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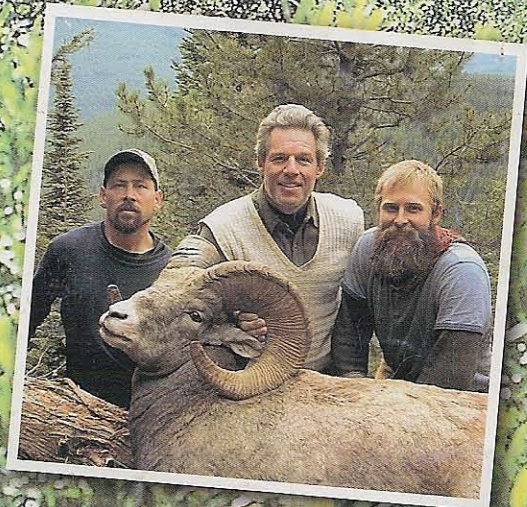
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The Three bears

Sundown adventures

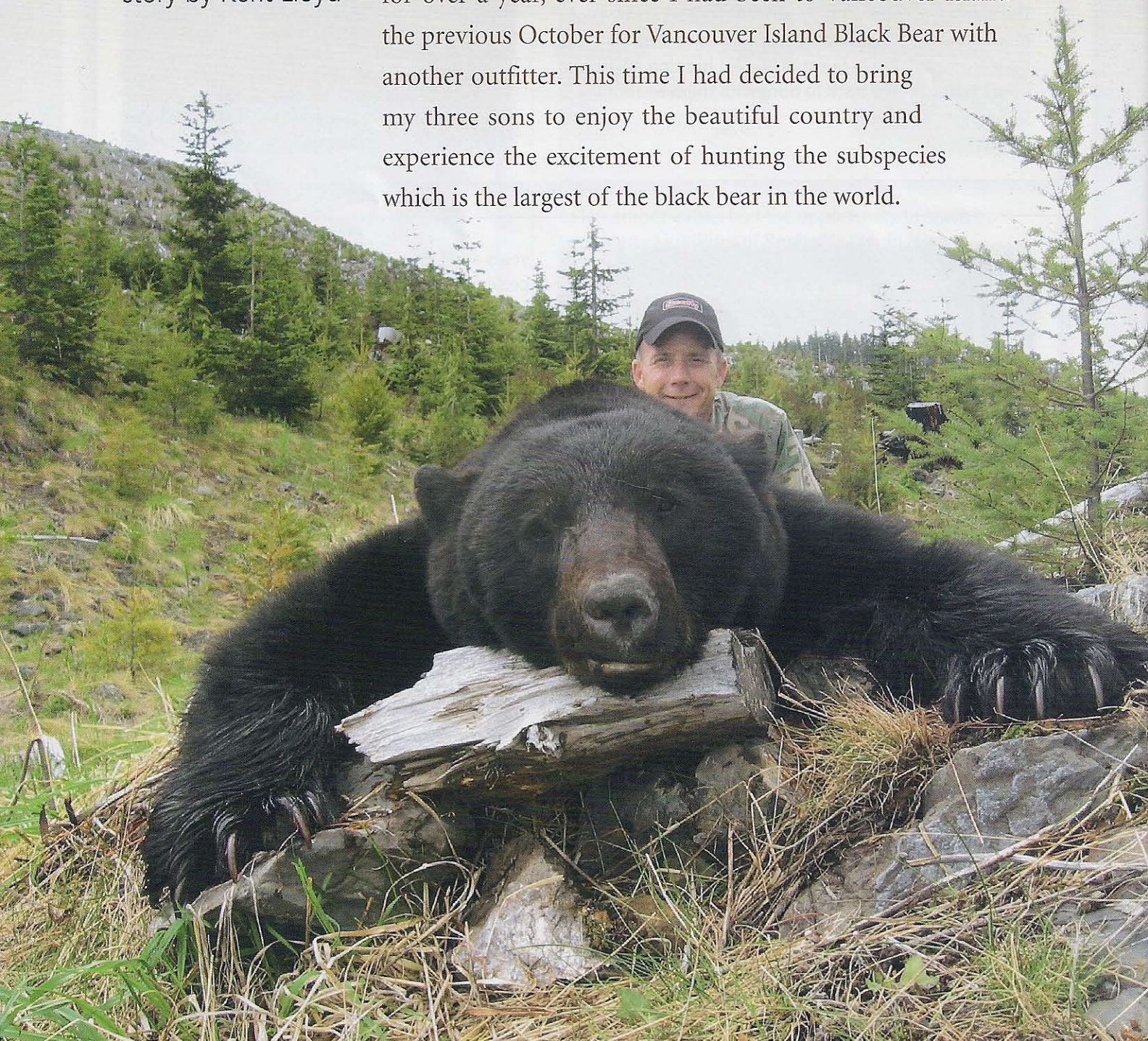
First elk

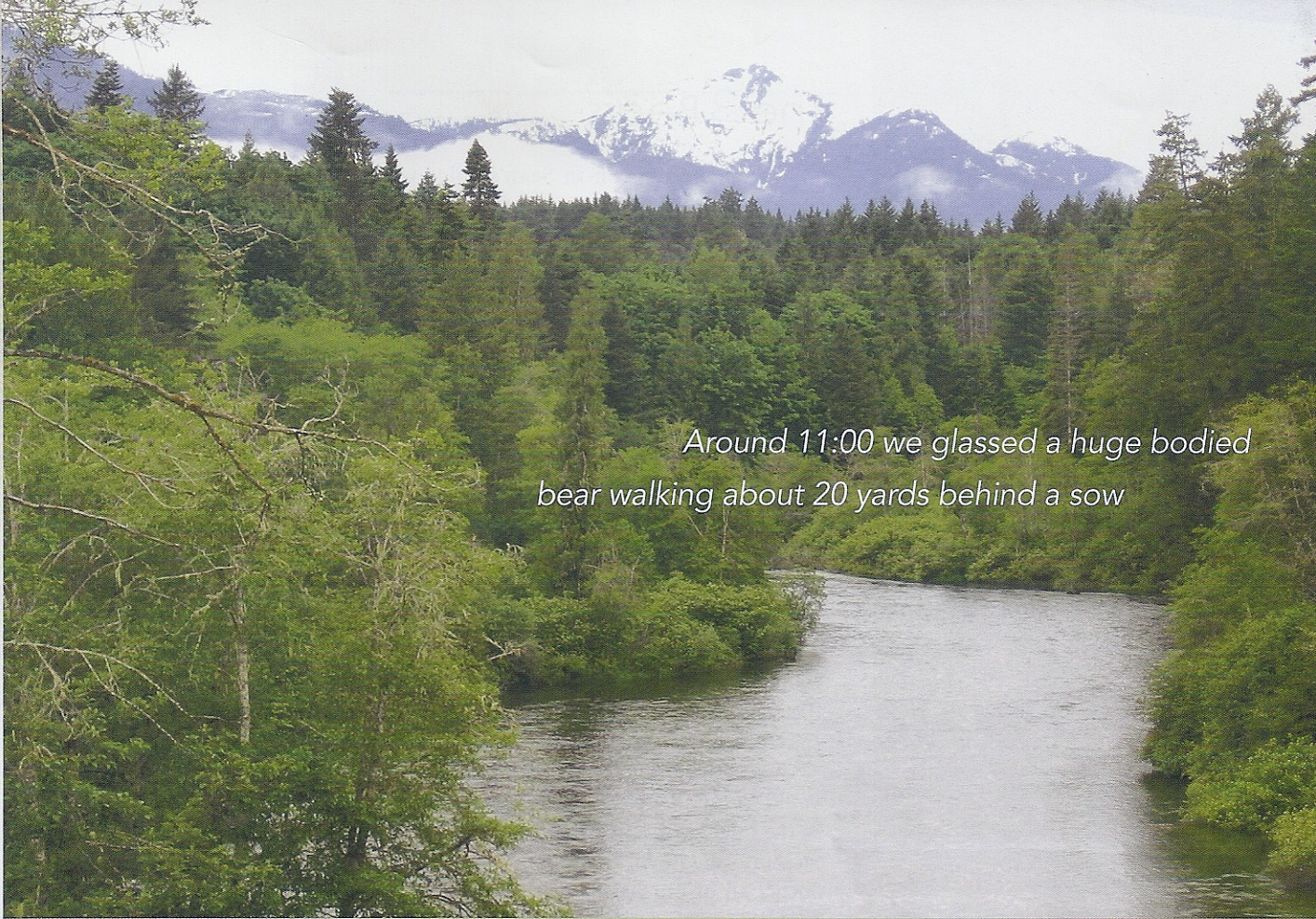


The 3 Bears

story by Kent Lloyd

The excitement built as our plane touched down in Vancouver for our 2006 Vancouver Island Bear Hunt. I had planned this trip for over a year, ever since I had been to Vancouver Island the previous October for Vancouver Island Black Bear with another outfitter. This time I had decided to bring my three sons to enjoy the beautiful country and experience the excitement of hunting the subspecies which is the largest of the black bear in the world.





