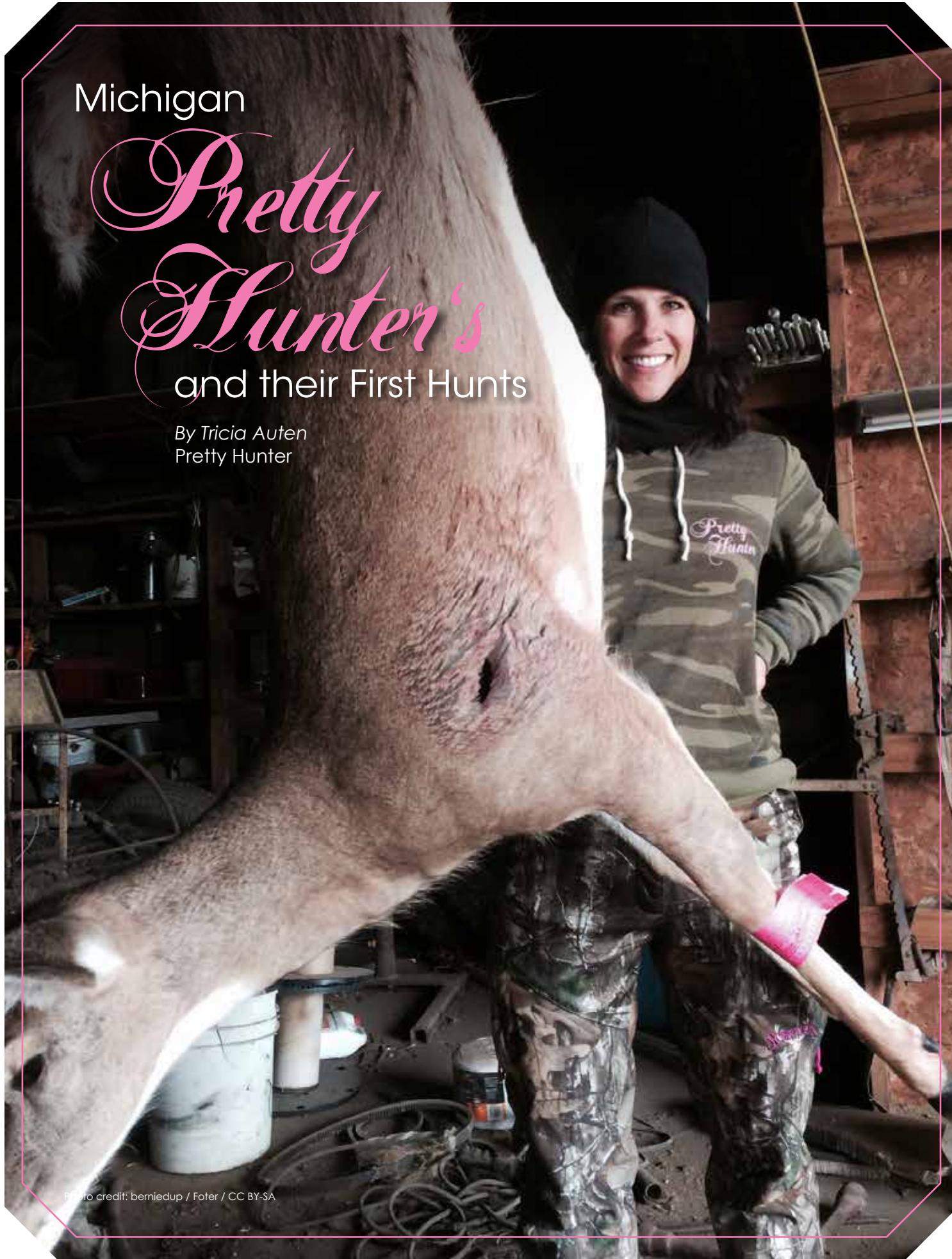


Michigan

Pretty Hunter's and their First Hunts

By Tricia Auten
Pretty Hunter



I am Tricia Auten, owner of Pretty Hunter. I am fortunate to work with some fabulous women who, along with myself, have hunting as a significant part of their lifestyle. I am privileged to share some of our first hunt stories.

