

Hunting in the Shadow of the “Duke”

By

Bart Hall (Owner/Operator Fred Hall Shows)

As I sat in a sturdy chair on the front porch of the Lone Pine Pheasant Club, mesmerized by the vista of the spectacular Alabama Hills landscape sloping gently to the East toward the village of Lone Pine, I realized why the creative filmmakers in Hollywood chose this location for making the classic “Western” movies. From every corner of the world, people of my generation came to love these movies. They created our vision of the “wild West”.

The Lone Pine Pheasant Club exists where Hollywood made Western movie magic. John Wayne walked, rode and hunted in this magnificent setting. He and his cronies actually bagged wild pheasant on this hallowed ground long before the Lone Pine Pheasant Club existed.

There are over 800 majestic acres of Alabama Hills land on which the Lone Pine Pheasant club sits. 700 of those acres are huntable. Each hunting parcel has its own distinct geographical variations. They are all part of this uniquely Western Landscape. The club is both rugged and comforting. This is the “West” in all its glory. If they filmed “Westerns” in a different part of the world we would have a different vision of “The West”. But they didn’t and we don’t.

Bruce Ivey started the Lone Pine Pheasant Club over 30 years ago. Bruce is a pillar of the Eastern Sierra society. This outstanding club is his creation. For the last three years Sean Ponso has been in negotiations to take over his club. Sean finally completed those negotiations and the club has officially changed hands.

Recently, I had the opportunity to take most of my family pheasant hunting at the Lone Pine Pheasant Club. My older son Morgan and his son Aidan were joined by my younger son Travis, his wife Lori, and their daughter and son Hannah and Hunter. My wife Ginny came along to take pictures. At age eight Hunter was the first of my grandchildren to get a hunting license followed by my granddaughter Hannah, my grandson Aidan and finally by my daughter-in-law Lori. When Hunter was seven he told me that he thought the California Fish and Wildlife Department should just give him a hunting license because he was, after all, named Hunter.

I have gone to several pheasant hunting clubs. They all have their fine points and hunting with your family is never bad. But, the natural setting of this club cannot be matched by anything that I have ever seen. I could sit on that porch, drink whiskey and smoke cigars for a very long time and never get bored. This is the view that dreams are made of.

On this hunting day we worked with our guide Randy and his German wirehair pointer. The dog’s name was George “W” (wirehair). What an outstanding animal! I have never hunted with a German wirehair before but this dog was fantastic and an extremely efficient worker. In the end, everybody shot birds and we walked back to the clubhouse.

The clubhouse at Lone Pine Pheasant Club has that very special porch I told you about, a comfortable and well-appointed lunchroom, a large kitchen with a great cook and modern bathrooms. You park right outside the clubhouse and when you are ready to hunt you walk east and then, when you are done, you walk back to the clubhouse and enjoy the view and the lunch. Our menu consisted of chips and salsa followed by a delicious potato soup, with cheese, homemade biscuits that were larger than any I have ever seen (served with butter and jam or honey butter), pheasant pot pie and home made brownies. Lone Pine Pheasant Club makes these potpies and will trade you pheasants for “pies”. They are delicious and for those of you that don’t cook, it will solve your problem of what to do with the pheasants.

I want to thank Sean Ponso and his staff for making our hunting day so special. When you are visiting the Fred Hall Show in Long Beach stop by the Lone Pine Pheasant Club booth and talk to Sean. The Lone Pine Pheasant Club booth is on the 100 aisle of the show. The 100 aisle is known as the Eastern Sierra Row. They will also have a “Pheasant Encounter” on the patio at Long Beach. See ya there “Pilgrim”.