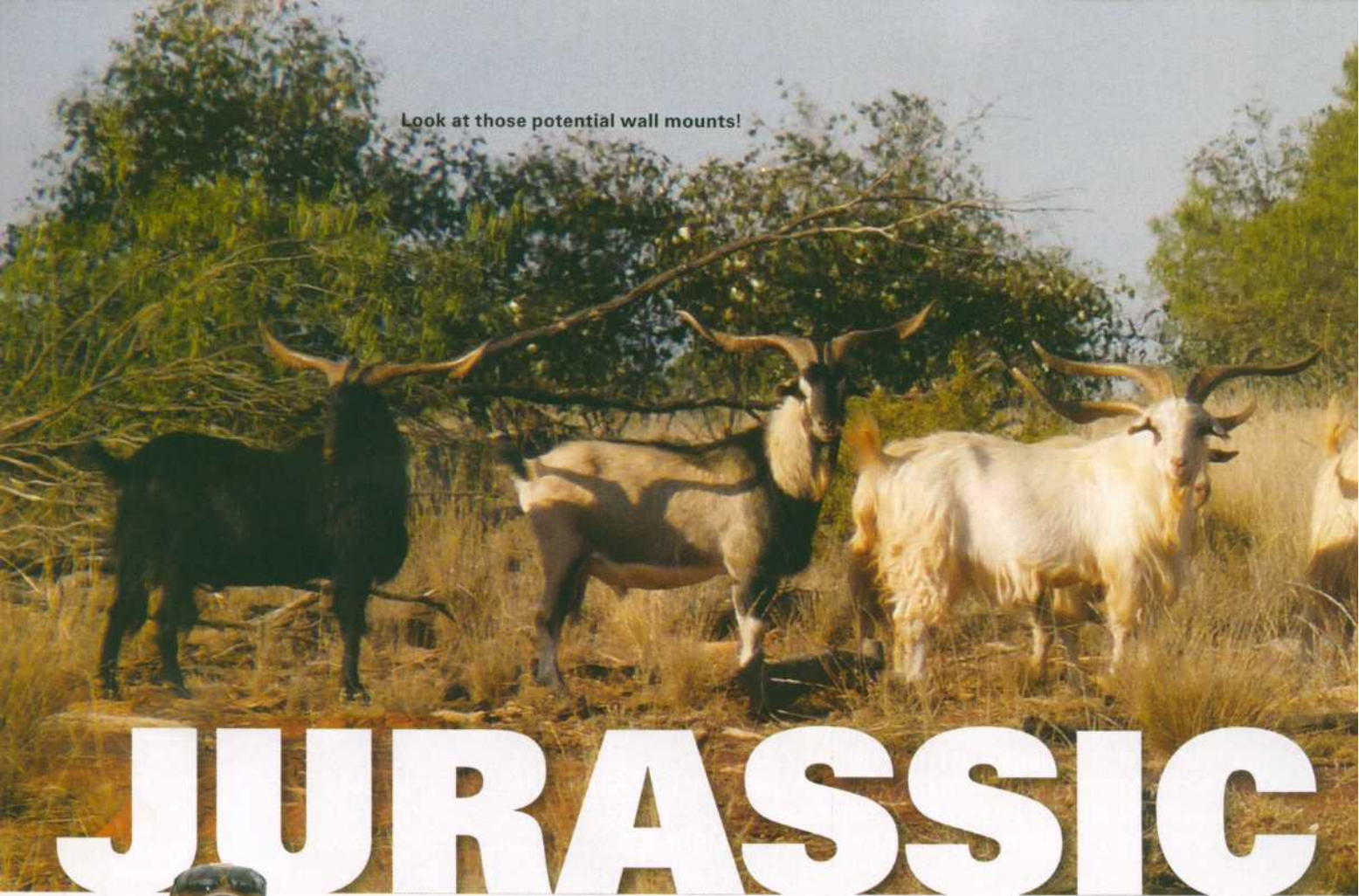
