

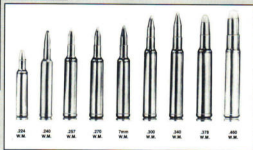
Roy Weatherby's Magnums



Roy Weatherby now serves as the board chairman of Weatherby, Inc., having turned over the duties of president to son Ed.

This California gun maker celebrates 40 years of designing high-velocity big game cartridges and distinctive hunting rifles.

By Col. Charles Askins



Sometimes an overwhelming sense of shame darkens my day when I realize that I am probably the most ungrateful

renegade this side of the Rio Grande. Why haven't I expressed proper thanks to Lionel Palmer, who got me my first 10-foot lion, or to Bill Jenvey, who led me up to my biggest Cape buffalo? Or why, now that I am making a confessional, haven't I offered Roy Weatherby my deepest and most heartfelt *gracias* for the rusty old Mark V shooting irons I have used all these years?

Roy Weatherby, on June 12, celebrated his 40th year in the production of the world's premier hunting rifle. I have known this extraordinary cuss for three decades of the four he has been offering those firearms that bear

Whether you're a varmint or an elephant hunter, you'll find a Weatherby Magnum up to the task. These cartridges feature belts and rounded shoulders and most have higher velocities and energies than comparable factory rounds.

his name. As these lines see the light of day, I shall be in Africa on my 30th safari. Few indeed have been those soirees to the Dark Continent when I did not depend either wholly or in part on the California rifle. The first one I shot was made by FN, imported by Jan Winter and his Firearms International, and stamped with the Weatherby logo. After that I had a .300 Weatherby Mag, in the Mark V that was produced by Sauer, and it was a superb rifle. Here more lately, my Weatherby rifles come from the Land of the Rising Sun, done by the Howa Manufacturing Co. of Japan. Certainly these guns,

spanning the last 30 years, could not have served more faithfully, performed more satisfactorily, nor brought me more unalloyed pleasure.

I sometimes contemplate whether I should be more grateful toward this gun maker for his firearms or for his cartridges. For the cartridges, in at least some cases, preceded the rifle. Typical of these banner rounds is the .270 Weatherby Mag., which came along in 1943, the 7mm Weatherby Mag. in '44, and the .257 Weatherby Mag. also that same year. Our Man followed through with a rifle that was fully competent to handle his hot loadings, but indubitably I must give him credit for a cartridge that inspired the rifle. Do you suppose for a moment that the Mark V rifle would be the prestigious arm it is today if it had been chambered for the .30-06 and the old .35 Whelen? You can bet your bottom peso it would not! It will always be debatable to me whether the firearm or the cartridge earns the first kudos.

The most popular of all the Weatherby rounds is, of course, the .300 Weatherby Mag. It is the premier loading, the plus-ultra of power and range. When the shooting man finally decides he just must have a Weatherby, his choice is almost invariably the going-hell-for-leather .300 caliber. Carried a bit beyond, the hunter who already has maybe the .257 or the .270 or perhaps

the 7mm is just not content until he adds the big .300 to his battery. Every wild animal of any size or stature in this world has been bagged by this cartridge. Some of the trophies taken were really too big for the loading, but it fetched them to earth for all that.

The .300 Weatherby Mag., designed by Roy Weatherby in 1944, when loaded with the 180-grain Nosler bullet spins along at 3,245 fps and indicates 4,200 ft.-lbs. of pizzazz. The .300 Win. Mag. with the same weight of ball does 2,960 fps and 3,500 ft.-lbs. of energy at the gun muzzle. The '06 again with the same bullet jogs along at 2,700 fps, and the muzzle blow is 2,900 ft.-lbs. Small wonder the .300 Weatherby Mag. has its devotees.

Just hypothetically, if a feller was going to rub shoulders with a Kodiak brownie in the alder jungle of the famous island, would he be smart to settle for anything less than the most potent medicine? I think not.

