

# Window Shopping

By Melissa Smylie

Melissa Smylie of 150 Mile House, British Columbia, with the big mule deer that she first spotted from her kitchen window. Little did the buck know that he had ventured into the wrong yard that morning. Melissa had a mule deer tag, and she soon grabbed her rifle and the hunt was on. On Crown land, she met up with him once again. The antlers are wide and tall, and they gross score just over 174 inches.

cabinet, and Emma grabbed some ammo from the reloading bench in the basement. As an afterthought, I also grabbed Jim's grunt call and headed outside. I walked to the back of the house and gave a couple of quick grunts on the call. As I waited for something to happen, I realized I could never shoot because children would soon be walking to their bus stops. So I unloaded the gun and went back into the house.

Ten minutes later, I looked up and there he was again. I told the girls to continue getting ready, and back outside I went. I had noticed that the deer had followed the treeline on the edge of our property and jumped the fence onto the Crown land behind our house. As I walked by our barn, I picked up my husband's rattling antlers. I went over to the fenceline, laid down my rifle, and proceeded to rattle the antlers and scrape the ground like I thought a deer would. I loaded the rifle in anticipation.

Then I heard, "Mom . . ." I ignored it.

Again, "Mom," a little louder this time.

After the third "Mom," I yelled, "What?"

It was our youngest, Laura, "I need a note for school."

"Oh, for pete's sake." I unloaded the rifle, ran down to the house, wrote a hasty note, and told the girls to get to the bus.

Back up to the fenceline I hurried. I was there for no more than two minutes when a doe jumped from our property across the fence to the Crown land. In my haste, I must have run past her and not seen her. The big buck came out of the deep forest, chasing her. I brought my gun up and waited for him to give me a good shot. The gun started to get heavy, so I tried to rest it on a woodpile near the fence. The buck heard me, turned, and quickly bounded away from me. Knowing I could never make such a difficult shot, I let him go. I smiled as I thought about how Jim would freak when I told him this story.

Thinking it was later in the morning, I went back into the house to get ready for work. However, I still had an hour or so



On November 21, 2005, we heard from some neighbours that a big buck had been seen near our home in 150 Mile House, British Columbia. My husband, Jim, was on day shift at the local mill, so he told me to keep an eye out for it.

Two days later, I was up early, getting my two youngest daughters, Emma and Laura, ready for school. Our oldest daughter, Katie, was away at university. I was at the kitchen sink and happened to look up and see the largest live deer I have ever seen, standing in the front yard. Unfortunately, our dog Sullivan saw him, too. Sully chased the deer across the road and into the bush. I managed to call the dog back and get him in the house.

I told the girls to get ready while I got dressed to go have a look. I grabbed my 7mm-08 Browning lever-action from the

before I needed to go. With the antlers and grunt tube around my neck, I took the gun back outside.

I was surprised to see that the buck had only bounded for 20 yards before he resumed walking. He obviously wasn't too worried about me. There were so many tracks that I decided to stop and try rattling again. Not long after that series of rattling, I heard a grunt. My first thought was that it sounded just like my call. I leaned around some small trees I was standing by, and there he was, coming straight for me with his head down. I brought my gun up and took the safety off. He presented me with a perfect broadside shot at 10 yards. He stopped, raised his head, and looked right at me as I squeezed off the shot. He bounded away and I sat down. I was a little weak in the knees, so I gave him a few minutes before following him.

After a short time, I went to where I thought he had been when I shot. It was obvious I had made a good shot because there was a definite blood trail. He only managed to go 50

yards or so before he hit the ground. What a great buck! I'm a bit embarrassed to say that I gave a little yell and did my happy dance! I checked my tag and ran back to the house for a hunting knife and the camera.

Now I know there are some seasoned hunters who will say the buck was obviously in the rut and there wasn't much skill needed. Granted it was more good luck than good management, but the best part of the story was telling my dad. After recounting the morning's events to him, he got up from his chair, and taking my face in his hands, he said, "That's my girl."

I lost my dad in February 2008, so he never got a chance to read about my deer in *Big Buck* magazine, but he would have gotten a kick out of it. According to the scoring system for North American big game, my buck officially grosses 174. It is proudly displayed in the living room of our home. 🍀