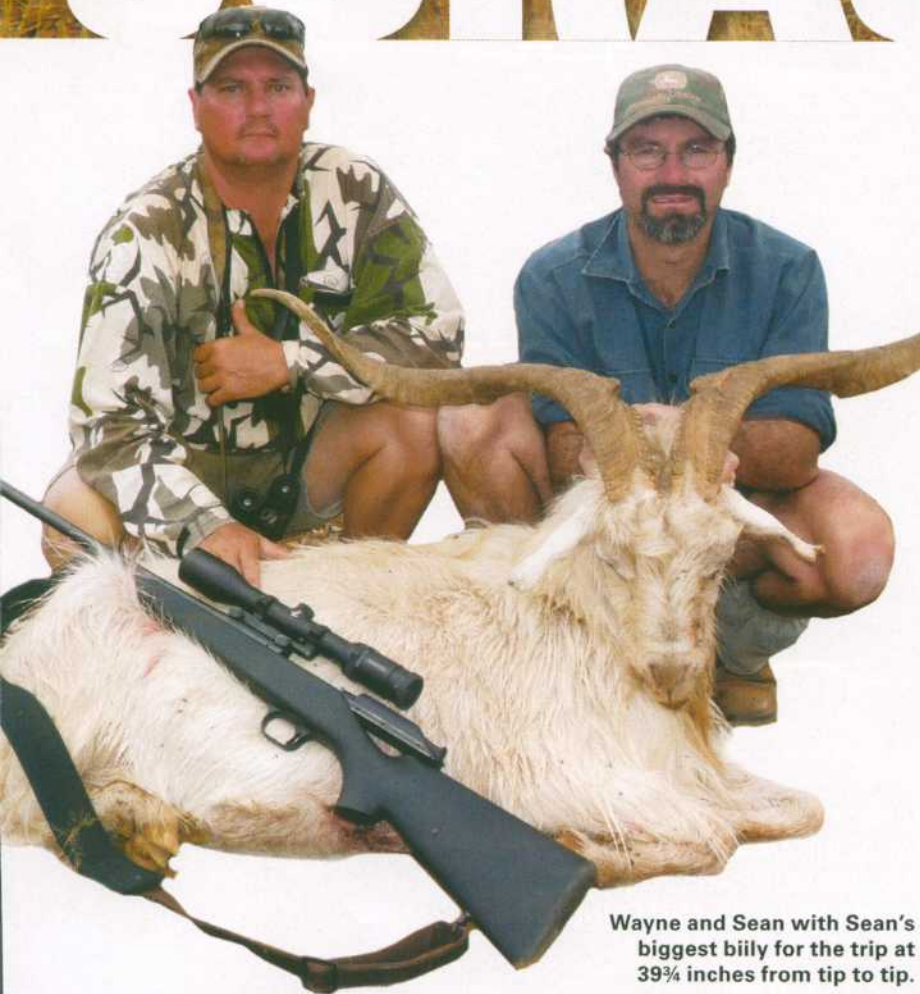


