

MIND YOUR MANNERS



“Everywhere it was buffalo, and more buffalo. I wonder whether the North American plains could’ve compared with this, in herds of bison, before the coming of the white man.”

—Harry Manners, writing in *Kambaku*, on the size of buffalo herds in the Marromeu swamps

By Phil Massaro

The charter flight was a bit bumpy (I don’t fly well to begin with), and though we had seen large herds of buffalo, sable and hartebeest from the air I was happy to have my feet planted on terra firma. It was the last hunt of the season, and as if Mozambique’s Zambezi Delta wasn’t naturally humid, Mother Nature had dialed up the temperature. No matter, we were there to hunt buffalo with a fantastic new rifle, so a bit of heat and humidity wouldn’t pose a problem.

Photo: Tom Martineau / TheRawSpirit.com



Photos: Author

My professional hunter, a stout young man named Poen van Zyl, met us at the airstrip, sorted our luggage and offered us refreshment. A couple of cool 2M lagers, the local Mozambican beer, were welcome relief after 28 hours of travel. It was a short drive to camp in the back of the Cruiser; not really long enough for my wife, Suzie, and I to fight off jet lag and sort out the names of a dozen or so people with whom we’d spend the next 10 days. But we were happy to unload at camp and see our quarters, a comfortable masonry building replete with shower, and it wasn’t long after that before we were sitting around the campfire at the lapa.

We were here for more than just a hunt. We were unveiling a new double rifle from Heym: the Model 89B in .450/400 3-inch Nitro Express. We’d booked with Zambeze Delta Safaris to hunt Cape buffalo in the forest area of Coutada 11. My friend Chris Sells, owner of Double Gun Imports (the sole importer of Heym rifles in the States), was on the safari with us, along with cameraman Doug King, as we’d be filming this hunt for an episode of “Tracks Across Africa.”

Poen was showing us around the camp—the mess hall, instructions for the solar-panel-fueled lights in our quarters, etc.—when he took me to the skinning shed. I was mesmerized by the buffalo skulls and horns when he uttered a phrase that snapped my head around and caused me to lock up like a pointer: “Our skinning shed used to be Harry Manners’ butchery, when he hunted here to provide buffalo meat for the sugar plantation. Harry would shoot buffalo in exchange for the opportunity to hunt elephant.”

“Wait, you mean *the* Harry Manners?!” I asked. “Like, the guy with the Winchester .375 H&H who shot more than a thousand

elephants? The guy who shot a bull with tusks weighing 185 and 183 pounds? He hunted here?”

“Oh yeah,” replied Poen. “If you’ve ever read his book *Kambaku*—he wrote all about the Marromeu swamps, right here in this block.”

Oh man, this just got even better. I’d taken an elephant in the very same region of Zimbabwe that Frederick Courteney Selous hunted. Now, to hunt the same ground that Harry Manners did was unreal.

I unpacked my rifles, my trusted Heym Express by Martini, in .404 Jeffery, and that sweet new Heym 89B in .450/400 NE. I had handloaded the ammo for both rifles with 400-grain softpoints and solids from Peregrine Bullets of South Africa. These monometal projectiles are fast-gaining a reputation for devastating terminal performance and high weight retention, and both rifles would put them into more-than-acceptable groups at the range. Clothing, bino, ammo belt and all the accoutrements were in good order. The next morning at the range, the iron sights of the double and my Swarovski 1X-6X scope were spot on, despite the long journey and the best efforts of the baggage handlers. (I lose a padlock or two from my gun case on every trip.)

The remainder of the day was spent trying to cut buffalo spoor in the forest. I couldn’t help but picture Harry Manners following trackers with that .375 over his shoulder, on the trail of big ivory. We had chosen the forest area of Coutada 11 so as to take the Heym 89B on a traditional tracking buffalo hunt; despite the enormous herds of buffalo in the swamps of the Zambezi River Delta, the shots there can be a bit too long for an iron-sighted double. A rifle of this style and pedigree

The Heym 89B performed spectacularly in the thick Mozambique forest once trod by famous ivory hunter Harry Manners.

belongs in the thickets, behind the amazing trackers who seem to see things we hunters cannot.

The Hunt

It was on our second full day when we found the first sign of buffalo—the head tracker, Gorchie, spotted a set of tracks. Upon inspection, it was a cow and a calf, not the dagga boys we were after, so we continued on in our search.

