

COVEY RISE®



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Welcome.

Year three for *Covey Rise* has started on many high notes and the year looks incredibly promising. The big shows in January and February proved that our industry is buzzing, and reminded our team how great it is to be a part of this sporting world. Dallas Safari Club (DSC) in early January had a record attendance of more than 45,000, SHOT followed through with many new products and an estimated attendance of 70,000, and the Safari Club International Convention was indeed the “ultimate hunters’ market.” It was fantastic to see so many men, women, and children out supporting our industry at these events. We always enjoy seeing you, our readers, and hearing your feedback. Thanks for stopping by and saying hello.

We had another successful night at the Dallas Beretta Gallery Pre-DSC Party. Thank you to all the sponsors who made the event happen. We’re looking forward to hosting more events as we grow, and that means more opportunities for *Covey Rise* readers to enjoy this lifestyle we all love. We also had the great pleasure this winter to spend several days at the Hageman Reserve in Sulphur Bluff, Texas. (You may remember I mentioned the Reserve last year?) We assembled a group of people from Beretta, Filson, Michael Mondavi Family Wines, Under Armour, and representatives from the NRA for some exciting hunts and fine fellowship and dining. We start off this issue with a feature story on the Reserve and how a sporting club’s vision becomes a reality—which in this case came from the visionary who had the ability to execute his aspirations, Steve Hageman.

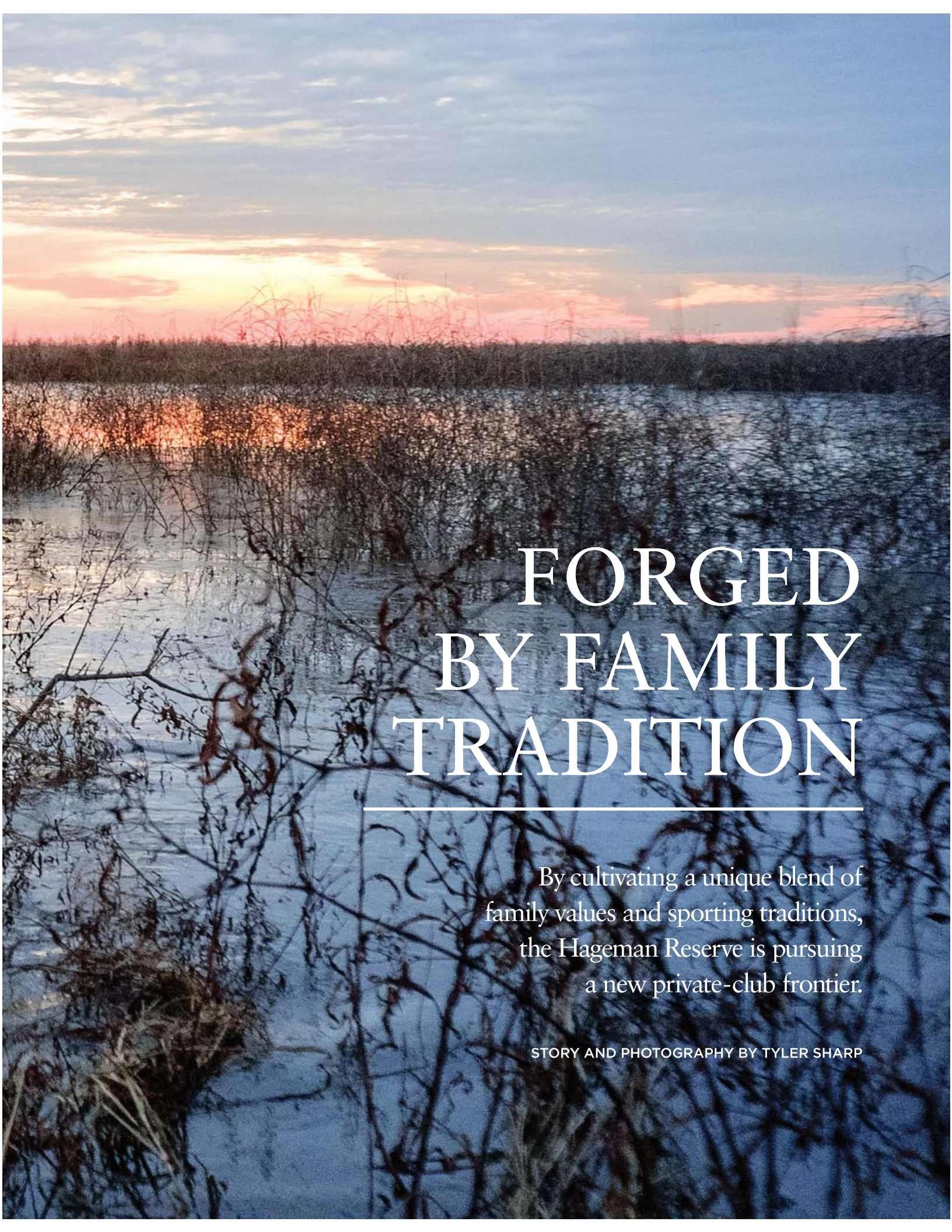
This issue is also special for me because we unveil a new feature subject. As you know, we include dogs, fine guns, facilities and destinations, artists, essays about the hunt, and culinary features in every issue. I am excited to announce our “Handmade” feature, which focuses not only on the craftsmen, artisans, and people responsible for making the products; but also on how something becomes a product of quality that we love. There is no better way to launch this topic, in our humble opinion, than to profile Leonard Logsdail and his bespoke tailored suits and tweed sporting jackets, all handmade from fit to finish.

