

His Name is His Passion

Eighteen-year-old Steve Hunt of Sterling, Ohio, spends a lot of time hunting with his grandfather, Skip Johnson. On Dec. 27, 2006, opening day of the late muzzleloader season, the two were accompanied by a couple of Steve's friends.

Since Steve had shot a doe in the early gun season, he gave up his usual spot to one of his friends, while he headed for the other side of the road. By 7:15 that morning, he'd picked out a tree to break his outline and had sat down beside it.

There wasn't much activity during the first hour, but then Steve heard a shot pretty close, which brought him to his feet.

While surveying the area, he glanced behind him to see a buck at a mere 50 yards. Without bothering to evaluate antlers, he shouldered his .50-caliber inline, put the crosshairs on the animal's shoulder and squeezed the trigger. After the smoke dissipated, he saw that his first-ever buck was lying on the ground.

Almost immediately, the teenager began yelling for his granddad. And that was before he even realized how big a deer he'd shot.

Turns out, the guys had seen this buck a couple of times, but not during deer season. Once it had been standing in a soybean field. The other sighting was while Steve and his grandfather were hunting squirrels.

After Skip joined his wide-eyed grandson, they loaded the buck on an ATV and took it back to the house for photographs. After that, they took it to the local tavern for show-and-tell.

BTR Score: 220

-- By Jerry Hartzler



Steve Hunt's first antlered buck sports foot-long brow tines, nearly 30-inch main beams and wrist-thick bases. The mainframe 5x5 qualifies for the record book by its lonesome, but it's the more than 37 inches of irregular points that push it well over the 200 mark (make that 242-plus, if the inside spread is included).