One of the early Weatherby cartridges was the .270 Weatherby Mag., which first saw the light in 1943. It is based on the .300 H&H Mag. casing shortened to 2.545 inches and then stuffed with the same bullets as the older .270 Win. The Man hunted with this cartridge during its first year of development, and he was so impressed with its performance he went ahead with its further refinement. The .270 Weatherby Mag. drives the 130-grain bullet at 3,375 fps; the .270 Winchester, its only real competitor, manages 3,060 fps.

During the following year, 1944, there were three new cartridges. These were the .257, the 7mm, and the .300.

The .257 Weatherby Mag. is a literal gem, a sturdy, efficient, and glorious little performer that simply outshines everything in the .25-caliber category. Firing the 117-grain bullet (or the 120-grain if you like), it attains 3,300 fps and energy levels closely parallel the '06. Muzzle energy is 2,825 ft.-lbs. The venerable .25 Roberts factory load strikes 2,780 fps, and the .25-06 120-grain offers 2,990 fps. Comparisons sometimes are quite irritating but in this case pertinent. The .257 Weatherby Mag. is simply the kingpin, the top dog.

Wanting a rifle identifiable "as far as you can see the stock," Weatherby unveiled the rakish Mark V in 1959. Diamond inlays are trademarked.



The popular Deluxe (top) and Lazermark are two Mark V models built to handle Weatherby's magnum loads. Both have the short-throw, nine-lug bolt that completely encloses the case head for strength and durability.

So far as the 7mm Weatherby Mag. is concerned, it runs neck-and-neck with the 7mm Rem. Mag. Velocities are similar and performance equally so. The most salient factor in the equation, I think, is that the Weatherby development appeared 18 years before the Remington cartridge.

From '44, when our hero had offered the most advanced cartridges in the shooting world, until 1953, he was so feverishly busy producing a rifle to fire these sterling rounds that he neglected the obviously necessary. That was a truly big-bore caliber. A round for such creatures as the African pachyderm, the African buffalo, and the rhino.

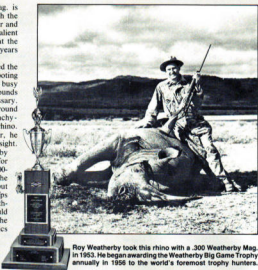
Toward the shank-end of the year, he made amends for this seeming oversight. He came along with the .378 Weatherby Mag. What Weatherby was striving for in this cartridge was the use of a 300-grain bullet to be driven at 3,000 fps. The .375 H&H Mag. fires a 300-grain slug but only at 2,530 fps. The additional 500 fps (provided the bullet jacket would withstand the additional acceleration) would be most impressive. Strive though he might, he fell a mite short. The ballistics are 2,925 fps with the 300-grain Hornady solid. Quite close, and the old bull tusker hit with the .378 Weatherby Mag. has yet to complain about that 75 fps of velocity that is lacking.

Before the .378 Weatherby Mag., our designer had leaned pretty heavily on the old .300 H&H casing for a basic cartridge. The newcomer was entirely different. It was a brand-new development not bearing any resemblance to any known cartridge. There's them who like to allege that Weatherby simply took the .416 Gibbs and reshaped it to achieve his .378. But that ain't true.

All Weatherby cartridges have a double-radius shoulder, and the .378 Weatherby Mag. is no exception. With the normal charge of more than 100 grains of propellant, the designer found in the beginning that the rifle primers available weren't sufficiently potent to always surely fire the powder. He went to Charley Horn, father of Bill Horn, the current president of Federal Cartridge Co., and old Charley designed a red-hot cap for the red-hot round. It was dubbed the No. 215 magnum primer, and it is loaded today in all the Weatherby rounds above the .240 Weatherby Mag. That Federal 215 primer resolved all the ignition problems with the monster cartridge, let me tell you!

To obviate confusion in the minds of shooters, Weatherby dubbed his big cartridge the .378 Weatherby Mag. Actually it is a .375 insofar as bullet diameter is concerned. He had experimented with a .375 Improved before the .378 Weatherby Mag. came along, but abandoned it. Even though it was a better round than the old .375 H&H, it was not quite hot enough for our man. Once he had it perfected, the .378 Weatherby Mag. left no shadow of doubt that it was No. 1.

