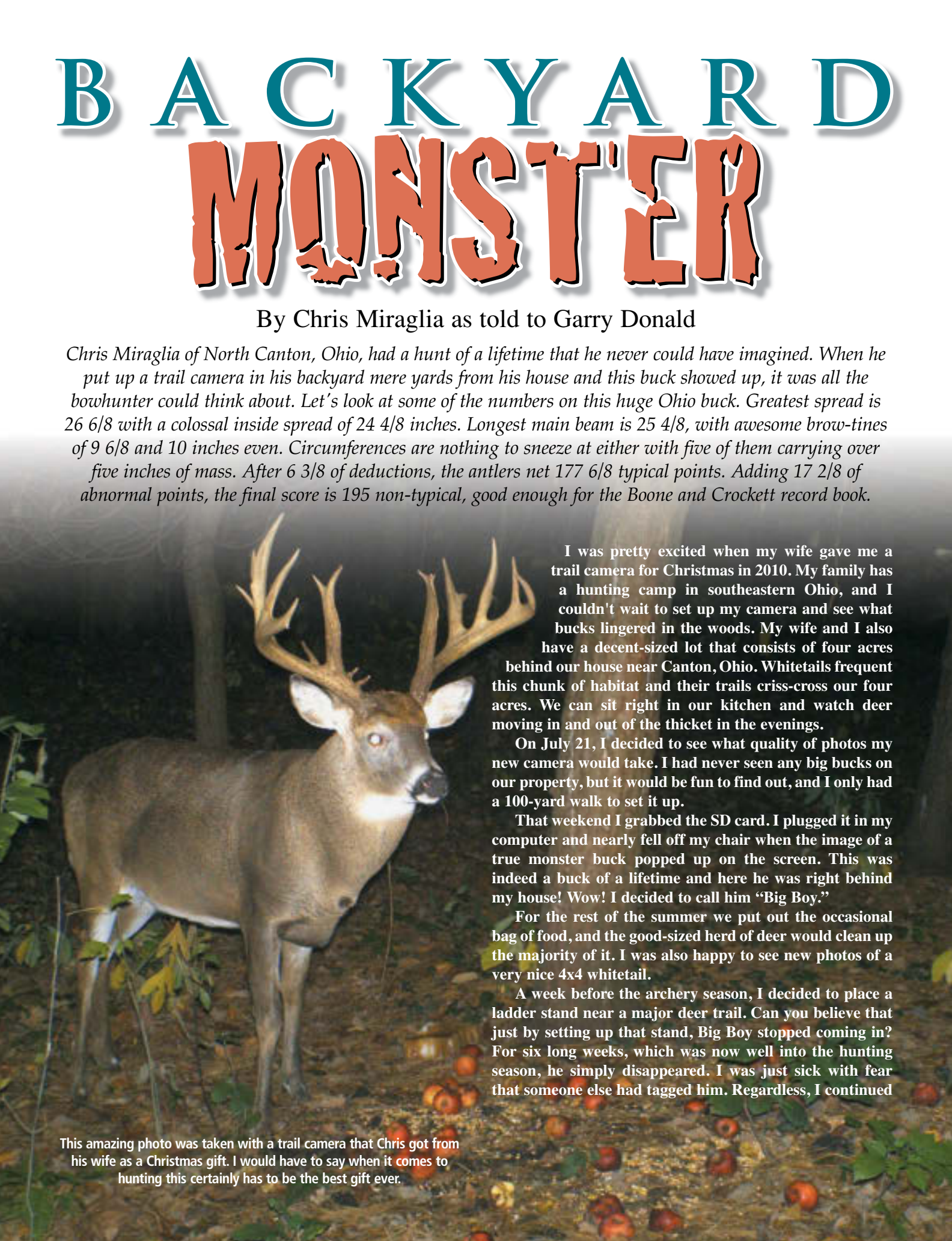


BACKYARD MONSTER

By Chris Miraglia as told to Garry Donald

Chris Miraglia of North Canton, Ohio, had a hunt of a lifetime that he never could have imagined. When he put up a trail camera in his backyard mere yards from his house and this buck showed up, it was all the bowhunter could think about. Let's look at some of the numbers on this huge Ohio buck. Greatest spread is 26 6/8 with a colossal inside spread of 24 4/8 inches. Longest main beam is 25 4/8, with awesome brow-tines of 9 6/8 and 10 inches even. Circumferences are nothing to sneeze at either with five of them carrying over five inches of mass. After 6 3/8 of deductions, the antlers net 177 6/8 typical points. Adding 17 2/8 of abnormal points, the final score is 195 non-typical, good enough for the Boone and Crockett record book.



