

africa's

# bowhunter

## Testing the Elite Pulse

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# Africa in a different way...

## bow hunting on Mauritius

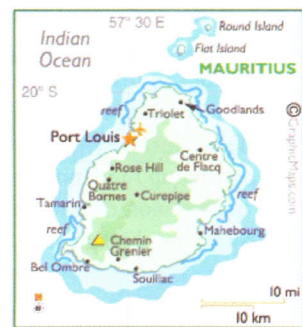


Frank Berbuir, ABH correspondent in Germany, writes about a combined holiday and hunting trip on the island of Mauritius.

During the Jagd & Hund fair last year in Dortmund, Germany, a particular booth caught my attention. It promoted the attractive combination of hunting along with a wonderful beach and sight-seeing vacation on the island of Mauritius. Relaxing and hunting on this paradise island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean sounded very interesting. So I got acquainted with Lionel Berthault from Le Chasseur Mauricien ([www.lechasseurmauricien.com](http://www.lechasseurmauricien.com)). For 14 years he has been passionate about hunting with bow and arrow. Hunting is not just work for him, it is his real passion. He is the agent and organiser, professional hunter and outfitter in person.

Hunting on Mauritius? What can you hunt there? Quite a lot, actually. Hunting is an old and respected tradition on Mauritius. Mainly you hunt the rusa, also called Java deer – a big stag (*Cervus Timorensis Rusa Rusa*). It is a slightly scraggy but nevertheless gracious stag with strong and heavy six-point antlers. You can also hunt wild boar, hare, pheasant, quail and helmeted guinea-fowl.

The rusa rut starts at the beginning of July and lasts roughly two months. So we left Germany on July 15 and flew in to Mauritius via Paris with an 11-hours overnight flight. The



### EQUIPMENT

**Bow:** Elite GT500 – 70 pounds – with Copper John drop-away rest, Spot Hogg sight and Trophy Ridge stabiliser  
**Arrow:** Carbon Matrix Maxima Hunter, with 125-grain G5 Tekan II broadhead  
**Optics:** Zeiss 10 x 40 binoculars and Nikon Archer's Choice rangefinder  
**Camo:** Sniper Africa

arrival and immigration the next morning at the airport in the south-east of the island went flawlessly and Lionel was waiting for us. He drove us to the Mövenpick Spa & Resort in Bel Ombre in the south of the island.

The sun was shining and we had comfortable weather at 24 degrees Celsius. The drive to the hotel in Lionel's pick-up led us through small villages and huge sugar cane fields, with the Indian Ocean on our left and the interesting mountain scenery on our right before we arrived at the spa.



Our booking included half-board accommodation with an extraordinary breakfast buffet as well as an abundant, tasty and continuously changing dinner buffet. There was a nice and well-equipped spa and wellness area, lots of water-sports options, a gym, and two tennis courts. If you wanted to play golf, the 18-hole course was five minutes away by taxi or car.

Everything was set for a nice holiday and lots of activities before or after the hunt.

### **The hunt**

On the afternoon of our arrival I wasted no time in slipping into my Sniper Africa camo clothes. I grabbed my bow and drove with Lionel to the hunting grounds in the mountains, roughly ten minutes by car from the hotel. Our way went through ten-foot-high sugar-cane fields and subtropical vegetation before we reached the 3 500 hectares (8 650 acres) hunting grounds of Bel Ombre. The hunting lodge is in a wonderful spot on top of a mountain, where I had an awesome view over the hunting and stalking areas. The hunting area is mostly mountainous, with slopes, meadows, pine trees, broadleaf trees and subtropical forest. There is some high, bulky bamboo and some small rivers, and also a 100-foot-high waterfall. Hunting is only by spot-and-stalk or walk-and-stalk – no tree stands or blinds, and absolutely no hunting from the car.