In this time off between most U.S. wingshooting seasons, you have *Covey Rise* to rely upon to help you plan your next hunting adventure, think about the next gun you might want to own, or try a new way to cook your game. Enjoy. 🦋



JOHN THAMES
PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
WITH HIS WIFE, MARGIE



A photograph of a sunset over a body of water, likely a marsh or wetland. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The foreground is filled with dark, silhouetted reeds and branches, creating a textured, layered effect. The overall mood is serene and natural.

FORGED BY FAMILY TRADITION

By cultivating a unique blend of family values and sporting traditions, the Hageman Reserve is pursuing a new private-club frontier.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TYLER SHARP



About 90 miles northeast of Dallas as the waterfowl fly, on the outskirts of the sleepy town of Sulphur Bluff, Texas, you'll find the Hageman Reserve—a 14,000-acre private sporting club that is the first of its kind, and will likely set the precedent for a new standard in sporting clubs. Arriving at the stately entryway of the Reserve, you follow a winding road offering mere glimpses of the property's diversity. Traversing ranchlands dotted with small lakes and pristine upland habitat, you crest the final hill and begin to see it—like some medieval apparition, appearing out of the East Texas plain is what looks to be a 400-year-old French chateau. A marvel of classic architecture, this 65,000-square-foot lodge is the cornerstone of the Hageman Reserve, and the place in which countless relationships, memories, and traditions will be forged.

The realization of this property largely has to do with the forethought and tenacity of a man who is equal parts visionary and humble Indiana farmer—Steve Hageman. A third-generation farmer, Steve has spent his life grounded in agriculture and, poetically, has seen his life's work grow from a 40-acre plot in rural Indiana to founding partner of a company that produces 20 percent of the nation's seed corn. But in truth, this is not a story of achievement, farms, ranches, or lodges—it is a story about family. It's about wisdom and virtue passed down from generation to generation, and working hard to ensure that your family will be provided for in the years to come.

