*

BY GRANT BOWIE

Thomas de Scally of Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, with the gigantic mule deer he took in 2010. If you like them wide, this buck fits that category. The greatest spread is a whopping 35 inches, and after a number of deductions, the buck still nets 173 6/8 typical points.

Thomas de Scally contacted me last year to ask about submitting a story of the buck he took back in 2008. Upon seeing photos of this huge mulie, it was definitely "Big Buck" worthy.

The story behind Thomas' big buck began in 2008 when he was introduced to Greg Rensmaag and his dad, Harry

Rensmaag, through a friend. Thomas and Greg became good friends right away and have been hunting together ever since.

In September of 2008, Thomas' family purchased a piece of property on a remote private lake in British Columbia. One day Thomas went to visit Greg and Harry at their house and told them about the recent purchase. Harry was very surprised when

he learned of the property's location, and said he had hunted in that area before Greg was born. He had harvested a 5x4 buck there in 1980, which is mounted on his wall. Harry told Thomas and Greg that this place had some of the best mule deer hunting he had ever experienced and they had taken many deer out of there between 1980 and 1985. Over the summer of 2009, Thomas' family built a cabin on the property in preparation for the 2009 hunting season.

Eight months went by and November 2009 finally rolled around. At first light, they were already in the area that Harry had hunted 30 years ago. Harry refreshed his memory of the terrain as best he could and sent Thomas in the general direction up the side of the mountain while he and Greg went up the front side. Thomas walked along a dirt-bike trail that eventually ended up in a big cutblock, then followed the treeline until he stumbled across fresh deer tracks littering the terrain but all heading up the mountain. As he began his ascent, following the tracks, it wasn't easy going in the half a foot of snow and 45-degree incline. He found himself slipping and falling numerous times and thought to himself, "What did I get myself into?"

Full of adrenaline with images of big antlers going through his head, he made the poor choice of not taking breaks and pacing himself on the way, which he would soon regret. He was about three-quarters of the way to the top of the mountain when he came across a big opening. He slipped out of the bush and entered the opening. Over a small hill, he saw a two-point buck and doe running away from him. Thomas continued hiking without taking a break when, lo and behold, there stood the buck of a lifetime approximately 80 yards in front of him with six does. Trying to sight in on this monster and gasping for air at the same time, Thomas could not keep his rifle steady but fired anyway, hoping to get lucky and hit the big boy. A clean miss.

This monster trophy buck occupied his mind every hour of every day for quite awhile. Thomas was really hard on himself for making the mistake of not taking breaks and ensuring he wouldn't be out of breath. He wasn't going to make that mistake again.

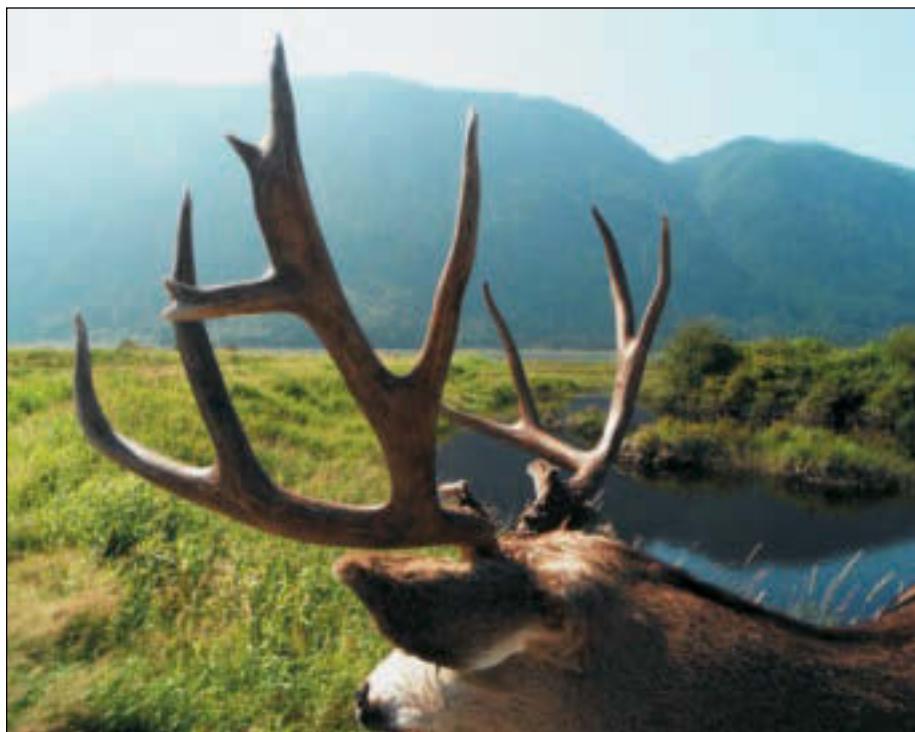
After months of dreaming and thinking about that trophy buck, November 2010 finally arrived, but this time Thomas was ready. First morning out, at first light, Thomas and Greg arrived at their spot, got their gear out, and started hiking up together, wishing each other good luck before heading their separate ways.