This was in 1953, and the .378 Weatherby Mag. was hurried off to darkest Africa for an extended field test.



Roy Weatherby took this rhino with a .300 Weatherby Mag. in 1953. He began awarding the Weatherby Big Game Trophy annually in 1956 to the world's foremost trophy hunters.

Photo Courtesy: Roy Weatherby

Weatherby, among others, killed a bull tusker with the load. Then he found that despite the fact that the 300-grain bullet belted out 5,700 ft.-lbs. of muzzle thump, there were certain African territories that banned any caliber under .400 for such trophies as the elephant. Nothing daunted our indefatigable designer, who simply sized up the mouth of the .378 casing and, presto, he had the .460 Weatherby Mag. Again, it should be explained, this caliber really fires a .458 bullet. To differentiate the .460 Weatherby from the .458 Winchester, our gun man thought it best to give his round the slightly altered designation.

The .460 Weatherby Mag. is the world's most powerful cartridge. The 500-grain bullet, a Hornady, is driven at 2,700 fps and offers 8,095 ft.-lbs. of muzzle stuff. Pretty keen to see if the .460 was as good as it was cracked up to be, I hid me away to darkest Uganda and there bowled over Cape buffalo with the Mark V and its mighty loading. It left utterly nothing to be desired, believe me. This was in 1960; the .460 had bowled onto the scene in '58.

In 1962, the innovative Californian came along with the .340 Weatherby Mag. It is a better round than the .338 Win. Mag., but only marginally so. The Weatherby manages to drive a 250-grain bullet 120 fps faster than the 225-grain .338 Win. Mag. If I had to live with just one rifle and one caliber hereafter, it would be the .340 Weatherby Mag. It is just that good!

In 1963, Weatherby acknowledged his interest in the pee-wee calibers by fetching along the .224 Weatherby

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Weatherby's Magnums

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Mag. This was a brand-new one, and it exhibited a handsome new cartridge casing. With a casing of only 1.9 inches in length and a case head of but .429 inches, it was an intriguing lilliput. Best part of the story, maybe, was the fact that the 55-grain bullet was driven at 3,600 fps. This was fine, and the .224 Weatherby Mag. was almost instantly quite popular. However in 1965, Remington decided to standardize the .22-250, and this old-timer, once it had been made a factory round, soon set the .224 Weatherby Mag. in the shade. It developed the same ballistics, and since the Remington shooting iron and fodder were cheaper than the Weatherby, shooters went for the less-costly combination.

Not daunted, our impresario developed a real bell-ringer in 1968. This is the .240 Weatherby Mag., a 6mm that utilizes the very familiar .243 caliber bullet. We have other 6mm cartridges, but none that is as highly lethal as the .240 Weatherby Mag. This Bull of the Woods drives the popular 100-grain bullet at 3,395 fps. The .243 Win. with the same slug ambles along at 2,960 fps. For game like whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope, and javelina, this is a splendid caliber.

From the very beginning, Roy Weatherby was beset with ammo problems. He could make the rifle, but if the interested shooter elected to buy the gun, he was faced with handloading his fodder. None of the big ammo manufacturers showed the slightest interest in making cartridges for the ultra-hot rifles. This was a major handicap, and our struggling maker arranged for a supply of brass from an unnamed major manufacturer. This proved an utter failure. The Weatherby Co. installed loading machines and commenced to turn out the family of magnum cartridges in the South Gate plant.

"The brass was either too soft and dropped primers when fired or it was too brittle and broke up around the mouth of the case when loaded," Weatherby told me in a long face-to-face powwow. "We had to give up on that one."

"In '53, or maybe it was '54, I heard of Norma. I flew to Sweden and as a result of a longish conference I had with the Norma people they commenced to load all our ammunition. We buy our own bullets from Hornady and Nosler and I ship them to Sweden. The cartridges come back boxed and ready for further shipment to our 5,000 dealers. Along with the bullets goes the big Federal 215 primer. It is loaded in everything above the .240."

