

South Dakota Dreaming by Pam Robinson



Some of you will think I am crazy and some of you will think I was lucky, but on December 7th I loaded up the dogs and in spite of the snow that was steadily falling and the winter weather warning, headed to Brookings, South Dakota, to join my fellow Nebraskan's, Ken Hamele and Tom McDonald. The plan was for us to join another SM owner, Jim Julson, and hunt with him for three or four days in the Brookings area. Joining us would be Jerry Thoms a name you may recognize because he has written a lot of articles for Gundog Magazine.

Many of you who know Ken will be amazed to hear that he was the first to arrive at Brookings knowing that he never drives over 60 miles per hour. Our plan for the first day was to meet up with Jim and be in the field by early afternoon. Around 3:00 pm, we followed Jim to some property north of Brookings and before he could open the gate for us to drive in, I saw 7-10 rooster pheasants fly out of the field across the road. (Mind you I haven't seen 7 pheasants all season here in Nebraska) We quickly got our dogs out and Ken, Jim, and Tom went

one way and Jerry Thoms and I went the other way. Jim had even made a detailed map highlighted for us to use as we walked through the fields. I grabbed my oldest dog, Hunting Hills' Gunnar, and Jerry grabbed his two short hairs and his Large Munsterlander.

Before we were in the field 10 minutes I heard shots from the other trio and I was trying my best to keep up with Jerry as we walked through



the drifts of snow. This was my first trip to South Dakota and I swear I saw more birds this first day than I have ever seen in an entire season of hunting in Nebraska. I am even pleased to report that my first shot actually hit a bird, knocked it to the ground, but didn't kill the bird. It was great to see how Gunnar used his tracking ability to find the wounded bird. We hunted for about an hour and a half and met back up with the other three guys. By this point we were all about frozen as the temperature was in the single digits. I was worried we would have to light a fire to thaw Tom out. He was in such a hurry to hunt he forgot that extra layers and long johns may be needed. We knew we had about 15 more minutes of daylight, so I grabbed my other dog, Joker, and Jerry grabbed his 17 year old short hair so they could have a few minutes of fun too before the sun went down.



The first night Jim and Jerry took us to a Mexican restaurant that cooked up the pheasant we had shot and Jerry brought along some pheasant legs and wings that they made into hot wings. We all had various Mexican dishes that were prepared with the pheasant and none of us were able to finish our plate. Our agenda for the next day was to head out again and be in the field at 10:00am which according to South Dakota law was the earliest we could start to hunt.

The forecast for Tuesday was for the high to be 10 degrees with a wind of 25-35 miles per hour. For those of you who live in South Da-

kota or further north, that may not mean much, but to us that was cold, even for the diehard hunters. Call us crazy, but we went out and before early afternoon, we had gotten our limit of birds. The conditions were not the best, but the dogs did great. I was amazed that this many pheasants actually existed in one place. You see, I always assumed some of

I am proud to say that all of the dogs did an excellent job of marking and retrieving birds that we shot.

This trip to South Dakota only affirmed my belief that the Small Munsterlander is truly a versatile and amazing hunting dog breed. We were able to put 8-10 dogs in the field at one time and we did not have one of our dogs act aggressively and they all honored each other's points. On the retrieve, it was usually first come first serve.



Ken's hunting stories about South Dakota were like his fishing stories, a little exaggerated.

On Wednesday we were a little slower to get started for the day due to the conditions. It was snowing and the winds were gusting over 40 miles per hour and the temperature did not get above 5 degrees. Thanks to Jim, he found a place for us to hunt that was out of the wind. Again we piled on the layers of clothes and went out with the dogs that I noticed never seemed to mind the cold. We humans could barely tolerate the cold and wind, but the dogs again found us birds and we had another successful day of hunting. After hearing that travel wasn't recommended, my husband was stuck in the driveway in Lincoln, and school in Lincoln was called off for a third day, I decided that driving home on Wednesday was not the smartest idea. Plus that meant I could get in another day of hunting on Thursday! Even again on Thursday, despite the snow, wind and below zero temperatures, we were able to find birds thanks to our dogs.

But all of the dogs worked well together. Our dogs handled the cold conditions and they didn't complain, unlike some of the humans! It was even hard for us to walk yet the dogs were going through drifts, cattails, and CRP ground that amazed me. We saw each of the Small Munsterlanders point and retrieve and adjust to the hunting conditions

that were presented to them.

I can honestly say that this was one of the best hunting experiences I have ever had. Ken, Tom and I can't thank Jim Julson enough for allowing us to come and hunt on his land and we appreciated the time he took to hunt with us and his hospitality. We also want to thank Jerry Thoms for his hospitality and for the photos he took as well as we want to thank him for the pheasant cookbooks he wrote and his hunting advice. As Jim said, we will never again be able to duplicate this hunting trip, but I know we all want to return to South Dakota again. As I took Gunnar and Joker out hunting last weekend here in Lincoln I could tell they were thinking the same thing I was.....

"If only we were back in South Dakota!"

