

PH Spotlight

PETER MAYALL



Peter and his HEYM 500 NE Double Rifle

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What do you wish a first-time Dangerous Game client knew before arriving?

I supply my clients with comprehensive gear lists and all other important information well before the hunt, so they should be well informed. I wish they would read it. Ill-fitting boots and packs, no gloves, not enough warm clothing and not enough physical preparation often leads to a miserable hunt. Once you are in the wilderness, there is no Cabela's around the corner. Also I wish many clients had spent more time practicing with their rifle. Most can shoot fairly accurately, but many are very slow to get the actual shot away. An old smart bull buffalo that has worked out something is up won't stand there forever.

How often do things go about as planned?

Even though you are hunting a huge wilderness area, more often than not things go to plan. Sometimes things go even better than planned. Several times this past season, I had success with my hunter before I even got to where I was planning on actually hunting that day. That can be the luck of hunting. When things don't go to plan, you have to always have a plan B up your sleeve, just in case.

■ **PETER MAYALL** is 48 years old and has hunted around the world. He first hunted Alaska in 1993 and acquired his guide license. He grew up hunting in Australia. For more than 25 years, he has guided in the Northern Territory of Australia for water buffalo and banteng and in Southern Australia for all the deer species, and continues to guide in the Alaska Peninsula. Peter is proud to spend a great deal of time taking out young children and teenagers on their first big game hunt. He has hunted in the U.S., New Zealand (over 20 times), New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Canada, Mongolia, Central African Republic, South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe.



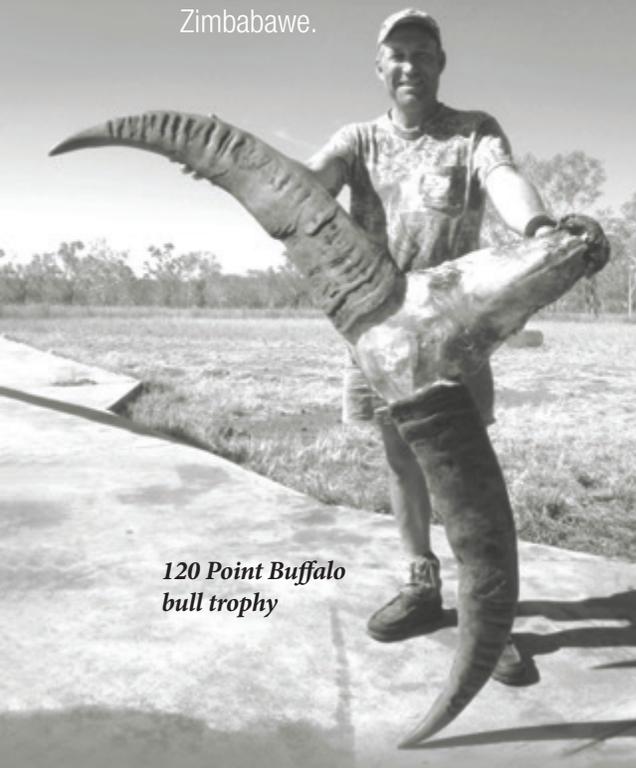
Young hunter with his first big game animal, PM with Heym 500 NE



New Heym 500 NE in action



Guiding my girlfriend Emma Sears on a Brown Bear and Dall Sheep hunt in 2017



120 Point Buffalo bull trophy

Who and how many people make up your best DG hunting team?

Australian PHs work completely different to African PHs. Most of the time you are hunting on your own. Just the client and yourself. So you are the tracker, skinner, water boy, the lot. Occasionally you may hunt together with another PH or apprentice PH. However, having quality camp staff such as a chef, skinner, mechanic helps make everything run smoothly. Guiding Alaskan Brown Bears is a little different again. You rely heavily on expert bush pilots, packers and camp managers and of course the satellite phone is your life line.

What makes a good client into a great client?

I find easygoing clients have the best success. Some hunters arrive in camp with a real chip on their shoulder. Some are in too much of a rush to get it done, so they can get back home to work. They do themselves no favors at all being uptight. Others think if we hunt harder (run around like a chicken with its head cut off), they will be more successful. If you hunt with a top PH and you are

totally physically and mentally capable in all aspects, you will be successful. Do as he says and go with the flow.

Do clients do a “starter” hunt, but then “graduate” for a second trip? Or do you have clients who want to DO IT ALL?

Like Africa it’s a long way to travel to Australia, many clients like to do it all. Some stop off in New Zealand to hunt stags, tahr and chamois etc and then do a hunt with us. Some become addicted to hunting Australia. I’ve had hunters hunt with me multiple times over the years.

Besides not finding an appropriate and legal animal, are there any reasons you would back away from a hunt, or a shot?

I’ll back away if I think the stalk has a slim chance of working or if it looks too dangerous. Then I’ll try and come in on a better angle that will be successful. I won’t let a hunter take a shot at a dangerous game animal that is too risky, which could result in a high chance of wounding.

What is your favorite dangerous game species and why?

Banteng here in Australia. It’s the only country in the world where you can hunt them. They are a unique animal that is very wary and tough to put down. The area I currently guide in produces the biggest trophies I have seen, and I’ve been hunting them for nearly 30 years.

What’s the best advice you received as you were growing up and doing PH apprenticeship? Who are your mentors and heroes?

Being a licensed guide both here in Australia as well as in Alaska, you gain a great deal of respect for all types of harsh environments. The best advice is “safety first.” My mentor in Australia would be Max Davidson who guided all the “who’s who” back in the day. In Alaska, it would be Dave Leonard, the youngest registered guide to become a Master Guide.

Do you have favorite DG guns, optics and gear?

I have a custom built 500 Jeffery that is like an extension of my own arm. It points like a shotgun and hits like the hammers of hell. It’s very hard to beat when facing dangerous game. I also have a love for double rifles of which I own several. I’m currently using a Heym in 500 NE. It’s very accurate, well balanced and nice to carry. Time will tell if it out performs my old 500 Jeffery.

If I do a quick calculation on the cost of my personal gear when I’m guiding brown bears, it would be approximately \$10,000 worth of optics and gear. When I guide buffalo and banteng here in Australia it would be even more. But relying on poor quality gear is a good way for a PH to end up in hospital or worse.

What do you do on holiday?

I go hunting. I’ve just finished my DG season here in Australia and I’m trying to work out how I can fit in a Cape Buffalo hunt before Christmas as I type this.



Family picture of my sons – Josh, Liam and Nick



Guiding Nick to his first Sambar stag



Thomas with a nice Banteng bull guided by Peter Mayall

If she was willing, would you take your mother on a dangerous game hunt, and would you be her PH?

My mother would be a very tough client to deal with but I’d give it a go. I may have trouble getting her to do as she is told!

If you knew you had just 10 days left on the planet, what would you do with that time?

I’d go hunting in the Wilderness with my girlfriend and wait for my time to come. The grim reaper would have to be good if he thinks he can catch me, the Heym 500NE would be waiting for him!