The manufacturer told me that in the beginning (1945) he eagerly picked up Mauser, Winchester, and Remington ac-

tions and barreled them with his tubes and in his calibers. In about 1949, he stopped this hodgepodge arrangement and commenced to get all his actions from Firearms International, which imported all their rifles and actions from Fabrique Nationale of Belgium. "We put our name on these rifles," explained the aggressive maker.

"I wanted a new rifle. A firearm better than anyone had ever had. The old Mauser with its two locking lugs simply would not do. I conceived the idea of not two lugs but nine of them. I had as my chief design engineer Fred Jennie, and I dropped the problem in his lap. Between the two of us we designed a bolt that has the nine lugs, but these lugs do not stand out beyond the diameter of the bolt itself. I took the fifth prototype to a meeting with some of our leading big game hunters; these included among others Herb Klein, unquestionably our greatest safari sportsman, and Elgin Gates, who hunted for many years with Klein. They admired the rifle and someone asked, 'What kind of a model name are you going to give this musket?'

a rounded fore-end tip and then I thought, well, what the hell, it will look a little more rakish if I give the tip a 45-degree angle and so I reshaped the fore-end tip to achieve that. I altered the conventional forestock so that it had a bit of a pear-shaped configuration. And I gave the stock the Monte Carlo comb with a comfortable cheekpiece. The stock is an indubitable part of the Mark V, and the rifle can be identified about as far as you can see the stock."

In 1956 Weatherby had Herb Klein as a partner. It was one of those friendly, good-natured partnerships, and the manufacturer who held the majority stock in the company decided he simply had to do something for the renowned sportsman. He got in touch with Gen. Nate Twining, chief of the U.S. Air Force, and this pair of worthies got together in Dallas at Klein's home. There were other well-known characters in attendance like Elgin Gates, Ken Niles (the television personality), and a few of the better-known gun writers.

Klein was kept in the dark as to the plot until Weatherby brought forth a huge



Weatherby's Fiberglass rifle has a Vanguard action in six conventional varmint and big game calibers. Like the magnum-chambered Fibermark, it features a lightweight, weather-resistant fiberglass stock that is ideal for hunting rugged terrain and harsh climates.

"That was a good question, and frankly I hadn't thought much about it up until then. I looked around for suggestions.

"Elgin Gates, who had sold Mercury outboard motors on the West Coast for years, suggested that I call the new rifle the Mark V. Mercury outboards used the 'mark' system and this appealed to him. I liked the idea and since this was the fifth prototype I acquiesced, it has been the Mark V Weatherby ever since. The year was 1959."

I asked Weatherby about the so-called "California" stock. Shooters are never at a loss to voice their opinion about the original butt; they are either for it whole-hog or emphatically against the furniture. In discussing the very original pattern the designer explained, "I designed the stock thinking I wanted a gun that was better looking and most especially different than the rifles we had seen all our lives.

"I put a little flair in the pistol grip and then added the Weatherby diamond in the base of the grip. I got a trademark on that diamond. At first my stock had

four-foot trophy emblematic of the outstanding sportsman of the world. The chief of the Air Force made the presentation and offered the accompanying speech. That really set off something. Every year since '56, with one exception, the Weatherby Selection Committee puts the finger on the most distinguished sportsman among the great hunters/shooters of the world. The Weatherby Big Game Trophy is the most prestigious award in the hunting realm.

These past two to three decades, the company has added a splendid line of sturdy and worthwhile hunting scopes. Then there are also over/under, auto-loading, and pump scatter-guns. Not to overlook a handsome .22 caliber rifle dubbed quite appropriately the Mark XXII. Together with these additions the company now has a new president. He is known as Roy Weatherby Jr., more familiarly addressed as "Ed." It is significant, I think, to add that the old man has promoted himself to chairman of the board and is still very, very much in the picture! ■

Who is our greatest living sportsman? And provided we commence a search for the fellow who has hunted the most widely and shot the greatest variety of the fauna of this world, just what criteria shall we apply in designating him the King of all Nimrods? In the past, we have had some outstanding shooting men. There was Buffalo Bill Cody, who shot several thousand buffalo, and Daniel Boone, the notable character of our early frontier days. This pair, along with countless others, were not exactly sportsmen in the modern sense. Buffalo Bill was shooting for the market, and Dan't was only intent on filling the pot. His pot.