I was pretty excited when my wife gave me a trail camera for Christmas in 2010. My family has a hunting camp in southeastern Ohio, and I couldn't wait to set up my camera and see what bucks lingered in the woods. My wife and I also have a decent-sized lot that consists of four acres behind our house near Canton, Ohio. Whitetails frequent this chunk of habitat and their trails criss-cross our four acres. We can sit right in our kitchen and watch deer moving in and out of the thicket in the evenings.

On July 21, I decided to see what quality of photos my new camera would take. I had never seen any big bucks on our property, but it would be fun to find out, and I only had a 100-yard walk to set it up.

That weekend I grabbed the SD card. I plugged it in my computer and nearly fell off my chair when the image of a true monster buck popped up on the screen. This was indeed a buck of a lifetime and here he was right behind my house! Wow! I decided to call him "Big Boy."

For the rest of the summer we put out the occasional bag of food, and the good-sized herd of deer would clean up the majority of it. I was also happy to see new photos of a very nice 4x4 whitetail.

A week before the archery season, I decided to place a ladder stand near a major deer trail. Can you believe that just by setting up that stand, Big Boy stopped coming in? For six long weeks, which was now well into the hunting season, he simply disappeared. I was just sick with fear that someone else had tagged him. Regardless, I continued

This amazing photo was taken with a trail camera that Chris got from his wife as a Christmas gift. I would have to say when it comes to hunting this certainly has to be the best gift ever.



to use my stand and the 4x4 gave me many opportunities to harvest him, but I couldn't get Big Boy out of my head.

If this elusive buck was still alive, I needed to get him back to my property. I had read somewhere about a "drag line." I bought some Trails End #307 scent, poured it on a rag, and dragged it along the trail and right through the thicket. It was now October 14, and on Saturday I would be in my stand again. That night, my wife and I were sitting in the kitchen, once again watching numerous smaller bucks and does moving behind the house.

That weekend was another bust for Mr. Elusive, but it was still time well-spent. One thing for sure, the scent rag had

produced a tremendous increase in deer movement, so I elected to try it again. On Friday I added more scent to the rag and did another drag through. This time I also added a scent dripper within range of my stand.

I witnessed lots of deer movement on Saturday, but Big Boy was still a no-show. I was getting a little depressed, but wasn't ready to throw my hunting tag into the wind yet.

Sunday, October 23, found me back in my stand, wondering if this would be my lucky day. Just like a dream, Big Boy suddenly appeared right in front of me. I couldn't believe that I hadn't seen or heard him. He was facing me, offering no shot, and then his tail went up and he was gone in

an instant. After waiting for this moment for what seemed like a lifetime, it had ended in failure. I was indeed heartbroken.

The next afternoon while in my stand, it was around 6:45 when I heard movement and spotted the 4x4 walking towards me. Unbelievably, Big Boy was following him! When the monster came to an opening, I released my arrow. I had him on my 35-yard pin and the shot appeared to be perfect. He raced to a pond, and I couldn't believe it when he went down and out of sight. Luckily I hadn't had time to get buck fever or I'm sure the outcome may have been different. With darkness now closing in, I opted to leave him till morning. If I ended up spooking him out of the area, he would surely end up on someone else's land.



This side view reveals the bladed brow-tines and the many sharp sticker points this big dude grew.



Another look at this 11x7 Ohio whitetail.

I was very excited and hyperventilating when I climbed down the ladder. I missed the last three steps and went face first into the tree. I split my forehead wide open and was a real mess when I walked into the house. My wife panicked when she saw all the blood, but all I could come up with was "I GOT BIG BOY!" She cleaned up my face, and the rest of the night was a restless one as I worried about my elusive buck.

The next morning, as soon as I could see, I was walking towards the spot where I had last seen him, and there he lay only a few feet away! Reaching his side, I dropped to my knees. It had been a long journey but worth every minute of it. Even with the hundred or so photos, he was much bigger in person. He was mine at last and only 100 yards from my back door – it just doesn't get any sweeter than this!

His body size was huge, so my brother came over to help me. My backyard buck later officially netted 195 non-typical points. 🍂

