



By Matt Klement

NEVER give up trying

Are you new to hunting Pigs and having trouble finding them? Are you having trouble securing properties to hunt on when Pig hunters are often hated by the wider community and Land holders for past incidents? Are your mates bagging you out for not catching pigs with your dog/s or not shooting them?

Don't despair, don't give up. Never Give Up trying because when you least expect it, you will get an awesome pig and it will be the best day of your life. I hope my accounts below spur you on and help you to be determined when hunting these animals which are extremely cunning, wary, hard to find and dangerous.

Hunting Pigs for me started with shooting in NSW near the town of Louth and also in the Pilliga Scrub in NSW. Now this was the beginning of the 10 year drought that we are still experiencing in Southern Australia now. I was given access to land via the Baradine Forestry Office and a land holder and this is where it all started.

I sometimes cruised the remote towns and asked if I could get access to Land. I would always carry a few references and my license and insurance info with me to prove that I was trustworthy as access was always difficult in the Southern half of Australia. This is how I got access to the Darling River country out of Louth NSW. I was there one day on a week long hunt at Easter with a mate called John Liddell from Adelaide. Now John is more of a 4 wheel driver but I got him hooked on shooting so he was there with me to nail some pigs and feral goats if we were lucky enough to find them.

Scatters flew into our camp near the river one afternoon on dusk as he knew I wanted to shoot my first pig. He flew in saying get your guns, there's a huge boar out on the flats. We didn't need any pushing, we were so there! We jumped in the 4x4s and drove out to where the pig had been sighted. Sure enough he was still there heading towards the river for a drink. I pulled over the side of the track lined up the 30/30 open sites and pulled the trigger. Can

you believe I missed I was so excited and the Boar took off away from the river where he had come from. We gave chase and 800 mtrs of open flat country later I smoked him in the shoulder. But he was so tough he wouldn't drop. I fired again and dropped him dead. We celebrated and I removed the head so I could get the tusks the next day. Only problem was I did not have a bloody camera and this saddens me to this day. He was roughly 75 kg's and packing some good ivory plus he was mottled and woolly. I was then hooked for life because the boar had charged me when I had to make my follow up shot. I realised this was dangerous and it was not like hunting foxes or rabbits.

My next trip was back to the Louth region along the Darling River and this time my mate John Vernon accompanied me with his wife Barbara. John is a very experienced and knowledgeable hunter and he taught me plenty about finding and stalking pigs on foot with a rifle. On that trip he had me wading through waist deep cold water and pushing up into lignum islands whilst he flanked the bank and looked for any trying to escape. This method worked a treat and we nailed 7 good pigs in one weekend using this technique. I realised at this point just how hard you have to work for pigs but it is very sweet when you get one and you appreciate it so much more.

Then came my trip to the NT and Normanton as I put plenty of effort in and secured some properties up North via my new friend Ken Millard. We walked about 8 kms per hunt in the heat and checked thickly covered areas where pigs laid up during the day. It was successful and so were the early morning hunts. You have to walk very quietly and have your wits about you when stalking – every step counts and planning where you place your feet is critical and also wind direction is imperative. Always hunt down wind and avoid windy days as pigs lay up usually deep into scrub where it's hard to reach them.

When hunting with Ken I was introduced to

Bull Arab hunting dogs and 12 months later I had my own and a dog run in Canberra.

I put in 2 years of tough slogging going out to Western NSW on 15 trips only get a handful of pigs in total. My mates said my dogs were no good and I was no good at hunting and I copped heaps of criticism – even from the breeder of my dogs. I was accused of doing the wrong things but I just kept going and I knew my dogs would learn even if we were doing it on our own.

Training the Bull Arabs was hard and I had to spend big money and go up North to the Pig Promise Lands. I worked hard at phone calls, letters and eventually secured some properties and from here the dogs learnt heaps. They got a few touch ups along the way and I had my mishaps, infections that blew out on my dogs from tusk hits, and the list goes on but I backed my dogs up and looked after them and kept trying. Then one day I was with my mate Ken in the NT. He flew all the way from Townsville to hunt with me and we nailed Boar after Boar on this prime property in the NT. In one week we did very well and caught plenty. As the dogs caught more, they got better at finding and holding and it just continued from there. I then got a pup for my wife and this dog caught it's first pig at 5.5 months on our honeymoon. What was magic is that I did not really train the pup with obedience or hunting – she learnt it all from the other two where I did the hard yards years ago.

It's taken 7-8 years and I have bagged roughly 200 pigs. I have trophies at home and when I go into my garage and look at the photos, the DVD footage and the tusks, I am reminded why I went to all that effort.

Nothing beats hunting Pigs and I have learnt to never give up trying.

Happy Hunting !