The sun was already high in the sky, and there was talk of lunch when the unmistakable cow-patty and urine stain in the middle of the sand road showed us more buffalo were nearby. There was no need for discussion. There were enough tracks to realize this was a herd of 20 buffalo, maybe more. This particular area of the huge concession consists of very thick forest, interspersed with dried pans of water and some openings in the midst of the thick stuff. We were examining the spoor, not very far from the truck, when Gorchie said two magical words: “Baas, nyati.”

Yup, Gorchie had spotted the herd, maybe a half-mile across a narrow, oblong opening in the forest. The problem? The wind was completely wrong. This did require a bit of planning, as the tracks indicated a good-sized bull in this herd. To get to them we’d have to make a long, arduous fish-hook of a trek through that vine-infested mixture of mahogany and teak.

“Phil, drink some water,” said Poen. “It’s gonna be hot and we may be walking for quite a while, depending on what the herd does.”



The author and his party of six stalked a mile through thick forest then crawled to within 45 yards of a buffalo herd to line up a shot on an old dagga boy.



Water was consumed, rifles were loaded, ammunition belts secured, and Poen and Gorchie planned a route. It required seven of us to quietly and accurately creep through the thick vegetation. We hoped to exit the forest—burned in some places, and lush green in others—on the downwind side of the herd. In that forest, where the possibility of bumping an elephant or buffalo certainly existed, I was more than happy to carry an iron-sighted .450/400. The Heym rifle had an unequalled balance, and its quick second shot surely engendered more than a bit of confidence. We used elephant trails where we could find them, for both speed and silence, but we were forced to traverse the thick patches by crawling over and under

fallen trees and the tangles of vines and creepers. At one point, Gorchie left us behind to creep to the edge of the opening to spy the location of the herd, and returned with good news: They were still feeding on the far side of the clearing. Our trek took us well over a mile, and I could tell we were turning into the wind when Gorchie slowed his pace considerably then did that famous squat-point-freeze move that trackers do when they spot buffalo that are close.

I could see them. Well, I could see some ears flicking and tails twitching, but the herd was a ball of black shapes in the dappled light of the forest's edge. Poen motioned Gorchie and me behind the base of a burned tree for a quick conference. "Phil, there's a good bull in this herd, on the left side," he said. "But we must crawl from here to get the shot." So, crawl we did.



KAMBAKU

If you'd like to learn more about Harry Manners, his book *Kambaku* is available from Safari Press. It's a great read and I highly recommend it. safariexpress.com

Wearing shorts, and carrying a rather expensive rifle in my right hand, crawling was a great experience—not. There was a wonderful selection of thorns and various sharp things on the forest floor, all of which did their best to draw blood. The combination of sun, excitement and ash from the burned areas had turned my mouth into a desert. The herd was still feeding calmly, and we slowly crept to within about 45 yards. I could then see the bull, my bull, head down, surrounded by three cows and a calf. I sat up, leaning the rifle on a small sapling that made a convenient rest, and watched my bull come clear of the others. Just as Poen was about to tell me to take him, that bull decided it was high time for a midday nap and proceeded to lie down, on our edge of the herd, slightly quartering toward us. With his vitals all compressed, this didn't make for my favorite shot, but Poen was completely convinced it could be done, and done right.

ZAMBEZE DELTA SAFARIS

Coutada 11 is essentially three hunting areas in one concession. The famous swamps, where the buffalo run in herds that are sometimes measured in the thousands, require a different hunting mind-set. The shots are definitely longer, and a scoped bolt rifle makes all the sense in the world. Those herds were counted at less than 3,000 head at the conclusion of Mozambique's civil war but today number more than 29,000 strong, as they were in days before the war.

The flood plains, the transition between the swamps and the forest, are interspersed with small palms and other scrub. It was there we took a half dozen reedbuck rams for the village. The forest, which I love the most, is Africa as I'd suppose you'd picture it.

