

NEW SHOOTING STICKS FROM SPORTING WOOD™ CREATIONS

Our good friends at Sporting Wood™ Creations have brought out an excellent piece of field gear. They are now offering a “take down” version of their very fine tripod shooting sticks.

As a hunter, I work very hard to close the distance on each game animal to less than 100 meters. Closer was/is always better. It is the way I was taught. I am not saying this in relationship to just the taking of dangerous game in that 35 to 65 meter range. I speak of it as the proper thing a hunter should do whenever stalking.

But there can be certain species of game that defy one's most serious stalking efforts. Or the country you are in happens to be devoid of trees or any other natural object that you can use as a support to make a proper shot. One animal specifically is the Pronghorn antelope. They have the capacity to live out in very open territory and they are very skittish. The wind blows from every point on the compass at any given moment and these wonderful animals have tremendous eyesight, estimated to equal that of 8X binocular. Add to that their ability to run effortlessly at 40 mph and achieve bursts approaching 60 mph (88 ft/sec); it can be very difficult to achieve a sight picture from either a standing position or a hasty kneeling or sitting position indeed! In the time it takes a 3000 ft/sec, 140 gr. spire point to cover 300 yards, an antelope can cover a little over 26 feet when moving a top speed. Thus a tripod can be a real help to ensure a proper shot.

So, over the years I have used shooting sticks when I felt no other option was available, or proper. But I did not care for single-piece, full-length sticks as I found them to be difficult to carry under certain conditions. The marketplace offered all-metal, one-piece and take-down units but I have never been

able to adapt to them. Frankly they remind me of clothes poles for forest elves. I apologize to those of you who enjoy the metal technology but I prefer more classical traditions.

This is where Sporting Wood™ Creations came to the rescue. They have put together the wonderful aspects of wood for the legs of the tripod and used a high quality aluminum alloy for the connector components needed to convert the two-piece leg sections into a rigid, full 70” (1.78 metres) high tripod. All of this while creating a pleasing, well-finished product.

The wood is a very hard, dense hickory which is sanded and finished by hand. The wood is dried to very low moisture content prior to fabrication. We are advised that the moisture level of the wood is lower than that of any natural environment where a hunter may wish to use such a device. Why is this important? If the leg sections were too high in moisture, they could crack, or separate from the aluminum fixtures if they were exposed to conditions with lower relative humidity.

The major engineering hurdle that had to be overcome was to create a connector module that would screw and unscrew smoothly/ readily under all climatic environs, and in addition, reliably stay together under the trying conditions of hunting. This they have achieved in full measure.

I have put a set of these sticks through a rather rigorous evaluation through fair weather and foul. I set them up as a finished piece and left them out in the field where the deer on my property forage routinely. I wanted to see if the animals would be alarmed by the matte gray finish of the metal joining fixtures or for any other reasons.

What happened....? Nothing! Just what I was hoping for. Rain, dirt, cold,

had no effect. Birds of prey landed on them as they searched out the field for mice and whatever else. I felt that being accepted by a Great Horned Owl was a rather high commendation. Did I clean them after their trial? Of course I did. A quick swab with a mid .30 caliber bore brush removed any debris from the connectors. I also gave them a very light touch of a synthetic lubrication. If one does not take care of his/her equipment the failure of said item is the fault of the owner, not the device.

Something that I like very much is that the dimensions of the tripod in take down format are about 37” (93.98cm) and the Red Oxx® case that is supplied has a nice set of strap handles which makes it easy to carry. I am going to have a shoulder sling added to my case so that I can easily keep both hands free and yet have the tripod ready to go in seconds. The case should stand up to most any field conditions and it comes along at no extra charge!

Another nice feature is the Fallow deer hide cover at the top of the tripod so that I will not scratch my rifle. If your sporting memories include the Dark Continent, Sporting Wood™ Creations also offers hair-on Cape Buffalo hide or Zebra skin (\$199.00) instead of the Fallow Deer (\$189.00).

S & H charges are additional. (Prices subject to change without prior notice.) They even have a version with a nice

rubber top cover in lieu of the animal skin so that you do not have to explain the origin of the hide to personnel from various departments of F&G in the country in which you are traveling.

So, if you are ready to acquire

a truly high-quality hand-built shooting tripod that breaks down to a compact size in seconds, check out the unit from Sporting Wood Creations @ www.sportwc.com.

Or you can call them at 1-423-975-7626. Jim can answer all of your questions and supply you with what you need.

