



Greg Alexander of Grimshaw, Alberta, with the huge bull elk he arrowed in 2009. Look at the length of those tree-busting tines! The G-1s, G-2s and G-3s are all over 17 inches, with the longest G-4 reaching 20 inches. The G-5s go 10 4/8 and 11 5/8. The antlers also carry good mass and gross score 369 5/8 inches. After 10 1/8 side-to-side deductions, Greg's bull nets 359 4/8 inches.

The fall of 2009 started smiling on me early. Working close to home, spending time with my family and friends, fishing, scouting, and practicing with our bows, what could be better! We awaited what would be a very intriguing and opportunity-filled archery season just around the corner.

Once confident about stand site locations, cameras and blinds were set up. Then Mother Nature stamped her foot down with extremely dry conditions, and weeks without a drop of moisture put the farmers into full gear. After returning home from work after not being around for 10 or more days, I found the crops were gone, water holes were dry, and other hunters had set up in every available field.

After a few close calls with some very respectable mule deer, our concentration was crushed, but all it took to lift our spirits again was the echo of the first bugle of the year. It was a refreshing sound after a week of hiking and calling with only a few sightings to show for my efforts. The bulls were just not talking in that heat.

On the morning of the eighth day, I pulled my treestand and blinds and went home for dinner. Throughout the entire meal, I was preoccupied with the thoughts of places I had overlooked. As I sat down to strategize, going over maps to see where I had permission and where the best food sources would be, it suddenly hit me. I remembered back in July, while at

THE BULL WE CALLED “MISTER”

BY GREG ALEXANDER

Huntfest, my brother Gord and I had taken in a presentation held by Ralph and Vicki. During that presentation, they had touched on land permission, hunting pressure, public land and the amount of acres we are blessed to hunt. Acting on a hot tip from Sheldon Bolduc about some huge scrapes he had found earlier in the season, I told my wife that I was off to the big timber and fresh spring water.

Inspecting the water hole confirmed my theory that every animal around was using this spring. I found tracks from a small herd of elk, one large herd bull, and what seemed to be a nice-sized bull elk dogging the main herd. Most of my legwork was done using one of my old stand sites. All that needed to be done was clearing some shooting lanes and rehangng my stand.

While hanging my stand, a small black bear startled me and I dropped the bottom of my self-climber with a crash. With my site compromised, I



Above: “Mister” ended up being the highest scoring bull elk taken with archery tackle in 2009. It also ranks in fifth place overall for archery elk.

Left: Another look at “Mister.”



went back to my truck to plan a new evening hunt. I geared up, looked at all my gear again, and decided to travel light in the evening heat. I took only my backpack, three sets of calls, scents and decoys. I left all of the noise behind. I had about 1 1/2 miles to cover to get to the thick spruce and pine bog where the elk liked to bed down.

Falling short of my mark by about 400 yards, a whitetail doe and fawn had me pinned down. After letting them feed away from me, I opted to set up and call from there. Placing my decoy about 30 yards behind me and using two different cow calls, I led into a 30-second cow/calf combination. Twenty minutes passed, I let the second set of calls go. After starting the third set, a bull immediately

bugled southeast of me from in the bog in the spot I had originally planned to be. I wanted so badly to move and cut the distance, but the doe and fawn were still between me and the bull. Mind and heart racing, *What to do, what to do?*

The bull bugled once more and sealed my decision. *He is coming*, I thought, and moments later a large chocolate bull was standing on the edge of the timber and heading my way. Time stood still, minutes seemed like hours, as he made his way across the small openings in the old cutblock.

A hundred or so yards from me, the bull stopped and bulged in my direction, then lay down. That's right, he lay down right there, rolling and kicking up dust and dirt in the air while I waited for him to stop and turn upright. When he did, I hit him hard with a cow call from behind me through an empty bugle tube. He jumped up and never broke stride until approximately the 30-yard mark. He stopped square on and bugled right in my face. I remained at full draw, and although he didn't present a shot, he continued to face me until about 10 yards. As he spotted my decoy, the bull turned and I took aim, waiting for the right angle. I touched the release and watched the Montech G5 find its mark.

The bull rounded the corner, and my heart sank as he went out of sight. Frantically cow-calling, I could pick out antler tips at 70 yards in a timber draw. I had to retrieve my pack, but when I moved, I heard bush break and the bull move. *I pushed him*, I thought. A long walk back to the truck, phone in hand, I called a couple of the boys to get some advice. Chester and Gord both said to leave him till morning.

One long sleepless night spent, morning could not come soon enough. At 5:00 a.m., my son Derek, nephew Jake, brother Gord and I went to track the bull. After a long walk and a very quiet sneak, we were at the spot where he had entered the thick timber. After finding a good blood trail and following it for about 40 yards, I spotted ivory antler tips in the underbrush. There he was, down, a much bigger bull than I had originally estimated. Now the real work began!

After an official drying period of over 60 days, I took the antlers to be officially scored. The gross score was 369 5/8 and the net score went 359 4/8. The H-1 measurement is over nine inches at the base and the G-4s tally 20 inches. 🍂



The 2009 mule deer rut was starting to peak when Rob Manley and I came across this wide buck with his girlfriend.
Garry Donald photo.