

# Bounder goes on a pheasant hunt

*Much better than a day in the office*



By Ross McLAUGHLIN

It was early in December when Ross Dutton (Ross #2) and I (Ross # 1) had an excellent day pheasant hunting with Gilles Lecompte at Sunrise Pheasant Farm in Eastern Ontario.

We thought it would be a great idea to bring out *Bounder's* publisher, Brian Warren, have him meet Gilles and his yellow Labrador, Sam, and then take him out on his first pheasant hunt. After a big breakfast and introductions, it was off to the fields, hopefully for some good shooting and – I knew – some great dog work.

The road back to the fields was not good for trucks, so we used the side-by-side. Brian got the good seat – inside – while the two Rosses sat in the trailer with the dogs in the crates.

As we entered the fields, two cock pheasants heard us coming and took flight. Secretly, Gilles was grinning, knowing how Ross and I were shooting the last time out.

We got out and started pulling the guns out of the cases. The dogs were starting to get excited.

They knew what was expected of them. Brian brought out his single shot 20 gauge. (Either he was one of the world's greatest shots or Ross and I could have some backup shooting to do.) Gilles explained that there were birds around and we could start with them while he went to "plant" some birds for us and the dogs.

Into the ditch the dogs headed, and we started to follow, trying to give Brian a few pointers about how to bring down the birds once they got up.

Up ahead Gilles was planting birds so we kept the dogs going. After a few false starts, we managed to get a bird up and away. After Brian shot, I took the backup shot – but too late, and it flew off into the other field. Talk about flying well (a little too well) and shooting skills needing some work! We laughed and started off again.

We caught up to Gilles. He started to point to areas we should look at to run the dogs in (hint-hint-wink-wink). Once again, the dogs didn't let us down. This time the bird dropped (don't know if we scared it death). Back it came with the dog wagging his tail the whole way in. Not sure who shot it but there was some discussion as it was a beautiful cock pheasant with not too many marks on it (ha ha).

The sun was still shining so after we had a

quick cup of coffee, Gilles was off again to plant some more birds to keep our excellent record.

I'm not sure how far we had walked, but the dogs had gone a lot further and with their great noses we managed to get a few more. Every time we caught up with Gilles he had that big grin on his face and asked how we were doing (knowing full well).

The clouds begin to roll in, so it was time to get moving again. The dogs were doing their thing and we were trying to help them, so we managed to get a few more birds. (Even a pheasant was bigger than a wild turkey, or at least it felt that way when it got put in my pouch).

We did a little more walking (like, "little" is the wrong word) and the dogs were good to us again. So we managed to keep up our low standard of shooting. (Or was it the safety/ no shell in the chamber? Never tell!)

Back to keeping up with the dogs.



Low and behold, the shooting gods were good to us and another pheasant fell! The dogs were doing a great job locating the birds. Gilles was still grinning but laughing with us.

The day was winding down and it was time to return to the trucks and sort out the birds (who-gets-what). That old saying: "A bad day hunting is better than a good day in the office" was confirmed by all.

I do believe Brian was impressed (maybe not with his shotgun) but with Gilles and the great birds he had put out for us. The dogs were good



and tired but still managed to get into the trophy photo.

The handshakes were done and it was back to the old grind of the real world – and maybe a snooze after supper.

*Note from Ross (McLaughlin): "I want to thank Gilles and his dog Sam for a great day, the marvelous weather (I am not sure if he had anything to do with it) and those faster-than-they-should-be birds (that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it)." ☺*



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