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Sean Lingl, who owns *Canadian Guide Outfitters Ltd.* had been highly recommended to me by other hunting members from a previous hunt. They indicated that he also operated a successful trophy deer operation in Northern BC and acquired this bear, Roosevelt Elk, and cougar area on Vancouver Island that was very large and has seen very little hunting pressure.

We disembarked and went to Immigration where we collected our baggage and went to show our gun permits and pay the small import firearms processing fee. (They take credit cards by the way.) It was absolutely no problem to bring in the firearms. All that Customs requested was to see the permit that we had acquired from our outfitter previously and we were off to rent a car.

I have found with my three trips to hunt Vancouver Island that it is far better to rent a car and take a ferry to Nanaimo. The ferry terminal is an easy 45 minute drive from the

airport and the ferry ride of about 1½ hours is very enjoyable; sometimes there is even an opportunity of seeing whales along the way.

Once you disembark in Nanaimo it is about a two-hour ride to Port Alberni up Highway 19 to Highway 4 through some of the most beautiful country in the world.

The accommodations that outfitter Sean Lingl had arranged were exceptional. The lodge overlooked one of the best salmon streams in the world and as you sat on the veranda overlooking the stream with the snow-capped mountains in the back ground, you wished you could freeze the moment forever, which I did in my memory.

The first morning we were up early and the aroma of breakfast, fit for a lumberjack, which, by the way, most of Sean's guides are in the off-season, flowed through the lodge. Excitement was building as we noticed the guides getting the trucks, ATVs and equipment ready to go.

I decided to go with my son #2, Allan, as he was going with Sean to the East side of Vancouver Island with promises of BIG Bears. As we headed out in the pickup, the sun was rising over the snow-capped mountains illuminating the gorgeous country Vancouver Island is made of.

Upon arrival to our first destination, we immediately glassed our first bear across a valley walking an old abandoned logging road. We knew we were in for a fantastic hunt.

After a bit more glassing, we saw four more bears but none that our guide felt met our expectations. Around 11:00 we glassed a huge bodied bear walking about 20 yards behind a sow, once again on an old road the locals call re-habbed. I quickly learned this means the once active logging road has been ripped up by an excavator, smoothed out and planted in lush grass, clover and small trees, placing it back into the natural habitat it was before the logging companies logged it. This also creates BIG Bear habitat.

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From the tension in Sean's voice we knew this one was the one we were after.

After a very quick Indy 500 race across the valley in Sean's F350 4x4 and a quick walk up the rehabbed road, the bears had disappeared into the thick underbrush. The emotional low was as great as the emotional high just moments before. But what we did see was huge bear scat and massive tracks the size of dinner plates freshly pressed into the wet grass by the tremendous weight of this huge bear.

We had the wind in our favour, so Sean wanted to settle in and give the bears some time to come back out as he figured they would want to eat.

It seemed we checked every minute around the slight bend in the road in case the boar and his girlfriend came back out for a quick bite.

He did exactly what Sean figured he would, seeing the sow first, followed closely by the huge boar. They slowly fed their way back into the open. His sheer size instantly started all of our hearts to race in unison. As Allan settled on a tree with his 300 Winchester Mag, the excitement was hitting the critical level and this is what we all live for.

After the posing and picture taking, which to Sean and guides is as important as the kill itself, we returned to the lodge

only to find that my son #1, Sterrett, and son #3, David, had both scored huge bears.

David who was hunting the opposite side of this area, said that they had seen over 20 bears, and that the guide was insistent that they not shoot anything until he was satisfied that would be a trophy. Sterrett said they saw several bear which would have averaged 6½ to 7 ft. square but the conditions were not right until they rounded a corner and just below the road in an overgrown clearcut was the monster he scored on.

Sterrett said as they rode the ATVs through some of the most beautiful country in the world they also saw so many bears they lost count. They rounded a turn on a deserted logging road and headed down the mountain, right towards them was his monster. The wind was right and they let him walk right into them.

That night, as we sat around the fire pit on the veranda, sipping our favorite concoction, listening to the rapids and swapping lies from previous hunting adventures, the emotion of togetherness and success was almost more than one could control, and yes, maybe, just maybe, this old man's eyes teared up a little!

I can only say thank you to *Canadian Guide Outfitters* and the great team of guides for the Lloyd's hunting trip of a life-time. ■



EDITOR'S NOTE

CANADIAN GUIDE OUTFITTERS LTD. offers hunts for black bear, cougar and Roosevelt elk. For more information contact, sean@canadianguideoutfitters.com, or call 250-230-4868 or write them at P.O. Box 827, Port McNeill, BC V0N 2R0



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