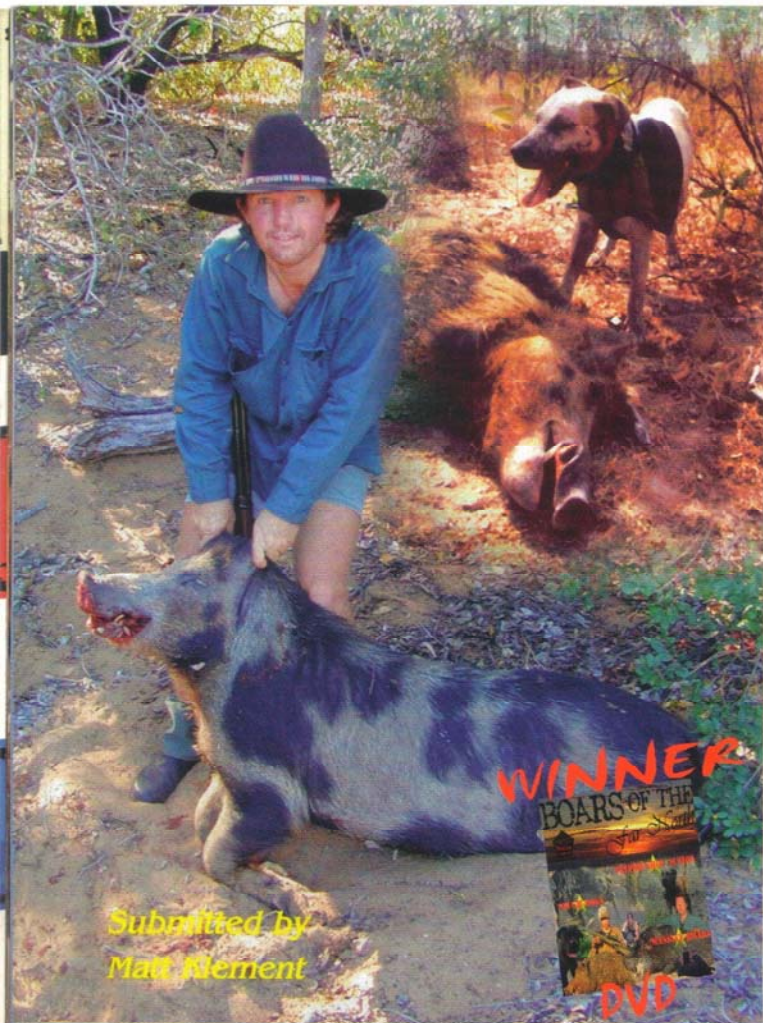


Ken Got me into Dogging



Submitted by
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In mid 2004, I started making enquiries into good areas in the Top End to go hunting for Pigs as I was starting to get hooked on hunting these animals due to their ferocious nature. I loved the fact that they would often charge right at you like they did when I was on a trip in Louth NSW with my old hunting buddy John Vernon.

I rang the local supermarket in Normanton one day and spoke to Tracey Millard. I was really encouraged after speaking to her and she suggested I call her husband Ken who worked for Queensland Rail and drove the Gulflander train from Normanton to Croydon. I rang Ken later and had another good chat and was invited to come up for a Pig shoot.

Over the next 8 months I put together a trip and arranged access onto a massive station near the Qld/NT border, owned by Countrymen. It was \$200 per car to get access but I thought worth it at the time.

Around 2005, Kirk (Scatters), and I left Louth and headed up to Burketown to meet Ken who would accompany us on the trip to the NT Station. We met Ken and headed to the station where we remained for 1.5 weeks. The property provided a few pigs but was definitely not worth the effort and cost of driving.

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We did have a funny experience though whilst there. On the way back from a morning pig hunt 15 km's from our campsite, Ken wanted to stop along the track and walk 3kms to a waterhole that he thought would be a dry season soak. He thought there may be pigs camped up around there. Off he walked and Scatters and I remained at the 4x4 kicking back in the shade. I radio'd Ken and asked him did he see any pigs? He said no, 'I caught a Barra though'. I said what? He said 'I caught a Barra'. I said yeah - whatever. Another 30 mins went by and I could not believe my eyes. He was walking back to the 4x4 with 3 good Barra on a tree branch on one shoulder and a dirty big smile on his face. After talking to him, we went back to the sinking waterhole and caught the rest of the Barra with Boof the pigdog and Scatters kicked the rest out onto the bank. We ate Barra for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the remainder of the trip in the NT.

Back to pigs - Ken told us it was much better over Normanton way so we headed back there to try our luck. We got to Normanton and things changed big time regarding Pig numbers. Within a few days we were hunting some great pigs up the Norman River and on nearby stations that we had permission to via Ken's 10 year contacts. We would often set off in the afternoon at 2pm when it was 36 degrees and head up the Norman River by tinny with guns, eskis, water, food, uhf's and cameras. It was awesome and pigs were



It was weird but this dog was damn smart and conserved his energy in the heat by using the trees. He had a thick tail and muscular blocky build and his head and shoulders were built like a front rower. Maybe I'm exaggerating a little here as I had never seen dogging before in real life but it was a dog to be reckoned with that's for sure and I would not have wanted to be a pig living in his area. What was so good about Boof is how friendly he was with children and people in general. I was impressed that he had so much drive whilst out hunting but was calm and relaxed around Kens place in Normanton.

plentiful back then in this region. It was mangrove and long couch grass country with us getting wet feet each time we hunted there. We didn't care though as we were nailing some awesome pigs and enjoying the bush as mates together. It was exciting getting Scatters to go into the mangroves on his own to flush out mobs of 20 pigs by making loud noises and clapping his hands. Ken was filming and shooting and I was shooting so when the pigs got spooked out, Ken and I opened up on them dropping many a good pig with head and shoulder shots and having some awesome video footage close up to boot! This went on day after day and I can remember heading back to Kens on the tinnie enjoying Amsterdam Lagers and Rum and Cokes whilst seeing the sun set in the distance behind us. It was truly a top experience to remember and I don't know if it will ever be like this again. When moments come along in your life like this it is important to enjoy them while you can and savour them as you never know what is before you in your life.

I had always loved dogs and was a member of the SA German Shepherd Dog Club back in the 90s and trained dogs for obedience and agility there. Actually my first dog was a pure bred Dachshund called Heidi and she would catch rats that strayed in from the Italian neighbours chicken run next door. I used to love seeing these massive dead European rats on the back lawn in the mornings when I woke up, knowing that my bitch Heidi had hunted them during the night. Anyway I loved dogs from the past and now was approaching a new chapter in having working dogs. This time I would go the whole hog and buy some Bull Arabs eventually and start hunting pigs with them. Thanks to those early days with Ken, I am now totally obsessed and addicted to dogging, I have just had my first litter of pure Bull Arabs and will never look back. Thanks to Ken!

Whilst in Normanton at Ken's, I got to meet an awesome dog called Boof that he owned and trained. Boof was a Bull Arab cross and he had an awesome reputation for being the toughest dog in town. Other dogs tried to stand over him but he would not have a bar of it. As well as having the odd biff with other town dogs that tried to stand over him, he had a reputation of being a very good pig dog. So good in fact that he often showed his signature moves of lugging pigs and holding them against trees and using the trees to his advantage.