But in all three environments the game thrives due to Zambeze Delta's unceasing anti-poaching operation, funded in part by Dallas Safari Club. They use motorcycles and helicopters, shotguns and radios, and they are effective. I've seen photos of more than 100 gin traps removed from the bush, and enough wire snares to fence most farms. My hat is off to Mark Haldane and the crew of Zambeze Delta Safaris. The game quality and numbers reflect their efforts. zambezedeltasafaris.com

Photos: Author

"You want to take him just under that left horn; slip that bullet in there and he's yours," said the PH. We used binoculars to verify there was no brush in the way, which might deflect the bullet, and I took a good grip on the sweet marriage of walnut and steel. The fine white bead nestled perfectly in the wide V rear sight, and I held about an inch under the lower curl of his horn. I'll never forget the glint of sunshine off the well-worn bosses, nor the glare off his wet nose. I broke the right trigger of the 89B, and at the shot all hell broke loose.

Buffalo were everywhere, covering up my bull before I had time to give him the left barrel. The herd—and my bull—headed out to a small island of trees in that open area, and his attendants surrounded the wounded bull. We had to wait for him to become clear of the others, which seemed like an eternity as they smelled and poked him with their horns. I was able to get another bullet into the bull as the herd began to clear out, and I actually knocked him down. However,

continued on p. 70 >>



HUNT HARDWARE



Double rifles are a special hunting tool, and the **Heym Model 89B** stands out among doubles. It differs from the famous 88B in that the barrel contour is slimmer, the receiver is rounded, the pistol grip has been opened up a bit and the balance is perfect. Heym makes its rifles to the customer's desired length of pull, and this rifle fit me perfectly. heymsusa.com



Recoil was no issue with the .450/400 3-inch, but the cartridge was extremely effective on buffalo. The **Peregrine BushMaster bullets** expanded perfectly and gave fantastic penetration. Handloaded to a muzzle velocity of 2075 fps, they provided all the killing power I

needed, yet the recoil was acceptable, as is characteristic of the .450/400 NE. peregrinebullets.com



For glass on this hunt, I used a **Bushnell Elite 10x42 binocular**. Images were crisp and defined, whether we were out in the harsh light of the swamps or in the shadowy forests. Light and rugged, the binocular stood up very well to the day-to-day rigors of safari. bushnell.com

My cartridge belt came from African Sporting Creations, and it worked perfectly. I could withdraw cartridges to reload the double with ease, even under the stress of walking up on a wounded buffalo, and they never rattled or fell out of their loops. africansportingcreations.com

CAMILLUS
Quality Knives Since 1874

AT THE EDGE OF THE JUNGLE, the world feels different.
The air is dense, and anything is possible.
I pause to appreciate the challenge.
One decision can be the difference between survival and failure.
My senses are heightened. My mind is prepared.
IT'S TIME TO GO BIG.

CONQUER YOUR WORLD.
Tested and approved by Les Stroud, the knives in this heritage series are expertly designed to survive the toughest tasks. Titanium bonded. Built to perform.
No matter the challenge, consider it conquered.

camillusknives.com/AHL

buffalo *continued from p. 55*

the tenacious qualities of a Cape buffalo are not exaggerated, and this bull was especially tough. He ran off another couple hundred yards, going down in a small clump of trees. His head was still up, however. It took another right and left from the Heym 89B before the bull was down and out. It was the first animal taken with the new rifle. The privilege of taking a buffalo with a classic cartridge on hallowed ground was enormous.

The Bond

With the buffalo down, with photos taken and a considerable amount of video footage shot, we loaded the bull into the Cruiser for delivery to the village of Peau (this was a non-export hunt; all the buffalo belonged to the people). Zambeze Delta Safaris provides a huge amount of meat to the native residents within the hunting concessions. Combined with their zealous anti-poaching operation, this makes for a flourishing game population.

Delivering this buffalo was an eye-opening experience for all of us. We met

the local villagers, and via translator, learned just how important this source of protein is to them. Children, holding even smaller children, gathered with their mothers to receive a ration of buffalo meat. Nothing at all went to waste. Smiling families, provided with food that is otherwise unobtainable, were as grateful to receive as I was to give. We found my first bullet deep in the entrails, and I pocketed it for examination. Within minutes, what was earlier a buffalo was en route to the myriad grass-and-mud huts that comprised the village, carried in small pieces in hands, and in baskets and buckets on heads. But it was on the way back to camp, with the sun sinking toward the horizon, when the whole safari was made for me.

The Honor

"Hey, Phil: Do you wish to meet one of Harry Manners' trackers?" asked Poen, his head craned out the driver's-side window to speak to me up in the high seat in the rear. I can't exactly print my response, but it was emphatically in the affirmative.

