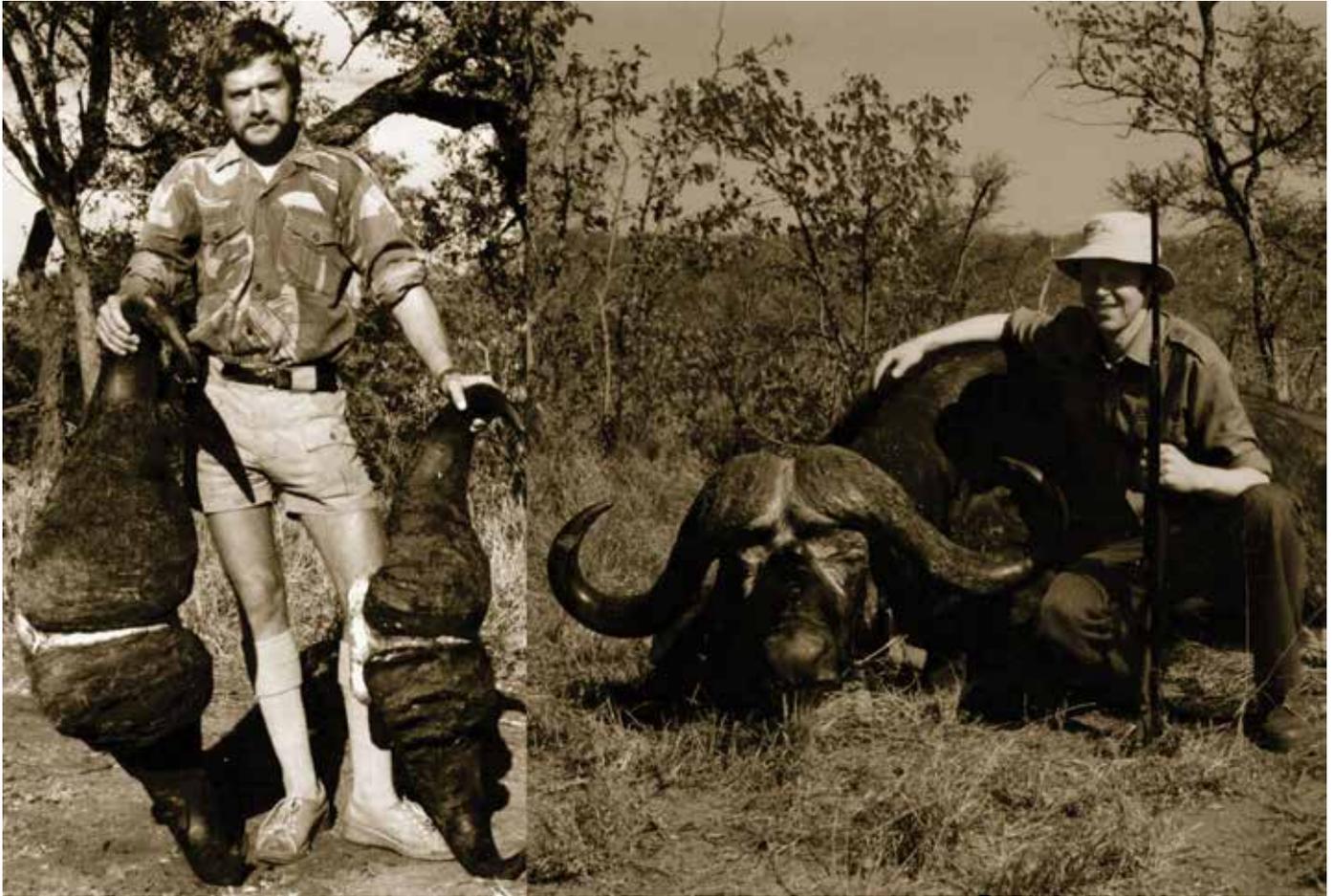


# PH Holger Jensen - *From Northern Lights to Southern Skies...*



*This exceptional buffalo was taken with a Danish client in the early 80s in the Umbabat Nature Reserve, where I held the concession for two seasons. The boss measured 23” across, and Rowland Ward would not accept the entry before receiving a photo of the bull!*

**African Hunting Gazette:** Tell us when and where you were born.

**Holger Jensen:** It was in the far north of Denmark on a farm – 1954.

**AHG:** Tell us about yourself and any family you might have.

**HJ:** I never married, but am looking after the wife and 12-year old son of my late hunting manager Benny, who died from cancer three years ago at the age of 45, after being my PH for 20 years.