Here more lately, we have come to regard the true sportsman as that outdoorsman who hunts only for the chase. He is not intent on the market, nor is he driven by want. He shoots and quests in distant places for the sheer love of the hunt. Maybe best known of these truly dedicated ones was Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States and keenest of big game hunters. One time, after he had served his stint in the White House, he gathered up Kermit, and they journeyed off to East Africa for a full nine months. Even before that, he had shot widely over our own West. Later, he almost killed himself on an expedition to South America, where he attempted to explore the upper reaches of the Amazon.

There were others of the Roosevelt era, one of them the successful author, Stewart Edward White. After his novels commenced to make money, he sojourned in Africa on a number of safaris. His particular forte was the lion. Still another American who had a penchant for the great cats was Paul Rainey. He was very well-to-do and took his pack of hounds to Nairobi with him. There he coursed lions from horseback. Now I have never spooed the King of Beasts with the canine pack, but I'd speculate the chase was short, spectacular, and exciting. *Panthera leo* flees from neither man nor beast. Rainey lost a lot of dogs, and on one occasion, the enraged beast almost accounted for both man and horse.

This opus is not concerned with the exploits of yesterday's sportsmen. These fine fellows were sort of amateurs compared with the modern crop of big game questers. Their activities were confined to relatively limited hunting fields, and by present-day standards were none too impressive. The modern sportsman hunts around the globe.

In my opinion, one of the greatest of these latter-day huntsmen was Herb Klein. This fellow made a fortune in oil, and he devoted the last 30 years of his life to the

Col. Askins dubs Dr. Robert Speegee, who has taken a variety of game worldwide, today's top trophy hunter. Speegee's trophies include a sitatunga (top) and a bighorn.

TODAY'S TOP TROPHY HUNTER

Col. Askins examines a long list of worthy candidates and offers his choice as today's No. 1 trophy hunter.

BY COL. CHARLES ASKINS



pursuit of wild game. I first met him in Spain almost 30 years ago. He had just returned from his first African safari, and he had a ranking amateur, a veritable tenderfoot in tow. This was a college professor named O'Connor, who had never hunted outside Arizona until Klein took him under his wing. He was probably impressed with the remarkable miscellany of beasts which the Dark Continent offered. Klein, quite apart from his benevolence toward chance acquaintances, was essentially a sheep hunter. He was the first American to penetrate Hunza, that tiny principality in the deepest Himalayas. He there took the first Marco Polo ram claimed by an outsider in 40 years.

This extraordinary fellow shot all the 27 big game species of North American game and along the way annexed 10 grand slams on sheep. Roy Weatherby saw fit to award the Texan the first Weatherby Big Game Trophy award, the most prestigious prize in the hunting realm, in 1956. Herb Klein died in 1974.

There are others. Probably even more impressive is the H.I.H. Prince Abdorrezza Pahlavi, brother of the former Shah of Iran. This peripatetic Persian game seeker shot on five continents, not once but countless times. He collected thousands of trophies and fetched them all home to Tehran, where all were housed in a magnificent museum. When the Shah was forced to flee Iran, Abdorrezza Pahlavi was compelled not only to abandon his country but also his vast collection of hunting fauna.

In 1962, Pahlavi was presented the Weatherby award. Later, our firearms maker persuaded the prince to serve on the committee that annually selects the award winner. The catastrophe in his native Iran has pretty well written finis to the hunting activities of this fantastic sportsman.

More recently, the highly coveted emblem was passed along to a most extraordinary individual, Watson Yoshimoto, a Japanese-Hawaiian. A second generation Nipponese, this genial little Oriental is literally all over the hunting map! You find him or hear of his exploits all over four continents. He is forever on the move, and my impression is that here is an elephant hunter. He is forever on the trail of a great tusker, and he has to his credit some bulls with truly mammoth ivory. "Yoshi," as he is called by his friends, accepted the Big Game Trophy in 1980. And very well deserved!

