



470 Mbogo - From Start to Finish

470 Mbogo, custom built big bore rifle by Dave Estergaard

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Chris and I went to the Safari Club International Convention in Reno, Nevada and talked to many of the booking agents about different African Safaris with Buffalo being the prime goal. We decided to go with KilomberoNorth Safaris of Tanzania through The Trophy Connection. The area is just west of the north end of the Selous Reserve with the nearest town being Ifakara. We drove for two hours to reach Kilombero’s main forest camp, which is located on the banks of the Ruipa River. After meeting the camp staff and getting to know our P.H. Armando Cordoso a little better we had a chance to shoot our rifles and zero them for 100yds. On the second day we went down the Ruipa River by dug out canoe to the junction of the Gundu River and then proceeded up the Gundu to Kilombero North’s fly camp. This trip took four hours and was magnificent. We saw Hippos, Crocodiles and Monitor Lizards on route. In the short time we were there we saw Buffalo, Crocs up to eighteen feet, Puku antelope and Lions. There are no roads leading into this area so it is still as it was a hundred years ago according to the camp staff. The lions in this area claim up to twenty locals each year. From this upper camp we travelled by dug out for another three hours where we started to run into Buffalo each time we stopped to glass. This is where we started with the stalk on the fist Buffalo.



Buffalo number two came on the third day out while travelling down the river in the dugout. We had just finished stalking in on a herd of about sixty-five Buffalo but the wind wouldn’t co-operate and the biggest bull stayed in the middle of the herd. When we started back down the river towards camp we heard a large animal on the side of the river in the Mateti. We thought it was a Hippo but Books one of the trackers said he saw a Mbogo horn while he was standing on the bow of the dugout. They turned the dugout around and poled back up the river. Kajazi our Tanzanian game scout said it was a good bull and I should take it. He was standing on top of a cooler in the dugout, my position was a slight bit lower than his was but I had a clear sight picture of the bull’s head. My sight picture was steady even though it was off hand from a dug out canoe at about 45 yds. I squeezed the trigger until the rifle went into recoil. At the shot the bull went straight down and all was quiet. They pushed the dugout into the shore above the bull but the Mateti was too thick to get through. We ended up going ashore straight in line with the Buffalo. Kutema the head tracker was going to climb straight up the Mateti until I got his attention and said that I was going up with him. These guys carry nothing but a shooting stick. At the top of the Mateti, Kutema pushed off to the right and yelled to shoot him again. At fifteen feet the bull started grunting and tried to get up. I thought I was short on time so I shouldered the rifle, pointed at the bull’s shoulder and fired . The shot knocked the bull straight back down and with this extra time I was able to chamber another round and actually aim a shot. The third shot was not necessary but with the close quarters and all the excitement it was better to be safe than sorry. When caping out the bull we found that the first shot had entered just under the left eye passing just under the brain cavity, taking out one of the four bone sections where the neck vertebrae meet the skull . This bull probably would not have been able to get to his feet to charge but being new to this you would have had a problem to convince me or Kutema. Bull number two was definitely an exciting experience for my first trip to Africa. It was while floating down the river after the celebrations that we saw and were able to photograph a very large Croc sunning himself on the riverbank.

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