**AHG:** How did you become a PH? How did it all begin?

**HJ:** As a kid I never wanted toys for Christmas

or birthdays, but wildlife literature, and I got the opportunity to get an education as a gamekeeper, and started the day after I left school. That means that I’ve made a career of hunting for 47 years.

**AHG:** Which countries have you hunted, and where are you hunting these days?

**HJ:** There are too many to count! I’ve hunted walrus in the Arctic and sambar in NZ, but my last four hunts were in Mongolia, Abu Dhabi, Burkina Faso and Siberia. I’ve been three times to Argentina – I like the nature and the people there. Then, of course, I hunt almost non-stop as a PH in South Africa from March to August each year, and have

done so for the past 38 years.

**AHG:** If you could return to any time or place in Africa, where would it be?

**HJ:** My African hunting career started in the then Rhodesia, where I shot my first buffalo bull at age 20, and that country still holds some special memories for me, because it has great hunting and wonderful people, politics apart. In later years I hunted a lot at Lake Mburu in Uganda, at the time when that country opened for hunting after many years, and that was also a special adventure, where some huge trophies were taken.

**AHG:** Which guns and ammo are you using

to back-up on dangerous or wounded game?

**HJ:** My interest in firearms is very limited. I shot 1,247 fallow deer with my trusted SAKO 222 Remington, and I often use my old Mauser 8x57 JS, which is very old-fashioned, but effective, and it cost me less than a USD 100 at the time! Being a bit patriotic I do have a Schultz & Larsen 30-06, which is used by many clients, and then a double-barrel Spanish 375 H&H Magnum, which to me is a better life insurance that you can purchase from Old Mutual!

**AHG:** What are your recommendations on guns and ammo – for dangerous game and for plains game?

**HJ:** I like the client to use a firearm that he knows and is comfortable with – the chance is very good that I will never know or remember what he actually used. In my belief it's that person between the earth and the firearm that is the most important part.

**AHG:** What is your favorite animal to hunt and why?

**HJ:** It has to be the bushbuck. I've guided hundreds of them along the Limpopo River – a demanding hunt on foot, which is my type of hunting. Believe it or not – I've never shot a single one myself!

**AHG:** Looking back, which was your greatest trophy?

**HJ:** It was my first buffalo in Sijarira Forest at Lake Kariba in 1975. I've also tried so hard to get a 30" impala in Uganda, but only got as close as 29 5/8 – my clients took many up to 33"!

**AHG:** What was your closest brush with death? Looking back: Anything you should have done differently?

**HJ:** It's quite embarrassing, but ending up underneath a mad male ostrich in the Kalahari many years ago, who was doing a war dance on top of me. My client shot it in the breast at close range, and for a few moments, I was unsure whether he had shot me or the ostrich. Other than that, there have been some exciting buffalo hunts, but never a situation where lives were in danger. Farmed buffaloes scare the Hell out of me, because they behave differently to wild buffalo.

**AHG:** How has the hunting industry and its clients changed over the years?

**HJ:** Being in the Scandinavian market, there has been a marked shift towards more ethical hunting methods, and nowadays we use the hunting vehicle for transporting dead animals only. We're off-loaded early morning in good



*My best little hunter – 12-year old Nicolaj with Balearian Boc Mallorca 2017.*



*Probably my best trophy ever – from the Rocky Mountains, a free-range elk being loaded!*

wind, and will only see the car again once the hunt is over, or we have had the luck to bag an animal. We've adapted to this demand, and I firmly believe that the future of South African hunting lies in offering fair-chase hunts. In Denmark, 18 per cent of registered hunters are now women, and on my last two safaris – five out of six clients were female, and all very good shots and delightful company. Years ago I hunted with the wealthiest woman in Scandinavia – she was 81, and would do the dishwashing in camp if I did not stop her!