With the exception of 1975, Roy Weatherby has passed along his tremendously sought-after trophy annually. He does not arbitrarily select some hunter who has momentarily come to his attention, and the canon that the winner must shoot a Weatherby rifle is pure hokum. Weatherby has a committee, and this little group, all practicing sportsmen, puts their heads to-

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Today's Top Hunter

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gether and carefully and meticulously considers the record. Thereafter, they make their recommendations to Weatherby in an atmosphere of considerable confidentiality. The winner is never known until the very evening of the gala banquet.

I once knew an old New Mexico rancher who had shot a whitetail buck every year for 42 seasons. "I reckon," he said to me one day, "that I'm the greatest deer hunter in the country." And maybe he was. Another pair, a father and son, had gone moose hunting for 27 years. Annually, the father/son duo each shot *Alces alces*, and if you talked to them, they would happily inform you that they were the champions.

Times have changed. Now the ranking sportsmen must hunt worldwide. Not just in North America, not just in Africa. And certainly not restricted to any one continent, but on all of them. Even with this peripatetic journeying, the ambitious cannot be at all sure he is in the running for the title of No. 1 Sportsman. No indeed. He may shoot an old tusker with ivory which weighs, on the side, 140 pounds or stop the charge of a hell-bent lion, together with 14 buffalo, all of them intent on doing him grave bodily harm. But these game-field brushes with death will scarcely get him an honorable mention.

The fellow who seeks the Weatherby statuery must be a mountain sheep hunter. It is utterly mandatory that he scale all the peaks in the Ogilvie Mountains, Canada; the Brooks Range of Alaska; the sierras of Baja, California; not to forget the lofty peaks of that mightiest of all ranges, the Himalayas. He, perforce, must fly into Moscow and thence to Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia, must tread the Wakhan Corridor and live in a yurt with the camels and goats. His trophy will be shot at altitudes approaching 16,000 feet.

I give you the sportsman who has climbed a thousand peaks, frozen and starved and braved death in countless hazardous situations over the past quarter of a century. A fellow who has hunted every continent, who has claimed all the major wild sheep of the world, 35 in number, and has two North American grand slams. (A grand slam is one each of our four sheep species.) This bucko has made 141 hunts worldwide, these to include North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

This remarkable individual is Dr. Robert E. Speegle of Garland, Texas. He has been hunting since the age of 29, and he is now in his 50s. A medical man with a family practice, I often wonder how the good doctor gets around to all his patients. He, too, has collected all 27 of the North American big game species, and he participated in the first exploratory hunt in west-

ern Nepal, licensed by the Nepalese Game Department, and collected the bharal (blue sheep) and the goral. He became the seventh American to collect the bharal and the fifth ever to collect 13 major species of the huntable sheep of the world. He added Ladakh blue sheep, Ladakh urial, and Tibetan argali to the collection in 1976. He is the third sport hunter to collect 15 major species of wild sheep.

He won the Shikar-Safari Club International Asiatic award for his Tibetan argali, the *Ovis ammon hodgsoni*. He was the ninth sportsman to collect the glacier bear in fair chase. He has collected eight of the spiral-horned antelope of Africa. These include the bongo, greater and lesser kudu, eland, nyala, mountain nyala, sitatunga, and bushbuck. Among his truly rare and most unusual trophies is the maneless Grant's zebra, collected in Sudan.

Dr. Speegle has four entries for his North American trophies in the Boone and Crockett record book, nearly 100 entries in the Rowland Ward tome, and nearly 200 entries in the Safari Club International record book. The trophies are all housed in the Speegle Museum of Natural History in his hometown of Garland. There are 465 animals. Most of these are displayed life-size and include such prized trophies as the bongo, tiger, lion, leopard, jaguar, polar bear, glacier bear, grizzly, giant Alaska brown bear, four horned sheep, Arctic wolf, and the northern Nubian giraffe. There are literally hundreds of smaller mammals, not necessarily game species but in the opinion of the good doctor necessary for a museum of natural history. The doctor's plan is to present the museum, lock stock, and barrel, to the state of Texas on its 150th anniversary.