Look at those potential wall mounts!



JURASSIC



Wayne and Sean with Sean's biggest billie for the trip at 39¾ inches from tip to tip.

Tony Pizzata takes us to one of the remaining few strongholds of super-sized billies.

"HE LOOKS LIKE a billie from the days of Jurassic Park", I commented to Marcus our editor, as we both scrolled through the images on disc that had been sent in to Sporting Shooter for consideration as a front cover shot. I was referring to billie goats, big, big, billie goats. And what's more there were lots of them. "Who sent these in?" I asked, as I reached for the details. To my surprise, it was well known bow hunter, Wayne Preece who lives in Queensland among some of the best red deer country Australia has to offer. While Wayne enjoys his big game hunting, he also does a bit of guiding for red stag and trophy billie goats. By trophy goat, I mean billies with a horn spread in excess of 36 inches. For most of us that's a bit hard to imagine, although I must admit many years ago I took one or two in that class around the Lightning Ridge area of N.S.W., but those days I thought were long gone.

As most who hunt goats will know, these days many farmers tend to live capture and sell for export. Goats are relatively simple to round up with good stock dogs out in the Western Plains area and until recently were fetching top dollar. As a result goat numbers have dwindled in many



A mob of unsuspecting mature billies browse the scrub.

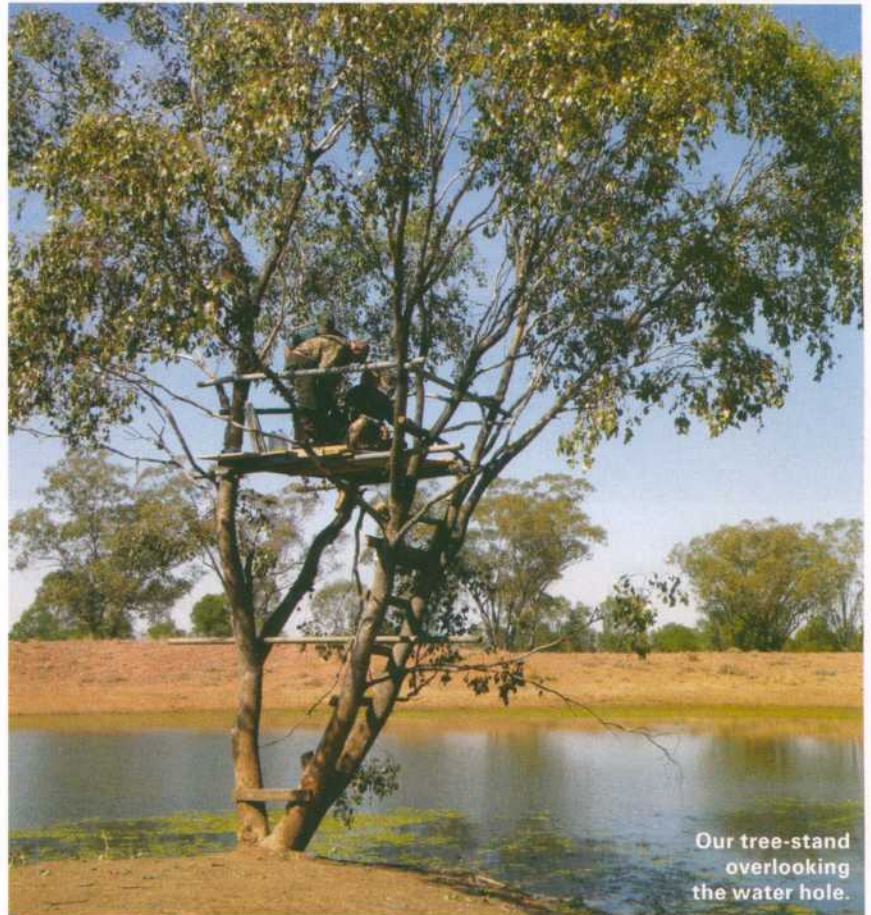
BILLIES

areas leaving only a small nucleus of minimal numbers in most areas which will take years to re-establish and even longer to produce the big ones. Obviously, however, as I was soon to find out, there were still a few sleeping giants out there.

A call to Wayne revealed that yes, he did indeed have a property in far South-West Queensland, that had not been mustered and still had a good number of trophy billies running on the 15,000 plus acre property. "There's plenty that go around 36 inches and a good number of 38 to 40 inch models" he bragged, "and with a bit of luck, even a few over the magic 40-inches in spread, if you spend the time to have a good look". Wanting to capture a few big billies on film for my next DVD, I decided to book a hunt with him. The plan was to attempt to take a good one myself and perhaps film a couple of other hunters as well. A short flight to Brisbane, then onto Roma our rendezvous point and it wasn't long before Wayne and I were heading West to what I referred to as Jurassic Park. Two other hunters, Rick, a bow hunter and Sean a rifle shooter, both from Queensland were also with us and both were there to try their luck for a bruiser. Although Rick had already taken a 38 incher there on a previous trip and was trying for a bigger model, it was Sean's first trip there and he too was hoping for a trophy billie.

At first light the following morning, Wayne dropped Sean and Rick off at a tree stand he had set up overlooking a water hole. Although in summer months, the dam had plenty of water and many hours of trial and error revealed the goats were coming to water between about 7am and 10am.

The boys were happy to sit, wait, film and shoot if



Our tree-stand overlooking the water hole.



we left them behind us and continued to hunt. Through out the morning we encountered lots of goats and crossed paths with an abundance of wildlife including red, blue and western grey kangaroos, emus, rabbits and an assortment of bird life. At one stage even a small mob of cattle that I'm told have turned feral were spotted and then a small mob of pigs. The latter were certainly not in big numbers on this property, so Wayne asked that we only shoot a boar if and when seen leaving the younger pigs to breed up.