The man was walking down the road, with an umbrella in one hand, wearing shoes that were more feet than shoes. He had cataracts and the limp that comes from the bad back of old age; if I had to guess, I'd say he was in his late 60s. His name was Domingos Martenote, I soon learned, and he started his hunting career with Harry as the hunter's young gun bearer, eventually becoming Harry's official lion caller. It took two translators, but I got Domingos to sit down with me for an interview on camera. He told stories of the huge elephants that Harry took, and even gave us a demonstration of his lion-calling technique.

Most folks in rural Africa don't live to see his age. It was a pleasure to watch that man, bent with the fatigue of old age, become animated as he recounted his days hunting with Harry Manners and enthusiastically demonstrate his lion-calling technique. The honor of preserving his experiences on video was very special to me, and although it took two translators, we were able to joke with one another. His smile was infectious. Thank you, Domingos. It was wonderful to meet you. *ah*



✓ Reliably Low Prices
 ✓ Easy To Use Website
 ✓ Huge Selection
 ✓ Fast Shipping
 www.rockauto.com



Get the Muck OUT!
 Marble size AquasClear™ Pellets clear your lake or pond bottom. Beneficial microorganisms. Restore balance in natural and man-made surface waters. Increase water clarity. Improve water quality. Eliminate black organic muck. **A 10 lb. bag treats 0.50 to 1.0 acres - \$89.00. A 50 lb. bag treats 2.5 to 5.0 acres - \$319.00.** Apply weekly for 4 weeks then monthly to maintain. No water use restrictions.
800-328-9350 **New Reduced Prices!**
 KillLakeWeeds.com
 Order online today, or request free information!
AQUACIDE CO.
 PO Box 10748, DEPT 625K
 White Bear Lake, MN 55110-0748

NUMISMATIC LITERARY GUILD
AWARD-WINNING BOOKS
 Your Choice **FREE** TO THE FIRST 125 CALLERS
 FREE SHIPPING
 NO BUYER'S PREMIUM
 Low 1 Year Buyer's Guarantee
1800.321.8700
 Your choice of:
 - THE AMERICAN
 - AMERICAN HISTORY
 - AMERICAN FREEDOM
 - SHOOTING
 - NRA FAMILY

Explore our digital network for at-a-glance access to Second Amendment news, gear, gun reviews, videos and more.
NRA Publications.org DIGITAL NETWORK
 THE AMERICAN
 AMERICAN HISTORY
 AMERICAN FREEDOM
 SHOOTING
 NRA FAMILY

LOWEST PRICE EVER on DR® Leaf Vacuums!
 Perfect for **SPRING CLEAN-UP!**
 ✓ Rated #1 in Vacuum Power
 ✓ Easy, 1-Hand Dumping
 ✓ Stores Flat in Minutes
 ✓ Converts to a Utility Trailer
The All-NEW DR® Leaf Vacuum is designed from the top down to make yard cleanup easier, faster, and more thorough than ever before. And for a limited time we are offering them at incredible low introductory prices!
FREE SHIPPING 6 MONTH TRIAL
Call for FREE DVD and Catalog!
 TOLL-FREE
800-456-1138
 DRleafvac.com

High Volume Dove Shooting in Argentina
 Two hours by car from BA / No domestic flights
 Four full shooting days \$ 1800
 www.argentinabighunting.com / argentinabighunting@gmail.com
 phone + 549 221 5524945
 Argentina Bighunting

HIGH ADVENTURE RANCH
 No Game-No Pay
 34th year serving sportsmen
 Elk, Red Stag, Whitetail, Buffalo, Deer
 20 more Cabins, lodging & meals
 call 877-858-3481 or 314-293-0610
 www.HighAdventureRanch.com

Pine Ridge Lodge
NEWFOUNDLAND
 MOOSE & WOODLAND CARIBOU HUNTS
 www.pineridge.nf.ca
 huntginfo@pineridge.nf.ca • 877-406-1055

We Tweet About Things That Quack
 #americanhunter

Over 600,000 Customers Served Since 1998
 FDA-approved medications from USA Pharmacies
 Licensed USA Telemedicine Physician Network
 Call 7 days per week
VIAMEDIC CALL TOLL FREE
800-551-2431
 Visit Viamedic.com/AH for special offers

MARKETPLACE TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL 703-267-1300