



# Outfitter Review



By Trent Swanson, Senior Editor

## Bar O Land & Cattle Company

On the plains of West Texas, where they rise up to meet the northern end of the Davis Mountains, lies an unassuming ranch that holds some of the best hunting I have ever seen. This part of Texas is dry. It is home to creosote, rattlesnakes, and *lechuguilla*, a yucca-type plant that I have always affectionately referred to as *shindagger*. It is also the home to desert mule deer, javelina, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, feral hogs, scaled quail, mourning doves, and the occasional wandering free-range aoudad.

The Cowden Ranch encompasses about 30,000 acres and has been in the family for nearly 75 years. Today, Tim Edwards and his wife Lou run the ranch. As the owners of Bar O Land & Cattle, they raise Braford cattle and offer guided hunts under the watchful eye of Lou's father. The ranch includes rocky, jagged mountains, rolling foothills, and grassy pastures. Most importantly in that arid environment, it includes WATER. With no less than 10 springs, Lou's family designed a system of pipes to run water to the far reaches of the ranch and everything in between. Initially for cattle, these water sources now greatly benefit wildlife, too.

The main focus of the hunting program is desert mule deer. For years there was no management plan in place, but Tim & Lou recently began limiting the number of hunters, started focusing on taking only trophy-caliber bucks, and started a supplemental feeding program. Their changes appear to be working! I was surprised by the sheer number of deer I saw and Tim showed me loads of good buck photos from his trail cameras.

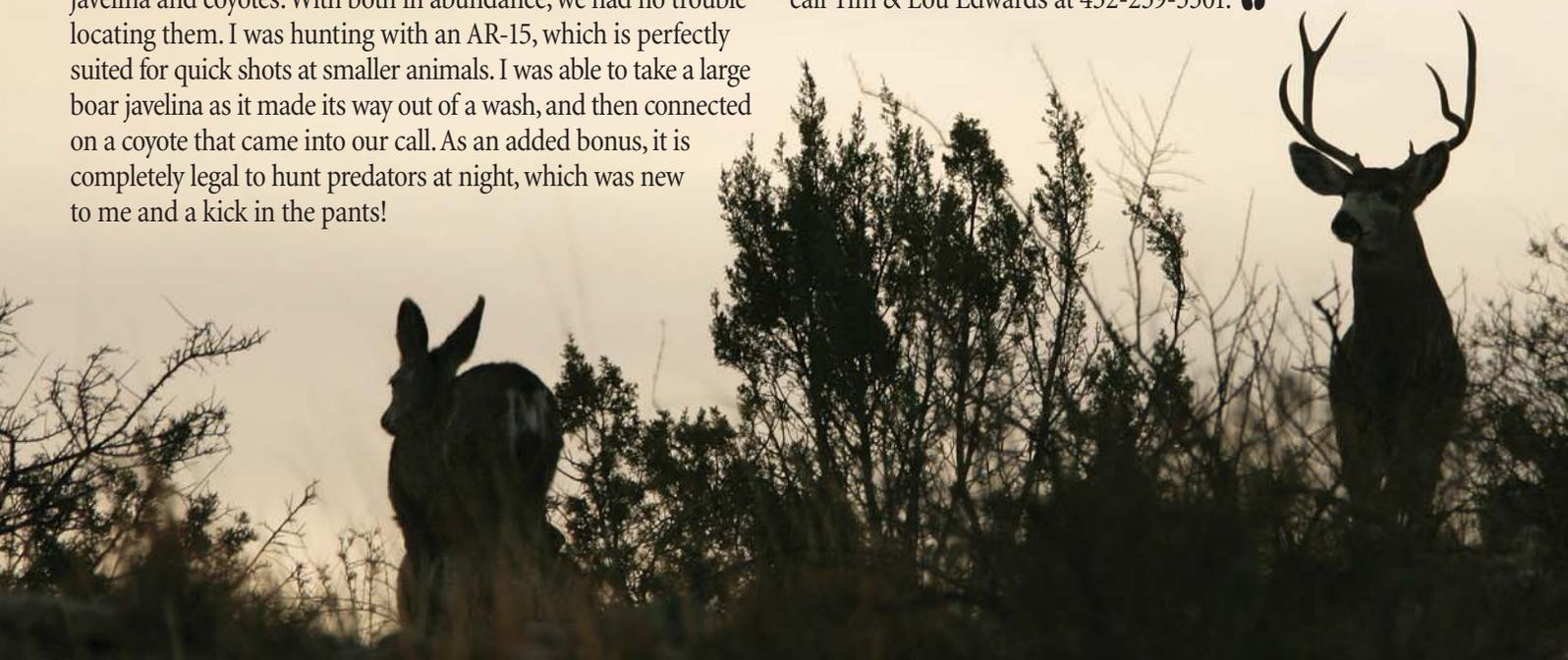
The ranch produces trophy-class mule deer, but I was there for javelina and coyotes. With both in abundance, we had no trouble locating them. I was hunting with an AR-15, which is perfectly suited for quick shots at smaller animals. I was able to take a large boar javelina as it made its way out of a wash, and then connected on a coyote that came into our call. As an added bonus, it is completely legal to hunt predators at night, which was new to me and a kick in the pants!



A few of the up-and-coming deer on the Cowden Ranch.

Photos by Trent Swanson

The ranch is enrolled in the Texas Park & Wildlife Department's Managed Lands Deer Permit (MLDP) program for mule deer. In exchange for improving habitat on the ranch, they can hunt from November 1 – January 4 instead of being confined to the regular state season of November 29 – December 14. The javelina and varmint seasons run year-round. If you are interested in a great hunt on a spectacular piece of West Texas with one of the nicest families I have had the pleasure to meet, don't hesitate to call Tim & Lou Edwards at 432-259-3301. 🍌





While known for trophy-class mule deer, Bar O Land & Cattle also has some great small game hunting.

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