From the lodge we could spot with the binos a small herd of rusa deer roughly 800 yards away in the valley, so we decided to walk down there. We crossed a small river and worked our way through huge, thick bamboo trees, uphill and downhill – interesting, but also sweaty. To be in good physical shape is definitely an advantage for stalking there.

Suddenly Lionel stopped, because two female rusas were lying in the high grass 50 yards in front of us. Should they see us, their barking would betray us. We hid behind a grass-covered hill and he tried to push them along by imitating the fawn distress call. It worked – they looked up and moved away. We also moved back roughly 100 yards before we went further downhill and made our way through a copse of bamboo. Then Lionel stopped again, because there they were – at about 80 yards a small herd of some 20 rusa deer stood on the grassland between us and the palm forest on the opposite side. There were cows, fawns from last year, yearlings, and two-year-olds, as well as three big stags with huge antlers.

We had to go around them in a wide circle to get closer because they were standing near to the palm forest behind them and the sparse cover on the grassland would not be sufficient for a stalk. Slowly we backed out and walked a bigger loop to the right to stalk through the thick cover offered by subtropical forest, where we passed the waterfall I mentioned and went along the sunken course of a river before we climbed up the slope again.

About 20 minutes later we were on the opposite side of the spot where the stags were browsing. Quietly and slowly we sneaked up the stony slope. At the top we lay on our bellies and looked through the binoculars. The herd was still there, browsing, at about 45 yards. Like ducks we toddled behind a palm tree to find some cover. Lionel was pointing to a big stag I could shoot and whispered that the distance was 40 yards. I did not hesitate and drew back my Elite GT500 bow.

At the moment I aimed on his vitals with the appropriate sight pin, the stag was looking at us. It looked as though he realised that something was wrong and he took off. The herd immediately moved with him. Cautiously I let down the bow. Wow, what an amazing experience and start, I was thinking when my adrenalin kick went down to normal level. We tried to follow the herd but when they started running uphill and we realised that dawn was approaching, we stopped and went back to the lodge.

On Saturday morning we started early, at 5:20 am. It was still dark when we entered the hunting domain. With the binos we found a group of 30 animals and stalked them, even though it started raining. Unfortunately the rain got worse and we had to pause under a palm tree. At 9:00 am it was raining cats and dogs, so we gave up and went back to the hotel. The weather was not in our favour for the rest of the Saturday, so we decided not to go hunting in the afternoon and early evening.

### **Beach**

The next three days we spent nice time on the beach – yes, the sun was back again – visited the capital, Port Louis, and enjoyed an amazing boat trip. Then it was time for hunting again. That was good because I was getting fidgety. During the morning stalk we saw several deer and good stags but could approach to only 70 yards before the females saw us and barked – and our chances were gone.

In the afternoon we visited the La Vanille Crocodile and Turtle Park. There are crocs, giant turtles, monkeys, iguanas, and an aquarium, as well as Mauritian fruit bats, also called flying foxes, and the second biggest insectarium in the world – very interesting indeed.

On Thursday morning I was out hunting again. This time we went to the south-western part of the hunting area. After a downhill stalk we crossed a river, where I stopped for a minute to enjoy the gurgle of the water and the sparse rays of sunlight that found their way through the thick subtropical leaves and plants. We then moved uphill and took cover behind the trees and bushes to look for deer on the meadow.

In the high grass there were five big stags, some cows and youngsters, and last year's fawns. All the stags had good trophy-size antlers. On the far right was one with huge, approximately 37-inch antlers – too much. The trip would then be a lot more expensive than planned. But to his left, a good stag with nice symmetrical antlers was lying in the grass. He was ideal. We were about 35 yards away but owing to the bushes and trees there was no shooting window and not enough space to draw the bow. Therefore we decided that I would crawl out on my own to close the distance. I moved forward inch by inch on my belly to get to a better shooting position. At a snail's pace I crawled. After what felt like an eternity I was only 20 metres (22 yards) away.