Greg went up the front side of the mountain while Thomas used the same route where he had missed the monster the previous year. Hiking up was a bit easier this year with only a skiff of snow at the very top of the mountain. On his way up, Greg radioed Thomas to say he had just seen a doe and a big buck with her but couldn't get a shot. Thomas got directions and would do his best to intercept them. Picking up the pace,

he made his way up and over one of the lower peaks and eventually ran into Greg as he came out of the bush after pursuing the buck and doe. The deer eluded them. The next day they decided to leave the mountain alone and explore other hunting spots in the area, but with no success.

On their last full day of hunting, the group planned to push the mountain one more time, looking for a dream buck. This morning was crisp, cold, and quite windy. Greg and Harry went their usual steep path up the front of the mountain and Thomas took his usual route up the side. Once up and over one of the lower peaks, he stopped to take a nice long break in preparation for the hike up to the highest peak.

About 100 yards up, he saw movement coming out of the bush but was unable to determine what it was. He got down on one knee and put his thumb on the safety. All of a sudden, there "HE" was, about 60 yards in front of him, the buck he had dreamt about for a year, and it didn't know Thomas was there!



This photo shows us the abnormal point this British Columbia mule deer grew. It actually has a matching abnormal on the other side.

With the buck standing broadside and looking around, Thomas raised the rifle and counted points . . . one, two, three, four, and pulled the trigger. Right in the engine room! The 150-grain bullet was all it took to drop the deer with one shot. After two or three front flips, it slid down the back side of the mountain and into a tree.

Thomas got on the radio to Greg and Harry and gave them his location. They knew exactly where he was. While Thomas waited for them, an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment came over him. All these years of hunting and finally his first trophy.

About 15 minutes later, Greg and Harry arrived and approached the buck together. He was a monster, a hefty 6x7 and 35 inches wide! With 22- and 24-inch main beams and five-inch circumferences, the buck eventually went on to score 173 6/8.

**Thomas with the buck he harvested on a chunk of land they call "a little piece of heaven."
I am sure it won't be long before we hear from this veteran hunter again.**



They took some pictures of the big boy and got him field dressed. Dragging him down was very interesting. At some spots, they just had to let him go and watch him slide down and hope for the best. Thankfully everything went well, and he was eventually at the truck. They had all taken a beating dragging this deer down that day, and Thomas was very grateful to have friends like Greg and Harry to help him out. This buck was the biggest one the taxidermist saw that year. That made Thomas feel good knowing he had landed a once-in-a-lifetime trophy buck.

The following year, in November 2011, Greg shot a hefty 6x7 mulie only a few hundred yards from where Thomas had taken his big boy. At the end of that trip, Harry said to both of them, "I don't know why I stopped hunting here. This is our own piece of hunting heaven!" Thomas couldn't have said that any better or agreed with him more! Thomas would like to thank Harry Rensmaag for showing "us young guys" the new hunting grounds. ☺

Garry Donald photo.

