

SKULL

AN OUTFITTER'S JOURNAL

*Russ
Santer*

1962 - 2018

SHIFTING
THE
PARADIGM

KILLING
KONG!

A SANDY HILLS HUNTING PUBLICATION

JUNE 2021

KILLING KONG



Russ began hunting with us in 2015. After numerous years of hunting with another Outfitter he encouraged Jeremy to pursue his idea of a company founded on quality driven by solid management practices. No more shooting young deer for the sake of just shooting a deer. Jeremy would strive to maximize every buck he had access to hunt and strictly pursue mature deer. Russ agreed to be Jeremy's client and to book for 5 years up front.

In 2015 Jeremy formed Sandy Hills Hunting Company and would pursue his own ideas regarding outfitting and management. That year Russ would go on to kill Kong, a deer that he and Jeremy had passed the year before realizing he hadn't met his true potential and with another year, he just may turn into something truly exceptional. They were right, and what was once an idea became a reality.

Better management, more discipline, and fewer clients would begin to shift the paradigm.

Russ arrived in 2015 and the course of conversation was quickly directed to what deer had been seen, what survived the following year, and what would be their target buck. While Jeremy knew of several great deer that had survived and were in the area, he had not seen Kong during summer scouting or the early part of the archery season. The problem with finding the buck the previous year during the rut is not knowing where he came from or if he would return. The only hope at this point is that he may return. Fortunately for Russ, the rut was underway, and Jeremy was seeing new bucks daily. After spending some time covering an area where Jeremy had seen a great deer during the summer, they decided to return to the area they had found Kong the year prior. After glassing the area diligently with



218 5/8"



no luck, they decided to swing around to another glassing vista and hit the area from another angle. Shortly after setting up his scope, Russ had a big buck located. And without much investigation Jeremy knew which buck they had just found. It was Kong. Time had served him well. His antlers were almost identical to the previous year, but every point was much, much bigger. Almost exactly a year to the day, Kong had returned to the same place to rut. Jeremy and Russ watched him and his does for a short time before the deer bedded in an ideal place for a stalk. Russ and Jeremy quickly devised a plan and began to negotiate for position. After getting the wind in their favor they dropped into a canyon to finalize their approach. Following a relatively easy stalk, the two sat at 40 yards waiting on the giant buck. After

only a few minutes the buck got up to resituate and Russ made a perfect shot. The buck didn't go far before expiring in the neighboring canyon. Kong unofficially ended up grossing 218 5/8" and is a true testament to genetics, age, a strong management plan, discipline, and self-control.

Russ passed away on a bear hunt in Russia in 2018 just weeks before he would return to the eastern plains to hunt with us. It was a privilege knowing and hunting with Russ. He was a truly exceptional individual, a dream client, and will be missed. There's not a year that goes by without his name being brought up and a good story told. Thank you, Russ!