



As a Matter of Fact, I Do Hunt Like a Girl

Ginger Spies harvested a trophy Mills County buck despite the fact she had decided she really didn't want to hunt that day.

Ginger, who co-owns the Mills County General Store with her husband Rodney, said between running the store through the hunting and holiday seasons, her family gets very busy and doesn't spend much time out in the woods hunting. Just after Christmas, however, Ginger relented and let Rodney get her a hunting license.

She was in the deer stand with the couple's son, T.J., well before daybreak. They didn't see too much and by 8 a.m. or so, both she and T.J. were more concerned with their cell phones than the deer. Just then, they noticed a huge, gray buck.

"He just seemed curious," Ginger said of the buck, adding he didn't seem interested in the feed or does, but just looked around. He watched the deer stand carefully, she said, which meant they didn't want to move to grab their guns and take a shot. After awhile, the big buck wandered off.

"That was a lesson learned," Ginger said, adding they went back several more times hoping to see the buck she'd come to call "the old gray guy."

They didn't see him again, she said, but on the last day of hunting season, she and T.J. were out in the stand in the evening. They saw some does and little bucks, and then just before 6 p.m., they saw a really nice buck come out toward the blind. It wasn't Ginger's old gray guy, but he was still a nice trophy buck.

Ginger said she asked T.J. if he had the buck in his sights, and T.J., using a .223, said he did. He prepared to take his shot, pulled the trigger, and "click."

"His gun wasn't loaded," Ginger said. By the time he could have loaded his gun and took a shot, the deer would likely have heard them and took off, so Ginger decided she would take one shot at him.

"He was about 75 yards off and turned broadside," Ginger said. "My hands were shaking, and I looked at him, and for a second, I thought 'Do I really want to kill this magnificent animal?'" She quickly decided he would make a great trophy for the store, she said, and took her shot, using a .308 she'd borrowed from a friend.

The buck hit his knees, then jumped up and took off over a fence. Ginger and T.J. then set after him on foot, finding him about 30 yards off in the direction he'd taken after being shot.

Ginger said she excitedly went for her cell phone to call Rodney, but he'd heard the shot and was already on his way.



Ginger's "Girly" buck is now mounted and displayed proudly along with other locally harvested trophies at Mills County General Store in downtown Goldthwaite.

"Did you get a doe?" Ginger said her husband asked.

"No, I got a buck, and I think he's pretty nice," Ginger replied. She said when Rodney saw the buck, he exclaimed,

"Oh my God! You don't know what you got!"

They loaded Ginger's buck and drove back into town. Over the next couple of days, she said, several people came and asked her about the deer. They wanted to see pictures, asked how much he weighed, what his spread was, what the score was, and asked her to tell the story of how she got him.

All the questions and requests for pictures reminded her of something, she said, but she just couldn't put her finger on it. She had never hunted before, so that couldn't be it, she thought. Then it dawned on her, she said.

"It was just like when I brought T.J. home from the hospital," Ginger laughed.

Knowing this was a once in a lifetime trophy, she asked Leon Sutherland to take a picture of her with her buck. Many have commented "Oh, I'm sure you had your hair and makeup fixed when you shot that buck."

Ginger says that actually she was just the same but with a watch cap.

"I love that T-shirt that says 'As a matter of fact I do hunt like a girl,'" Ginger said.

While she enjoys cooking and eating venison, and is now quite curious about what attracts deer — like the old gray guy — Ginger said she

has "retired" from hunting. She'll probably still go out with her son, but as far as taking another big buck, her first was a once-in-a-lifetime trophy, and she's quite content with that.

She went on to say, however, that she has been invited by the Texas Wildlife Association to a recognition dinner in Abilene in mid-September, due to how well her buck scored. The buck, which was scored by Warren Blesh, was an 11-point and scored a 144 7/8 on the Boone and Crockett scale.

Ginger noted the friend that loaned her the gun she used to take her buck had asked her beforehand how long she's been hunting.

"About a week," she replied.

"You've got no right to think you're going to kill a buck this season," the friend had told her. When asked about his reaction to her buck, Ginger laughed and said the friend said simply, "nice deer."

"He did tell me that the key to hunting is patience and persistence, and that was absolutely true," she said.

See the "Girly" Buck on display at Mills County General in downtown Goldthwaite. The store is open 7-6 Monday - Saturday and 12-4 on Sundays during the fall.