

African

Outfitter

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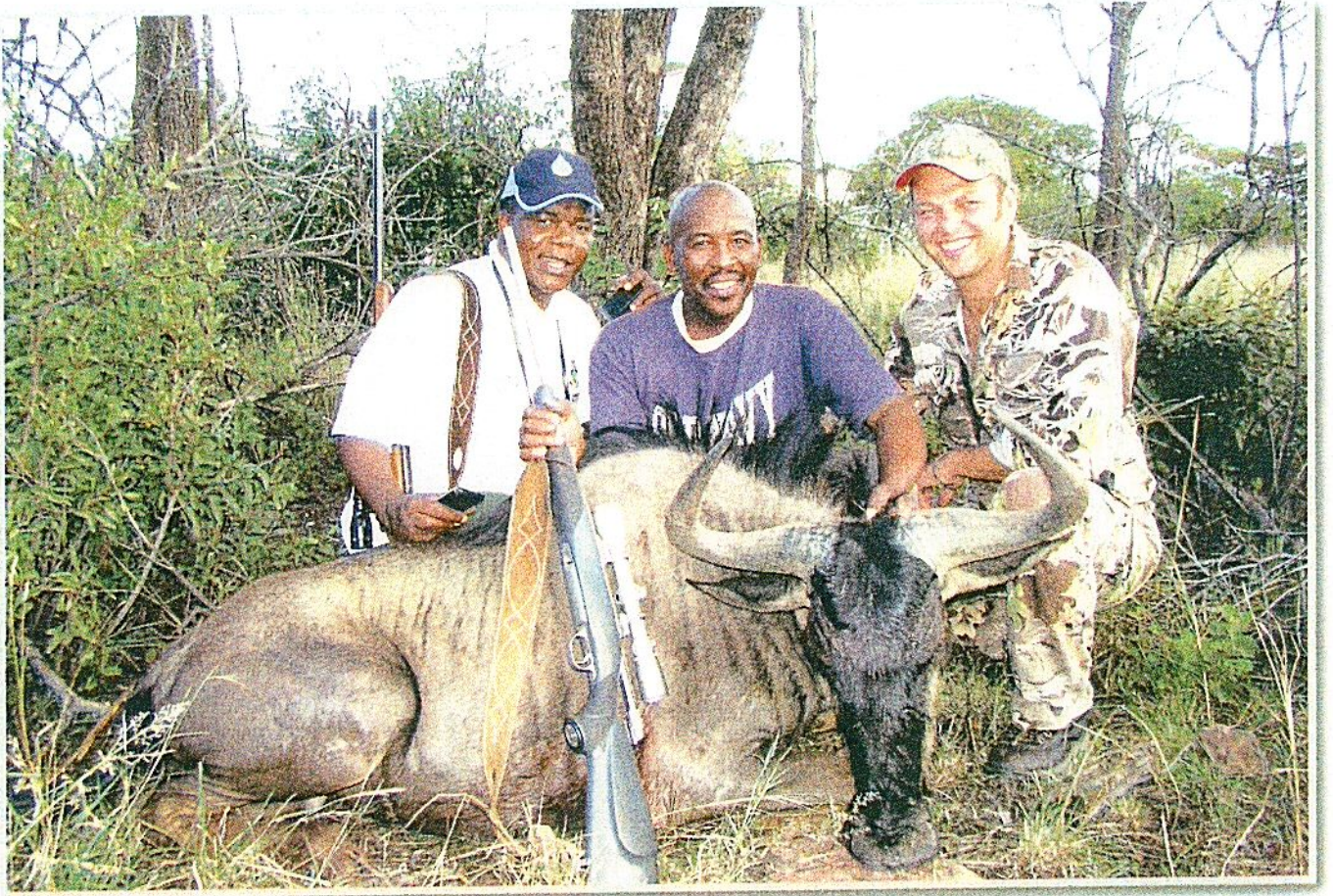
*Generations of
Hunters*

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An ecstatic Reggie Makoane (middle) with his first blue wildebeest. With him is Moses Maphosho (left) and Henu Cronje. Reggie shot the animal with Henu's .30-06 after some guidance from Henu.

Mike's Corner

Introducing the previously disadvantaged into the outdoors and hunting

Over the many years that I have been involved in the hunting industry, it was a rare sight indeed to see a non-Caucasian on a hunt as a hunter. Statistically, I would say that 96% of all hunters were white and the balance perhaps Afro-Americans. The outdoors sport of game hunting has never really caught on amongst the Afro-Americans. From a professional hunting point of view, Zambia and Tanzania have had indigenous professionals for some considerable period of time.

Having said all this, one could imagine my surprise when we booked a party of biltong hunters last season, and the majority of the hunters were indigenous South Africans. The leader of the group was an enterprising young lad by the name of Henu Cronje. An outstandingly good hunter and superb shot, he did a sterling job to advise, assist and feed the group. After the day's hunt, sitting around the fire with your favourite tippie, it was most interesting to see the interaction between the "salted" hunters and the novices. Nothing breaks down barriers faster than a campfire, especially when a bunch of hunters relive the day's hunt. The frustrations of having a stalk go wrong, wounding or killing your designated animal – all this comes out, some-

times to the great amusement of the group, but it is this kind of thing that forms a bond for future trips.

From a professional point of view, all the indigenous hunters were professionals with their own enterprises, doing extremely well in the corporate world. Hunting at present is certainly not a cheap sport anymore. Therefore, anyone that can afford to participate in this yearly outing must stand apart from the masses.

Game ranchers who do not have foreign visitors paying top dollars for their game and who rely on biltong hunters for an income now have a new client base for their surplus game. I believe that it is imperative for the hunting industry to attract more black hunters, which can only bode well for the future.

In conclusion, this season saw the same party back, but with several new faces. They do not possess firearms as yet, but it is simply a question of time before, I hope, we will see many more black hunters enjoying the great sport of hunting that Africa is famous for.

And hopefully, many more Henu Cronje's will come to the fore.