



Ken Cull of Cambridge, Ontario, stands beside the trophy whitetail he took in that province back in 2006. The antlers carry good mass and long tines. Ken's buck ended up grossing 167 3/8 inches. Ken also took a colossal Ontario whitetail this last fall that will be featured in a future issue.

The Buddy System

I first met Ken Cull at the Huntfest show put on by *WildTV*. He was there working at the Vortex booth, a company which produces some outstanding optics. After the show, a bunch of us would meet in the evenings. A lot of laughs were shared, and I soon realized Ken was like the rest of us: a serious deer hunter. The hunting stories started getting even crazier into the wee hours of the morning. It wasn't long before it dawned on us that the

only people we were fooling were ourselves as in a couple of hours we had to work our booths and talk to thousands of avid sportsmen. In my case, I had to look and sound like I knew everything about big old bucks. Somehow Bill and Mike Longman and I pulled it off, or at least we thought we did. When the show was over that last day, I met Ken in the lobby and we bid each other farewell. As I walked out the door, I told him to send me the photos and

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information about the deer he had taken in his home province of Ontario. A couple of months later, I finally got to see his buck and learn how he got it.

It was in 2006, and Ken had permission on a couple of properties that he knew held some big bucks. The veteran hunter enjoyed bringing guests to also hunt these chunks of real estate and figured for sure one of them would be lucky. The hunters would just have to put the time in.

Over the course of both the archery and shotgun seasons, Ken placed other hunters in some of his stands. Some were close friends enjoying a hunt together while others were new to the area and didn't have spots to hunt. When a hunter was successful, Ken was the first to help the lucky sportsman get his deer out of the woods.

The days kept marching on and soon it was the second week of October. With deer movement starting to pick up, Ken headed to a local farm, figuring the last hour of the day would be the best chance for him.

After an intense rattling sequence, Ken put the antlers down and scanned the terrain. The countryside was dead calm and quiet. Thirty minutes ticked by when suddenly the flood gates opened and deer began showing up. In the group of does and fawns were three bucks. The three amigos included a small eight-pointer, a nice ten-point, and a huge eight-pointer. The big eight had four long tines per side and Ken wanted a chance at him. However, when the ten-point offered the seasoned hunter a broadside view, he already had his crossbow ready. The arrow sliced through the air, placing a lethal shot, and the buck died quickly. Happy to fill his freezer with tasty Ontario venison, Ken opted to take a couple days off hunting.

Within a few days, Ken invited another friend for a hunt. They headed to the same farm and Ken set up another stand. The plan was simple: he would enjoy another evening in the great outdoors and hopefully see his buddy tag a deer. There was one exception, though; if the big eight showed up, Ken would take the shot. In Ontario they have the buddy hunting system, which means you can fill someone else's tag if they are hunting with you.

The sun was bidding another day farewell when Ken caught movement. As the buck came slowly in, Ken realized it was another 4x4 buck that he knew very well. It was decided that Ken would try for him. The crossbow did another fine job and the 140-class buck toppled over.

With only a couple of days left in the shotgun season, Ken took out his buddy Joe, who hails from Hamilton. They couldn't believe it when a wide 4x4 showed up and Joe downed the trophy buck. The property had now produced three great bucks.

When December arrived, another friend asked Ken to help him move a stand. Ironically, Ken found himself sitting in the same tree on the edge of the same successful field. As last light approached, he looked across the field to see a huge buck working its way towards the stand. The key to success is good stand placement and the hunter had done a fine job that fateful day. At a mere 10 yards, Ken counted 13 points on the giant whitetail. He raised his crossbow once again and the deer made it only a few yards before dropping stone cold dead.

After the cheering and high-fives, Ken's buddy tagged the brute to end what can only be described as a dream season. After the mandatory 60-day drying period, the 13-pointer grossed 167 3/8 inches. ♦