

B&C South of the Border Sweepstakes Winner

# Hunts Coues' Deer

with Pusch Ridge  
Outfitters and Craig Boddington in Mexico

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On February 6, 2003, I received a call from Keith Balfourd of the Boone and Crockett Club informing me I had won the grand prize in their membership drive contest (a contest I had completely forgotten about!). The grand prize was a Coues' deer hunt in Mexico with Kirk Kelso of Pusch Ridge Outfitters. And as if that was not enough, I would also receive \$400 in cash and a 7mm Remington Ultra Mag from Remington's custom

gun shop complete with a 4.5x14 Leupold Vari-X III scope and mounts. Once I got over the shock of winning this incredible package, Keith told me there would be another hunter with me — the noted outdoor author/hunter and frequent contributor to *Fair Chase*, Craig Boddington.

From Reno, I flew to Hermosillo, Mexico, on November 29th, where Kirk and some of his crew met me at customs. We spent the night in Hermosillo. Craig, who was still trying to get back from Tajikistan where he had been hunting Marco Polo sheep, was going to have to meet us later. The next morning we loaded up our gear and headed to the ranch where we

would be staying during our hunt. The ranch house had all the comforts of home, including a hot shower, electricity, and comfortable beds.

The desert mountains in the area reminded me a great deal of the mountains in Nevada where I have hunted desert sheep and bighorn. Over the next two days we saw 20 or more bucks a day. On the third day of the hunt, after seeing a couple of dozen bucks, Martin, my guide, and I spotted three that interested us about 1,000 yards



Successful Coues' deer hunters and Grand Slammers, Boddington and the author, at camp in Mexico.

**OPPOSITE:** The author with Boddington and his buck; and the author with his Grand Prize Coues' deer.

away. We looked them over and decided to attempt a stalk even though we had only 40 minutes of legal shooting time left. We ran up a ridge, down a canyon, climbed out of that canyon, and scrambled to the top of the next ridge where we figured we would be within reasonable shooting distance of the group. Arriving at the ridge top, we found the bucks feeding not far from where we had last seen them.

With the sun now just barely above the horizon, I decided to try to shoot the largest buck. We estimated the animal at about 326 yards, which was a comfortable shot for me. With Martin watching through his binoculars, I waited for the buck to turn broadside. I squeezed off the shot, but due to the recoil, I lost sight of him. Martin said, "good shot, he's down."

It was nearly dark by this time, so we hurried across the canyon to find my buck. Within minutes we found it lying right where it had been standing before the shot. After congratulations from Martin, field dressing the buck, and taking a short break, we put on our headlamps to head off the mountain in total darkness with my well-earned Coues' deer. An hour later we were picked up by Kirk's dad and taken to the ranch house to take some pictures of the buck and have a hot meal.

The following evening Craig arrived at camp, and being the gentleman that he is, apologized for not being there to hunt with me. He didn't need to apologize — I knew that sometimes plans just don't work out. The next day I accompanied Kirk, Craig, and Ramone, Craig's guide, to find a Coues' deer for Craig. After several hours of glassing, we spotted several bucks across the canyon. Craig made a perfect stalk and took a great buck.

All too soon my Mexican Coues' deer hunt was coming to an end. That evening we all stood around the campfire and told great stories, which I am sure, were all true. But even if I don't remember all the stories we told that night, I will remember this "grand prize" adventure as first class in every way and one of the best-guided hunts of my life. ■



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Photo by Donald M. Jones