She bagged a huge rhino bull in 1981 for the princely sum of R5.000!

**AHG:** Which qualities go into making a successful PH and / or a successful hunting company?

**HJ:** Hard work and being able to understand your clients' needs. I prefer to hunt with nationalities whose mentality is familiar to me – Spanish or French clients would best be left to their own PHs – I don't think I would get along with them. Once you've completed a successful hunt, the most important thing

## Professional Hunter - Q&A

is that the trophies are treated and marked properly, and delivered on time. That is one all important part of the hunt that is often forgotten. My motto is, "The hunt is only completed once the trophy is hanging on the client's wall!"

**AHG:** Which qualities go into making a good safari client?

**HJ:** The client that is a bit laid-back on trophy sizes usually bags the best animals. I don't own a tape – measuring is done by the taxidermists on delivery. It's nice when the client is fit, but if he/she isn't, we will adapt the hunt. It's also great if the client has done a bit of training

with the firearm before getting here.

**AHG:** If you should suggest one thing to your hunting clients to improve their experience of their safari, what would it be?

**HJ:** Take out the gun to a firing range before coming here, and learn to shoot a bit faster than when hunting back home in Europe.

**AHG:** Based on your recent experience in the field, do you think that any species should be upgraded to Appendix I or downgraded to Appendix II or closed all together?

**HJ:** Hunting mainly in South Africa, I don't see any specific need for either.

**AHG:** What can the hunting industry do to contribute to the long-term conservation of Africa's wildlife?

**HJ:** We have to concentrate on natural breeding of animal populations, once species have been established. Canned lions, artificial trophy genes and various freaks do not contribute in any way to conservation, but do excessive harm to our reputation. We've come a long way in South Africa since I started my company in 1980, but unfortunately our industry has become unduly dominated by people that are business people rather than hunters.

**AHG:** You look after your ex-PH and manager's wife and son – do you think Benny's son will follow in his footsteps?

**HJ:** I hope my late manager's son Nicolaj will follow, but I can't tell. He shot his first warthog at age four, and now has eight species, and one overseas hunt for Balearian goat on the island of Mallorca.

**AHG:** Anyone you want to say thanks to who has played a major role in your life?

**HJ:** Finn Kristoffersen, alias "Stoffer" back in Denmark was the man that started trophy hunting at foreign destinations. He was one of the founders of the Nordic Safari Club and was highly influential, and then he was a real hunter.

The other person is Jens Kjaer Knudsen, who came out as a volunteer to work for me, and later became the president of the Nordic Safari Club, and worked hard to promote ethical hunting in Scandinavia. He and his committee removed all South African lions from their record book – an appropriate action in the circumstances, and they've taken a similar stand towards unethical practices in NZ and Eastern Europe. Today he's my best hunting buddy, and next project is a black-tail hunt in California – that will be my 16th antlered deer species – all hunted free range.

**AHG:** Any Last Words of Wisdom?

**HJ:** Last week in Siberia, just as the light was disappearing, I bagged a magnificent Siberian roebuck, after a week of mixed luck, and long stalks. The Russian PH said to me in his broken German "Du bist ein richtiges Jäger" – "you're a 'real' hunter", and that to me is the biggest compliment anyone could give me. Try to be a "real hunter" – don't take shortcuts, or do unethical or embarrassing hunts, but go for the real thing. Then you will have much enjoyment from this wonderful hobby! 🍷



*Hunting Alaska moose in 2018 north of the Polar Circle with my late hunting manager, Benny.*



*A record-size Nagor reedbuck from Burkina Faso - apparently it will come in as the fifth-biggest ever recorded.*