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The old boy didn't know what hit him and dropped where he stood.”

us and knew he had company, so he too made haste to depart. As I followed him in the scope, he eventually pulled up at around 300 metres for a quick look back. A hasty now-or-never shot went under him, so I instinctively rechambered another round and took aim. A second shot at the fleeing stag missed and to top it off, gave me a Weatherby eyebrow to be proud of.

I was gutted to say the least. “Do you have a tissue?” I urged John who was still following them with his binoculars. “You’re not going to cry on me, are you?” was his reply. “No, I’m covered in blood,” I muttered, to which he turned and smiled. Anyway, I’m not going to elaborate further about that particular mishap, as I’m still having nightmares today. Over the proceeding days, I must

have counted at least another dozen good, shootable stags, but for whatever reason we simply couldn’t get it done.

The good thing, however, was that we were in new country every day, so new undisturbed stags were constantly being seen. Additionally, a couple of the areas I visited had good numbers of chamois, but I was only interested in a red stag on this trip. And the same can be said about the fallow deer herds in the area. Nonetheless, good photo opportunities were constantly presenting themselves. I remember one particular gully, where we stumbled across a mob of some eight or nine young stags. The best was a small 10-pointer. Passing them up at 80 metres, I did, however, manage some great photos. But for some reason, when it came to the big stags, I was too slow, too far away or simply had bad luck. Looking back, this meant I wasn’t going to get another shot until my luck finally changed on the second-last day. But more on that in a moment.

THE TEAM. As I mentioned earlier, Glen Dene has a fine team of guides

and even a full time taxidermist on the premises. He can take care of the preparation of your trophies, shipping, expediting and even the paperwork, including a taxidermy, statement of processing certificate and a Department of Conservation (DOC) certificate. This fully-functional taxidermy studio is run by Raynardt, a South African taxidermist with many years’ experience and who was also a full time guide running his own South African Big-5 guiding operation while living there. Today, Raynardt and his family live in New Zealand and have brought their expertise in taxidermy and guiding with them. This is a real positive for overseas hunters who wish to take their trophies back with them or alternatively would like them mounted by Raynardt himself. In fact, I’m told Glen Dene Hunting & Fishing is the only New Zealand outfitter that offers in-house taxidermy.

GETTING BACK TO THE HUNT. After meeting Raynardt and having a look at the Glen Dene taxidermy studio, he offered to come out with us the following day, as he also guides on Glen Dene and knew John from