So far nothing had changed. The stags were still lying calmly in the grass. Now it became interesting and challenging because I had to straighten up to shoot from a crouched, kneeling position, or sitting on my haunches. At this position I would have no cover. The stags still had not seen me, so I raised my upper body in slow motion and sat on my haunches. Then I



slowly brought my bow to full draw.

I had agreed with my PH that he would imitate the sound of a fawn when I was ready. He did it, but it did not impress the stags or females at all – nothing happened. After 40 seconds I let the bow down slowly, always looking at the deer so as not to spook them. Two minutes later, they still had not noticed me. I drew again and this time the PH roared like a big stag. It sounded a little bit funny, but all of a sudden all the animals were on their feet. The one I aimed at was facing me directly. “Stay calm, Frank, hopefully he will turn broadside”, I thought. Things went in my favour this time – he turned left and stood broadside for a few seconds. Before he could walk away I released the trigger of my Scott release and sent the Carbon Express Maxima Hunter arrow, with the G5 Tekan II broadhead, on its deadly mission. The stag jumped up and kicked out with his hind legs before he ran downhill with the others. My blood pressure was in a range that cardiologists would not recommend, so I sat down for a moment. We crawled forward on our knees to look down the hill and saw the herd standing roughly 90 yards away, close to the edge of the wood. With the binoculars we checked whether the one I had shot was with them, but he was not. Maybe he had left the group and gone down into the woods. We decided to wait at least 45 minutes, which seemed an endless time. Meanwhile the animals had left the spot and we searched for the arrow and a blood trail, but we found neither blood nor arrow. We decided to go into the forest, starting from the spot where I had shot the stag. Perhaps he bedded down in the woods. About 100 yards later, through the woods, we saw a big and dark brown object

lying on the steep slope. It was not a stone or something – it was my rusa stag, stopped by a tree when he probably died and slid down the slope.

Horrido – waidmannsheil – congratulations!

My eyes were shining with joy and my sense of delight was nearly endless. What an exciting and challenging hunting experience. We had to call two guys from the hunting lodge to help us, along with the pick-up and the winch, to pull the nearly 400-pound stag up the slope. During the skinning and slaughtering we saw that the arrow had penetrated both lungs. It was undoubtedly a quickly lethal shot.

The skinner prepared everything for a nice, straight-looking shoulder mount and then we enjoyed a delicious Mauritian beer.

Over the last couple of days we just relaxed and did some sightseeing. The Walk with Lions – yes, real big lions – was a special highlight. On Tuesday we took a nice last game drive through the Bel Ombre hunting estate, and the next day we left for home.

### Wonderful

This hunting and holiday trip was a wonderful and challenging experience. It was a great combination of exciting bow hunting combined with sightseeing, beach-lounging and shopping. We would do it again, any time.

Thank you very much to everybody who made it happen – especially to Lionel and his wife from Le Chasseur Mauricien.

*Waidmannsheil, Horrido and Alles van die Beste*

## Product Showcase

### German Kinetics is back

German Kinetics, which manufactures SilverFlame broadheads but broke off production in September last year, is now back in business.

Markus Gross, SilverFlame designer and former owner of German Kinetics, has transferred ownership to Mr Ingo Kuhn, also from Germany. Ingo runs an archery pro shop ([www.redneckpoint.de](http://www.redneckpoint.de)). He is not only a hunter and bowhunter but also a professional gunsmith, and he is most fanatical about quality.

All small parts will be made by the same companies as before and to the same quality standards – standards many customers enjoyed and appreciated over the eight years that SilverFlames have been on the market. Absolutely everything will be 100 percent made in Germany. Markus Gross will stay in the background as a consultant and eventually as a designer of new products.

The whole range of broadheads from 100 to 210 grains, as well as the awesome SilverFlame XL sizes, will be available again

soon. The new, improved 125-grain SilverFlame will be introduced in the course of the year. All blades will be equipped with the new “ToughTip” – true cut-on-impact! Gimmick-free quality on the leading edge!

For more information, visit [www.german-kinetics.com](http://www.german-kinetics.com)



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