Our hunting man has worked for four years on the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and has served as president of the American delegation. Our Texan has served on the Hunting Hall of Fame Foundation as a member of the board of directors and recently completed a term as president of Shikar-Safari Club International. He has also been on the board of the International Sheep Hunters Association. He lectures and presents slide shows to hunting and conservation groups and civic clubs in his hometown and in nearby Dallas. He is an exceedingly active member of the NRA and lends a hand in teaching gun safety programs.

Roy Weatherby presented this fantastic hunter his Big Game Trophy in 1979. Never was it more deserved, believe me.

Unlike some of his peers who received the coveted trophy, our hero never stopped hunting. He was off to Mongolia, and since then he has been almost continually on the move. I bumped into him last year and asked, "Where away, Doc?" He smiled and told me, "I am going to drop down into Peru and shoot a rabbit. There is a big, long-legged fellow down there that I want to add to the museum." ■

BELGIAN HUNTER

Wins
28TH

WEATHERBY AWARD

By Col. Charles Askins

The prestigious Weatherby Big Game Trophy was awarded November 29, 1984, to Belgian Jacques Henrijean, who has made 177 separate hunts on all six continents. If our sportsman friend devoted 30 days to each hunt, it required 14 years to accomplish this considerable shooting stint. No small attainment, believe me. He has collected 142 separate species, placing 89 of these in the record book. He has taken the African "big five" (lion, elephant, leopard, buffalo, and rhino), the super slam on mountain sheep, and a grand slam on Spanish ibex.

The Weatherby trophy is now in its 28th year of award. It is a very special sort of prize that interests a very select few sportsmen. While it is given annually, the facts are those who are ambitious to claim the award actually strive to be in consideration for years. An entire lifetime of energetic big game hunting goes into the powder-burning. Some winners profess their complete surprise at being anointed, but my private opinion is that they had a pretty good inkling before the lightning struck.

The candidates for the award are reviewed by a selection committee, which is old and of long standing. The canard that Roy Weatherby puts the finger on the yearly winner is hokum. Too, the long-standing nonsense that the winner must fire only Weatherby Mark V rifles is strictly the bunk. There are nine members of the selection group, headed by the world-renowned sportsman Prince Adorrezza Pahlavi. Other ranking and extremely knowledgeable voting members are Dr. Bob Speegle, Elgin Gates, and Weatherby himself.

A close observer of the Weatherby extravaganza over the past quarter-century, it is my impression that if there is any game taking that carries more weight, it is sheep hunting. It is absolutely material that the candidate have bagged not only all the North American species (there are four of these *Ovis*), but some eight other species, most of which are found in the Himalayas of Asia. Our boy can shoot a 120-pound bull elephant and a 10-foot lion and the selection committee will hardly grunt. But let him account for the Tibetan argali and a trophy-size urial, and he is a marked man at once. There really isn't anything wrong with this attitude. Sheep hunting is the toughest, hardest, and most dangerous of all game questing.

The first winner of the Weatherby may very well be the greatest nimrod of them all. This was Herb Klein of Dallas, Texas. This fellow, now dead, hunted not for glory nor yet renown, but solely for the pleasure of the chase. So great



Jacques Henrijean (r.) accepts the 28th Weatherby Big Game Trophy from Roy Weatherby. Henrijean's 89 record book entries and his achievements in wildlife conservation gained him the award.

were his game-field accomplishments that Roy Weatherby saddled up one day and galloped over to Dallas and there presented sportsman Klein with the first Weatherby cup. The recipient did shoot Mark V rifles, most especially the .257 Weatherby Magnum, and I suspect that from this early beginning the story got started that you cannot win without the Weatherby ordinance.