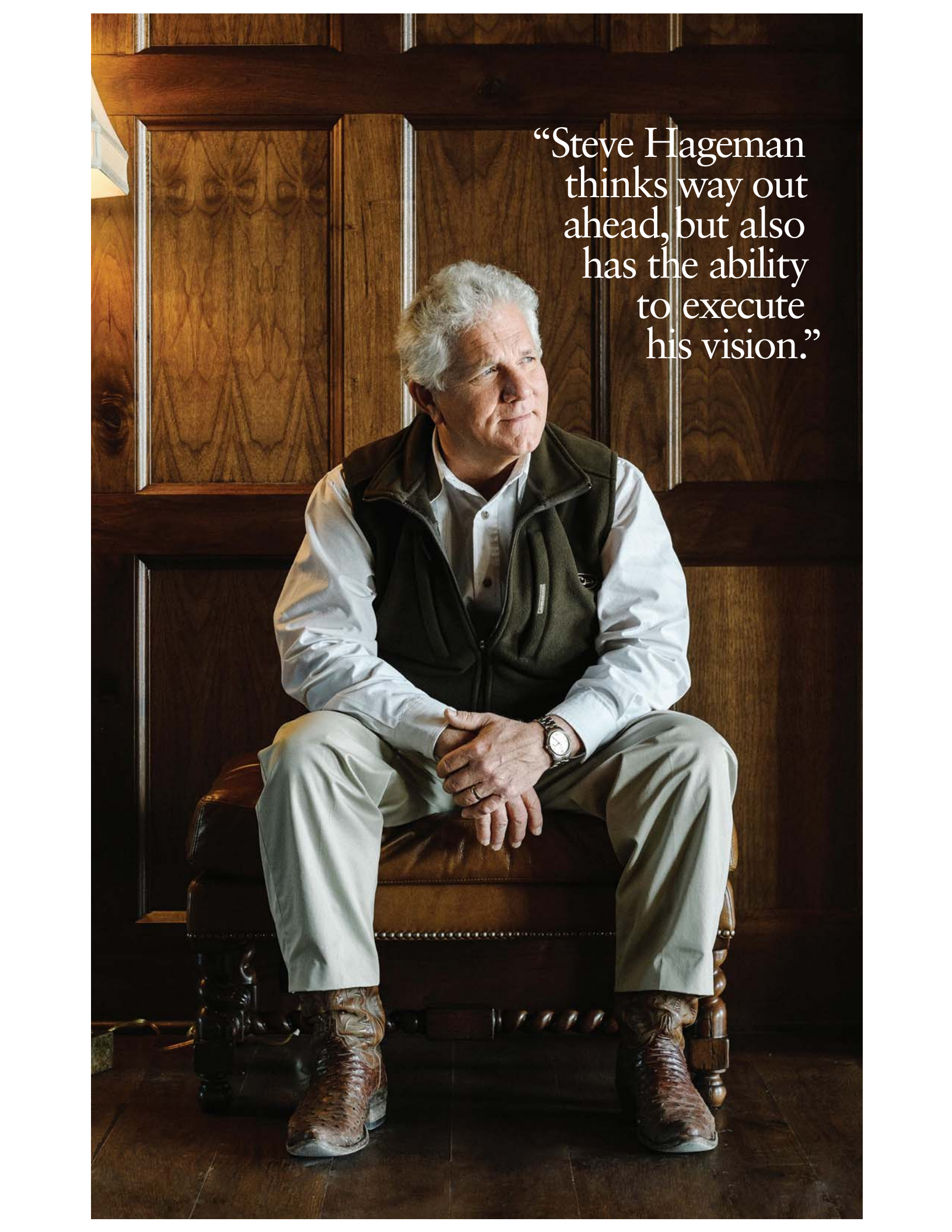
Leave it better than you found it. This proverb, rooted in agricultural integrity, has been passed down from grandfather, to father, to son in the Hageman family, and is the guiding principle that has brought continued success and prosperity in their endeavors.

"We put on paper our family-values statement that was created as a reflection of our family tradition, going back multiple generations," said Steve's son, Shane Hageman. "That family-values statement is the backbone of our company values statement—same values, just applied more specifically to our business." It would be this same simple principle and related proverb that would ultimately lead to the purchase of the 14,000-acre property in Sulphur Bluff. "I had no idea we were going to build a lodge, a hunting operation, or entertain in any way. My wife Sandy and I just came down here to purchase a large piece of land, with the intention of increasing the productivity and value of it on the agricultural side," Steve Hageman told me during our tour of the property. Steve continued that it was Shad Schenck, professional angler and husband to Steve's oldest daughter Sara, who eventually discovered the staggering habitat

A CLUB LIKE NONE OTHER

(ABOVE:) A successful retrieve in the Reserve's quail habitat.

(RIGHT:) Steve Hageman, appreciating what he helped build

A photograph of Steve Hageman, an older man with white hair, sitting in a dark leather chair. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, a dark green vest, light-colored trousers, and brown cowboy boots. He is looking off to the right. The background is a wall with dark wood paneling. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

“Steve Hageman
thinks way out
ahead, but also
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and wildlife resources on the property, leading to the development of the reserve. “We had all heard rumors of the ducks that had been coming for thousands of years, so I took a four-wheeler down to the reservoir, peeked over the edge, and couldn’t believe what I saw—literally thousands of ducks. I knew right away that we had something special,” Shad shared.

Realizing they would need someone to help oversee the habitat improvement and wildlife management, they recruited Shane Roethle. An expert in wildlife biology and habitat and game management, Shane also has an extensive agronomy background, which perfectly suited the agricultural foundation of the endeavor. They formed a partnership in 2008, and since then have created incredible wildlife habitat. Over the past 7 years, Shane has led the pioneering of an entire wetland, and improvement of various habitats for waterfowl, deer, and upland birds. “We started with a basic channel reservoir, and through a series of installed gates, gravity flow canals, and pump systems, we can manage the flooding or draining of crop fields to manipulate surface water for ducks,” Shane told me.