Let me introduce you to Renee Anderson, originally from Redford, MI

and now resides in Wixom, MI. I have gotten to know Renee through her involvement with Pretty Hunter, she started working with us in 2015 as a model in one of our fashion shows. Let me stop there, seems a little odd to be writing about a fashion show in a HUNTING magazine! Well on with the storyRenee has done some of our country music festivals throughout the summer. I have worked alongside her and have seen her interact with our customers and have chatted about hunting with her as well. She has a genuine smile and her spirit is inviting, and Renee never compared or qualified a customer based on their status as a 'hunter'. A little something about Pretty Hunter qualifications to work with us, one rule is to NEVER size someone up by whether they 'hunt' or not, because how we see it from a Pretty Hunter standpoint is that all women hunt, whether that be hunting for an animal, a man, or even a bargain, it is all considered hunting.

hunt [huhnt] /hʌnt/ to chase or search; to pursue with force.

As Renee and I began sharing hunting stories, she excitedly told me she was returning to Maine for a second year of hunting bear. I asked her to tell me about it and these are her words, "I usually bow hunt, but my husband suggested I use a rifle...I shot a few guns to see what I could handle and it turned out after trying several small guns that the gun best suited for me was my Dad's 30-06. He passed away when I was 15, so I was beyond excited to be using his gun and thought it must have been a sign."

Time passed, and as her trip grew near the sense of excitement sparked among the members of Team Pretty Hunter. We all looked forward to hearing about her adventure and with the power of social

media and of course, texting, we were able to stay tuned into some of what she was experiencing.

One of the main things that may be taken away from a hunt or hunting trip, in addition to meat for the freezer and a rack to mount, but the relationship and understanding shared with the hunting partners that become friends along the way. It's the feelings that you can't explain or express in words, but when you see these hunt 'family' members you just know. We understood that this was a huge part of why this trip was so special to Renee, she was returning to the same group she had hunted with the year before, and was ready to commune with this 'family' again. They spent the first day of the trip hanging out and enjoying each other's company and then set out for the blind early afternoon the next day (opening day).

These are Renee's words of her experience: "Gary walked me into my blind and dumped some raspberry stuff all around the bait. He says "Remember, there is a sow with three cubs, give some time before shooting and check for the cubs" We (him or I) do not and will not shoot a sow with cubs...and off he went. I was beyond ecstatic to be back in the woods. After the first adrenaline rush had worn down a bit I got a little fidgety and started playing solitaire...for a very long time. I saw nothing-no squirrels, no birds, raccoons, nothing to keep me entertained, so I continued to play solitaire.

I heard some rustling of leaves, I assumed it was a squirrel, but just in case I picked up my gun (my dad's gun) and set it on my lap. The rustling was faint, but consistent-so maybe a bear? I thought I saw the brush move about 30 yards by the bait pile--so I was watching the brush. I heard a crunch fairly close to my left and glanced over, I could see the black hair right next to me, I took the safety off and he turned towards me and took another step and slipped down the tree root-he was inches from my face staring into my eyes, I could feel his breath on my face!

I did not breathe, I did not move and what felt like an hour was 30 seconds of my life flashing before me. He turned around and waddled to the bait. I knew once I saw his rear end waddle away that this was a shooter, my gun was up and ready. He passed the bait pile, but circled around and pushed off a log. He was standing in perfect broad side position. I aimed up-trying to control my heart that jumped into my throat. I close my eyes, take a deep breath, open my eyes aim up that scope and exhale squeezing the trigger. I never even felt the trigger, I just remember the shot. **I JUST SHOT A BEAR!!!!**



my story. I know that she is going on a bear hunt next spring, and I look forward to hearing her story as well – don't you?"

Another dynamo that I have had the fortune of getting to know is Tina Fay from Davisburg, MI. We signed up to do our one and only County Fair of 10 days back in 2013. And well, the best thing that came of it was meeting Tina! She has become a very important part of Pretty Hunter and works very hard all of the time. Day after day, I have seen Tina become stronger in her spirit and in her resolve as a determined, adventurous woman. Here she tells her first hunt story.

I am Tina Fay and I decided in 2011 I wanted to start hunting again after many years of always doing for others. It is the peace I needed. I started going with a friend to turkey hunt in the spring and I was hooked. I learned anything and everything I could. I purchased my first shotgun and a bow myself which I found very liberating. I looked at every opportunity I had to get out in the woods as a gift, one that I cherish.

On December 21, 2013 I debated on hunting due to the impending ice storm they were predicting. I love hunting in the snow. I was excited and nervous to try hunting with a Muzzleloader. I had never shot the gun that I was borrowing. I decided to go for it. The blind was glazed with ice, I felt like a kid waiting for Christmas while I waited for Deer.

