



DRIVEN SHOOTING

TRUE BRIT

Finding a paradise of traditional English-style hunting in the American West.

By JONATHAN GREEN

ON A SPRAWLING IDAHO ESTATE JUST THREE HOURS FROM ERNEST Hemingway's home in Ketchum, Lars Magnusson has established an English hunting idyll at the foot of the sweeping Big Hole Mountains. Over a number of years the redheaded Magnusson—a Swede by birth who has worked in shooting all his life, formatively at the West London Shooting School—developed the Lazy Triple Creek estate as his idea of a utopian setting for traditional English driven shoots in the United States: an ideal habitat for grouse, partridge, and pheasant. Here in God's Country, gentlemen brandish Purdey, Holland and Holland, and E.J. Churchill shotguns and dress in tweed breeks.

"When I arrived in America a few years ago, people were pulling birds out of boxes and tossing them over men with shotguns," Magnusson declares with some disgust. "That's not English driven shooting." For years Magnusson scoured America for an area where he could replicate English driven shoots, in which birds are "driven" over waiting guns by 30 beaters—a line of men with flags rustling the underbrush—led by a gamekeeper with well-trained spaniels that flush the birds from cover. In 2009 he started the first authentic driven shoot in America open to the public. It is run under the aegis of **Blixt & Co.**, the name being Swedish for "lightning," in honor of Magnusson's great-great-

grandfather, who earned the moniker in the Swedish military.

Magnusson runs the enterprise with his wife Jennifer, who maintains a clothing line of traditional bespoke British shooting attire, for which she enlisted the New York-based British tailor Leonard Logsdail. He created Logsdail Classic, an entire line in tweeds from the Scottish border town of Hawick.

This year Magnusson is moving the action to two nearby estates—Twin Peaks and Beckhurst—while lodging guests at the River Rim Ranch in Teton, Idaho. But last fall I spent three days shooting at Lazy Triple Creek with Logsdail; John Morgan, of the Morgan Foods dynasty; Dave Hanlon, a former executive at various casino companies; and Peter Beck III, a Texas property tycoon who flew in by private jet. (They had each spent \$10,000 for Blixt's perfect recreation of English country shooting.) I grew up in Suffolk, England, attending driven shoots using my grandfather's short-barreled Churchill. I moved to

the United States in 2002 and had just recently obtained a shotgun license, feeling homesick for my youth and my homeland. Magnusson offered me a few days on his estate as a way to rediscover my passion for shooting in the English vein.

"Remember," Magnusson said, as we picked playing cards to determine our shooting positions, "that firstly we want all the dogs to come back. And do try not to hit beaters if you can help it." A wicked chuckle followed. "Do not shoot unless the bird has 360 degrees of sky around it." We began with two partridge drives. This was followed by sherry infused with jalapeño at a well-appointed tent in a thicket: part of "elevenses," the traditional midmorning snack. Only the circling bald eagle told me I was in the American West, not back home in England. Over a weekend we shot more than 500 birds. The experience offered camaraderie, good cheer, and bonding. And the dogs all came back safely, not to mention the beaters. ●



Photographs by ANDY ANDERSON



BIG SKY
Gamekeepers
Mattias Jonsson and
Tom Dyer in action
on a driven shoot
organized by Blixt
& Co. in Idaho.