



On Our Cover -
Ron Madison with
his NY "Legend" buck
from 2007.

the "LEGEND"

"The Legend"

New York's Best Gun Buck of 2007

by Jeff Brown

Recclusive monster whitetails can become local legends after they show themselves a time or two. And that is what happened when Chautauqua County hunter Ron Madison and his son Brian both encountered a monster buck in 2006. As they shared their encounters with family and friends, who were skeptical that the buck could really be that big, the buck was quickly dubbed "The Legend." One year later The Legend made a fatal mistake, and Ron was able to prove to everyone that it was every bit as big as he and Brian had said!

The Madison Buck – A Local Legend

49-year-old Ron Madison has lived on his 365 acre farm in Chautauqua County his entire life. He started deer hunting there as a young boy, and has had the privilege to hunt this same piece of ground for so many years that he knows it as well as any human being could. He also has been able to bring up his 19-year-old son Brian on the same farm, and introduce him to deer hunting in the same woods that he roamed as a young boy. Ron considers himself to be a very luck man.

Over the years he has religiously hunted the archery and shotgun seasons on the farm and has killed nearly 40 deer there, 30 of them bucks. He had killed two nice archery bucks prior to the 2007 season that would score just under 100", but had yet to take a "monster buck" on his own land. But that was about to change...

In 2006 Ron had an encounter with a buck that he will never forget. He was bowhunting and caught a glimpse of a giant buck that defied description. It was chasing a doe about 80 yards from Ron's stand. Although he did not get a shot, he regards the encounter as one of the great moments of his hunting career. He couldn't wait to get home and tell his wife and his son about this monster buck. Later that season it was Brian's turn to see this freak of nature – he saw the buck right at dark. Like his dad's, the encounter was overwhelming for Brian, and the two men talked constantly about the buck from that point forward. The more they discussed the buck, the bigger the "legend" of this monster grew.

Ron was completely obsessed with the buck as they headed into the 2007 season. He dedicated himself to hunting the buck he and Brian had dubbed "The Legend." He found a good rub line during archery season and had another encounter with him. The buck came within 40 yards but did not present a shot. That just cemented Ron's desire to kill this buck, or no other. He passed on several smaller

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The New York

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"LEGEND" Buck



The New York "Legend"
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bucks during the archery season. Later that season Brian took his best bow buck ever - a nice 120-class buck. He later took a good 8-Point with his shot gun. But Ron was determined to hold out for The Legend, and continued to pass on lesser bucks on the first day of gun season.

The first Tuesday of the gun season was a dark, rainy day. Ron decided to go back to the same area he hunted the previous day. He had told Brian he was thinking about changing stands that day, but Brian told him to stick with it. He loaded up the Arctic Cat and drove up to a ditch, parked it, and walked across the end of the corn field to put up his API climber. It was very quiet and the deer would be able to sneak up on him without making much noise, so he knew he had to stay alert. At 7:30 Ron was surprised by a doe crossing the corn field and right away he looked behind her for more deer. And that was when he saw him - The Legend!

Ron quickly shouldered his Mossberg 695 12 gauge and looked through his Bushnell scope. He found a clear shooting lane, and the buck stopped, apparently when he came upon Ron's trail where he had walked into the stand. Ron took the shot (estimated at 125 yards) and the deer jumped straight up in the air, and then bolted out of sight.

He couldn't believe it - he actually got the shot at The Legend, and he hoped the Remington Sabots did the job. Ron climbed down because it was raining, assuming that he had to look for blood quickly before it was washed away. He quickly surveyed the area, and found no blood, but he easily found the big bucks' tracks. Ron anxiously followed the tracks in the mud, but still no blood. He crossed the field, crossed the ditch and a fence, and headed up towards some thick thorn apples. At that moment he caught sight of The Legend turning and walking away. Ron carefully walked up to where the big deer was standing, but still found no blood. At this point he knew the big buck would go into the thick and nasty thorn apples, and that he would bed down until he bled out. So he packed up his stuff and went back to the house. Once the weather cleared he and Brian went back to where he shot deer. This time, upon more careful examination, the pair did find some blood and even a piece of liver. They knew they would find him



Brian arrowed this nice 120-class archery buck on the same farm earlier in the season.

now! They went into the thorn apples and worked through the 300 yards-long brush lot. After about 100 yards of searching, Ron heard the words he will never forget. Brian yelled, "Hey dad, I found him! You shot The Legend!"

Upon seeing the buck up close for the first time, Ron found himself speechless. The buck was even bigger than it had been in the woods of his imagination. After pulling himself together and getting the buck on the 4-wheeler and out of the woods, he and Brian called some friends and showed The Legend off. Everywhere they went The Legend attracted a huge crowd, stopping traffic and attracting people, many of them taking cell phone photos and calling friends. At one point he stopped for gas and it took him 45 minutes to get out of the gas station! Ron knew he had a very special buck!

Ron initially had the buck green scored by Steve Mason of the New York State Big Buck Club. Later, measurers from the NYSBBC, the Northeast Big Buck Club, and Boone & Crockett got together at Whitetail Country in Olean, NY to "panel score" the deer and submit it to all three organizations. The scores presented below are still subject to final review by all three clubs.

The Score

The Madison buck certainly will be one of the highest grossing non-typical bucks from New York in 2007, and may very well be the largest. At the time I wrote this article, it held that honor. Madison's "Legend" had a gross B&C score of 192 6/8" non-typical, and a net B&C score of 183 1/8". In total the buck had 16 scorable points, 4 of which were abnormal. The typical gross score of the buck was 182 2/8". The massive rack had an inside spread of 22 3/8" and main beams of 24 3/8" and 22 0/8". The buck had good mass, with both bases measuring 5", and very good tine length, with the longest tines measuring 10 1/8" and 9 3/8". So it is safe to say that The Legend lived up to its name!

This New York shotgun buck is just one in a string of impressive gun bucks from the state in recent years. In 2006 Bob Cuozzo shot one of the most impressive bucks to come out of this state in many years, and one of the biggest all-time, with a gross Boone & Crockett score of 215 3/8" and a net score after deductions of 209 6/8". In 2005 Andy Hall shot an Ontario County buck that scored 201 6/8" (gross B&C). That's quite a string of big non-typicals!

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There were many other great bucks taken during New York's 2007 season, some of which you will see featured in articles in upcoming issues of this magazine. Be sure to watch for more about these and other great bucks from 2007 in New York!

For more information about the Northeast Big Buck Club, or to purchase their hard-cover Record Book – Northeast Trophy Whitetails V, visit their website at www.bigbuckclub.com, email jbhunts@aol.com, or phone (508) 752-8762. For more information on the New York State Big Buck Club, visit www.nys-big-buck.org



Bob Cuozzo with his 215 3/8" buck from 2006.



Andy Hall with his 201 6/8" buck from 2005.



Ron Madison

Ron's buck "The Legend" joins an impressive group of monster non-typicals taken in New York in recent years. Most of these bucks are coming from small pieces of managed farm land, by hunters who know the land well, and have seen the monster bucks before.