

I have hunted numerous times with Matt Gilstrap of Extreme Hunting Adventures and will be back for more. My most memorable experience was when I first met Matt. I had drawn a bull Elk tag in New Mexico for Unit 16C with a rifle. I called a couple of outfitters I knew and they both recommended Matt, saying he was the one to hunt with in this Unit. I then called the New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish and got Matt's phone number, called him and booked the hunt. Upon arrival at the ranch in the Middle of the Gila I knew I had made a good choice and I knew I was going to have a great hunt.

The deal I had with Matt was that I would stay at his place and hunt with my father. If I needed help Matt or one of his guides would be around to lend us a hand. The first day my father and I went in the direction Matt said to go. We saw several different groups of Elk and tried a coupe stocks but just couldn't get close enough. Toward the end of the day on the way back to the truck my father accidentally dropped my rifle and broke the scope. Now what?

We returned to the ranch and I told Matt what had happened. When I showed him my gun he said, "I have a rifle exactly like that one, my Dad bought it for me the day I was born." This was no ordinary rifle as it is a Winchester Model 70 pre-64. My father had given it to me as well. Fortunately for me Matt loaned me this special gun and was going to guide me the next morning.

Next morning before daylight we drove to the top of a ridge to glass for Elk. Right after sunrise Matt spotted a lone bull in a meadow miles from where we were. He told me "There's your bull Frank!" I thought no way are we ever going to get close enough to get a shot at an Elk that is right now three or four miles away. Boy was I wrong. We drove back down the valley, up the river, then walked about ¼ mile to the edge of the meadow where we saw this big bull Elk, but there was no Elk to be seen anywhere in this meadow. I then asked Matt, "Now what!". He told me that the bull had probably gone to bed and that we would find his tracks and follow them to where he is. The ground was mostly covered with volcanic rock and I had my doubts about being able to follow any sort of tracks. Matt told me that the bull had been standing next to a lone Juniper tree on the North side of this meadow and that his track should be easy to find and to follow him. Standing next to a lone Juniper tree Matt said "Here he is, let's go!" How he could possibly see tracks on that terrain was beyond belief. In fact, for about a mile or so I was absolutely sure that I was the one being led astray. Several times I tried to talk Matt into going back to the ranch and getting on the horses and going to another area. He told me to be patient that he would find this bull. And find him he did, a very nice 6x6 bull Elk that I am very proud of. But I got more out of this hunt than a trophy, I gained a wonderful friendship.

I have been back to hunt with Matt several times and highly recommend his service.

Frank Vilorio