The wait was worth it, before long out came two doe, one was a shooter. I hesitated said a prayer



He ran off to the right of the bunker. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't catch my breath and my heart was beating louder and faster than ever before. This was not the same adrenaline I get from deer back at home-it was 1,000x more intense. I grabbed my gun again and headed towards the bunker, I looked everywhere I thought a blood trail should be...once I stepped further out I could see blood under the fish bait bucket. A huge relief washed over me, I got him! I did not track any further and went back to my blind to wait it out for the guys to help track. I was completely satisfied once I had seen blood. I had to wait until dark for my husband, Mike, and our friend, Gary to help track as we did not want to ruin Mike's hunt. We tracked for about 50 yards and it was getting close to time to call when Mike yelled "I got bear!" Pure relief, joy and anticipation hit me all in one instant. It took 7 guys to get him out. I'm still grinning ear to ear & trying to process it all. I know my Dad was with me, because not only did I survive, but I got my bear!"

Of course, Team Pretty Hunter celebrated this experience right along with Renee, and continues to do so. I personally was so excited, I sent her a text message right away expressing just this, and telling her "You better call me!" so I could hear the story. I was so excited I couldn't wait and Renee was just as excited to hear from me – back to her words. "I was SO excited when Tricia called; she is the only other female hunter that I know. I feel as though we can relate feelings and experiences of being a female hunter and I consider her a role model. The enthusiasm was heartfelt and it was an honor to share it with her; along with the details of

"You Only Live Once; if you Do it Right Once is Enough." Mae West..... truly a quote I live by.'

- Tina Fay

and took a shot once the cloud cleared there was no deer, I had missed. I was so disappointed thinking I would not see another deer. Reloaded my gun and waited.

The same two doe came back I couldn't believe it! I've been told that never happens. I saw her in my scope and took the shot. She died instantly. I was so relieved, excited, and proud. In the same moment I had overcome so many hurdles and obstacles. I knew this was a defining moment in my life. It was then I realized I could do ANYTHING I wanted to and applied some determination to.

And now for me. My memory of my first hunt is surreal – so surreal that I often remember it as if I was watching someone else, almost a dream.

She had bow hunted a little in 2013, actually hardly enough to say she had. She remembers sitting in a blind by herself on her uncle's farm wondering whether or not she could actually shoot a deer and kill it with a bow & arrow. One year later she found herself driving to South Dakota to hunt some amazing deer on an amazing property, not entirely sure how she got so lucky to be invited to this hunting haven.

She arrives to the farm on which they have cattle, corn, a pheasant hunting outfit and so much more, only to be greeted by some of the nicest, most sincere people she had met in a long time. Took her back to the family she has in Tennessee, from the hospitality to the hearty meals.

The next morning was the first hunt, which turned out to be her first deer kill. The does were beyond curious, no regard for wind direction, she could have smacked them on the nose with an arrow! It was simple, swift and set a tone for the remaining 10 days of hunting that was ahead on the trip. Strapping herself with a successful hunt with her bow, she set off with some well needed confidence to seek out those trophy bucks that awaited her.

Fast forward to 5 days later, everyday consisted of 2 full hunts with a break in between of scouting. The land was vast and the deer were heating up. It became a game and it was getting to be more fun and a good little challenge.

One particular evening hunt, sitting at a far removed watering hole, the earth offered an obvious reason why she was out there hunting, she paused, took a breath and took in what the moment had to offer. Out the front of the hay bale blind the sun was setting and was of course gorgeous, turning to the back window the rut moon was rising. She thought it was quite a gamble to be out in the middle of a prairie where most hunters wouldn't even consider setting up, but taking in the scenery was the benefit of that particular hunt.

So if this hunting trip would have been with an outfit she would not have spent the hours between hunts learning about the land, watching the woods conduct themselves during the midday hours, or learn all that she did about the behavior of deer and the evidence nature provides. Most of all, she would not have been able to say the success she had was due to the decisions she made based on the scouting she did herself.

She had passed on some definite shooters on the first half of the trip, in hopes of bringing home that trophy buck. She did not bring that home, but certainly came back with a with a big doe and a wealth of knowledge and experience that can only come from hunting without boundaries.

I think that the woman that was so fortunate and somewhat spoiled to have that hunting experience early on in her hunting journey. Then I realize, it's me! What a fantastic memory.

I cannot wait to take the knowledge I have gained and will continue to gain in hunts to come and share it with my children and experience what nature has to offer with her. Hunting Whitetail can be parallel to living without boundaries!

*With that, stay tuned,
stay pretty
and Hunt On!!*

Truly, Tricia