By late morning we decided to return to the water hole and radioed the boys to ensure we weren't disturbing their area. Sean and Rick said they'd seen plenty of goats including one old timer that probably went about forty inches in spread. As Rick had drawn the short straw, it was his turn for the shot, but the old billy refused to pose a broadside shot and managed to elude any opportunity with the bow. As the vehicle was only several hundred meters from



ABOVE: The author capturing some footage from the tree stand

TOP: Rick and his excellent billy taken with the bow at around 35 metres. Note how the horns spiral unusually upwards.

necessary while Wayne and I would go for a walk and see what we could find up the track a bit. Heading off on foot it wasn't long before goats were encountered. Two billies with horns around the 36 inch mark and one that was a little better were spotted, but Wayne said we'd hunt on for a bigger model and I was happy to agree with that. About a kilometer further on we ran into a bachelor mob of billies. I was excited to say the least, as each sported horns in the high 30's and one may have even gone close to forty inches in spread. Getting plenty of photos and some excellent video, again, we decided to pass. Back home I'd have taken any of those billies I'd seen in a heart beat, but knowing the potential via his photos and only a few hours into the hunt,

the water hole we returned there for lunch and discussed plans for the afternoon. With plenty of goats around, we decided to all head out together. After many sightings and lots of younger billies passed up, we cut the tracks of a mob of four or five billies that were feeding out in the open and completely unaware of our presence. Wayne estimated the biggest of the bachelor group to be around 38 to 39 inches and Sean was eager to take him. After planning their approach, the pair headed off leaving Rick and I to watch and film their stalk in. At no more than about 100 meters, Sean lifted the rifle and prepared to take the shot. As the billy turned broadside, Shaun squeezed the trigger and the billy lurched up on his back legs confirming a good hit and then went down for good. Rushing up to congratulate him, the smile on Sean's face said it all. After photos, video and the trophy head secured, we headed off to continue our search for another.

As the sun began to hide behind the distant horizon, Rick caught a glimpse of a lone goat feeding some 6 or 7 hundred meters away. Quickly closing the gap, it wasn't long before our binoculars revealed another trophy billy of similar size to Sean's. Eager to bend the bow, Rick decided it was his turn and proceeded to stalk in for the shot. Unaware of our presence, the feeding billy continued to quarter away as Rick drew back on his Mathews compound and released the arrow. Fatally hit through the vitals, the billy took several steps and expired. With very little light remaining, we took a few quick photos and caped the old buck out. Returning back to camp we enjoyed a few ales and delicious barbeque dinner before calling it a day.

The following morning Wayne and I decided to spend the first few hours in the tree blind and managed to see and film some nice billies with lots of nannies and kids also coming to water. Later we decided to head for another part of the property and eventually stumbled onto a pair of lone billies under the shade of a distant tree. A stalk in closer revealed the bedded billy was an exceptional trophy,



The author and his well earned 41 ¾ inch billy.

probably in the vicinity of 40 inches or better and the one standing guard wasn't far behind either. As I motioned to Wayne that I'd take him, I remember feeling the breeze change direction and knew well what the consequences were going to be. At that instance both billys fled at a fast trot as if told we were there, but had not seen us. As they angled away, I can still vividly remember how wide and heavy the big, old boy looked.

He was indeed an old timer with thick, heavy horns and an enormous spread. Low-lying scrub offered us a little cover allowing us to change direction with the wind again in our favor. The goats traveled about 300 meters and stopped. Quietly trying to close the gap, we followed three. Although unaware of our presence, the goats began to move again and slowly shuffled off. Although we were in heavy scrub, their horns were always visible above the low bushes. The game of cat and mouse continued for about a kilometer or so as Wayne and I continued in an effort to pursue our quarry. Every time I'd line up on the big boy he'd move off, damn, it was frustrating!. Finally, my opportunity came when the pair stopped and began to browse, thinking they had lost us. Shouldering my Blaser chambered in 7mm Rem. Mag., topped with a Swarovski 2.5-10 x42, I quickly found his shoulder and squeezed of a shot. The Big old billy was fatally hit but still managed to leap forward. I quickly chambered another round and finished him off. The other, a coloured billy with equally

impressive horns looked back at us and then took off at a gallop. Running over to inspect my fallen trophy, his horns seemed to grow bigger as I approached. He was indeed an old timer with horns in excess of 40 inches. 41 ¾ inches to be precise, with a double curl and very dark in colour. Now all three of us had been successful, with still a day to hunt. The following day, both Sean and Rick took another exceptional billy each, with a different shape and style to their first. I'd been lucky enough to capture both hunts of film and now had a total of five exceptional billys taken on camera for my next DVD.

“An old timer with thick, heavy horns and an enormous spread.”

For those interested in hunting a trophy billy goat, Wayne has a great area and if managed correctly, will be able to offer good trophy goat hunts for years to come. Camp consisted of five basic rooms for hunters equipped with air conditioning, single bed and linen and a separate dwelling with kitchen, bathroom and dining area. Food was first class and plenty of it. **To contact Wayne Preece regarding a hunt, phone 0419 681 996 ■**