Probably the most popular and certainly the hardest-hunting recipient of the Weatherby brass is a Japanese-American named Watson Yoshimoto. He hails from Honolulu, and I have seen him in many strange places. "Yoshi" simply never quits hunting. He won the award in '80, but this did not slow him up a whit! Of all the great huntsmen I know, I am always more likely to see this extremely likeable chap in Lusaka or in the Cameroon than anyone else.

Twelve years ago, Jay Mellon, he of the fairly well-known clan of Pittsburgh, was handed over the four-foot trophy. He was the youngest man ever to claim it. For 10 years, young Mellon made his home in Nairobi, hunting almost continuously. I had him in mind when I commented that when the lightning struck he must have had a fairly reasonable feeling that it would happen!

Of the 28 winners, Doc Bob Speegle is the collector of the greatest number of trophies. This amiable medico has a museum in Garland, Texas, that holds 465 mounted specimens, almost all of them full size. The good doctor claimed the Weatherby diadem in 1979. He, like Watson Yoshimoto, has never quit hunting.

Only two firearms editors have ever been honored by the presentation. The first of these pundits at the time of the award had hunted in Africa once and in India once. He had shot all the North American sheep. The other editor got the trophy the year following. This was back in the beginning when the selection committee was pretty generous.

Today, the candidate must be like Jacques Henrijean and have put in 14 years in the game fields. The Weatherby trophy is a most unique and exemplary token of the constancy, the determination, and the devotion of the hunter to the chase. ■

Italian Hunter Captures 25th Weatherby Award

By Earl Shelsby

Dr. Carlo Caldesi, who has hunted on every continent, was the recipient of the 25th Weatherby Big Game Award Trophy at a gala black-tie reception at the grand ballroom of the Beverly Hilton.

The trophy, which has been referred to as the "Oscar" of the hunting world, is presented each year to a big game hunter with outstanding accomplishments in the sport. It was created in 1956 by Roy E. Weatherby, a big game hunter and manufacturer of famous guns.

Television personality Dennis James, while making the trophy presentation, pointed out that this year's winner has "made 203 separate hunts on all six continents, collecting 187 different species and placing 92 of them in record books."

Dr. Caldesi, who lives in Biella, Italy, has made 19 hunts in North America and has collected 25 of the 27 recognized big game trophies, including the grand slam of North American sheep.

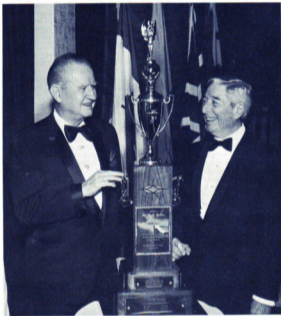
His African hunting experiences have been exceptional. He was the first sportsman to collect the rare shoa bushbuck. He has taken 112 different African species, including the African big five on three occasions. He has placed 40 animals in the Rowland Ward record book.

Dr. Caldesi has taken 11 different species of ibex and goats, as well as three bongo and record-class kudu, mountain nyala and sitatunga. Also, he was the first sportsman to hunt the Coburg Peninsula in the northern territory of Australia. It was there that he collected two record-class banteng.

Dr. Caldesi is a life member of Game Conservation International and is an honorary or regular member of six other groups, including the Los Angeles chapter of Safari Club International.

He is an 18-time member of the Italian pigeon shooting team in world competition and, in 1956, was the winner of the Grand Prix de Monte Carlo against a stellar international field.

Dr. Caldesi was selected by a panel of eight sportsmen and hunters over five other distinguished nominees. The other candidates were: Dante Marrocco, Palos Verdes Estates, Calif.; Glenn Slade, Houston; Thornton N. Snider, Turlock, Calif.; Mahlon (Butch) White, Pueblo, Colo.; and Erwin Wilson, Birmingham, Mich. ■



Dr. Carlo Caldesi (r.), recipient of the 25th Weatherby Big Game Award, poses with gunmaker and award-donor Roy Weatherby. Dr. Caldesi has hunted on six continents and taken 187 big game species. Ninety-two of his trophies are listed in record books.

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