Initially operating out of a small ranch house, Shad and Shane soon realized they needed a larger hunting lodge, more suitable for guests. “Steve’s vision is unbelievable. We told him we wanted to build 6 rooms, and he said to build 30. Steve Hageman thinks way out ahead, but also has the ability to execute his vision,” Shad said. “At this point, through the discussions about a lodge,

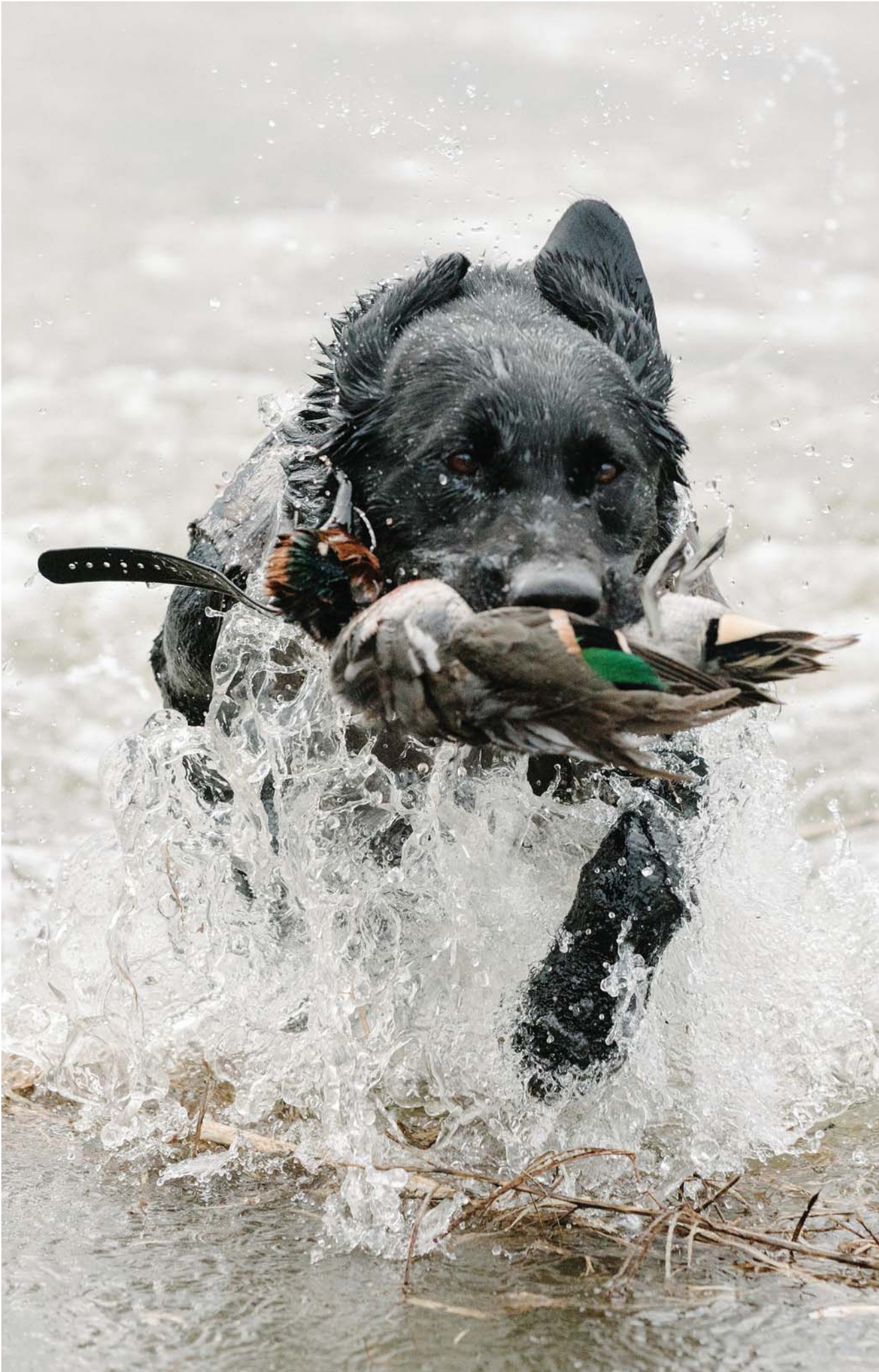
we recognized the business potential for a hunting and sporting operation, so we began to conceive the club,” Steve said.

Shane Hageman was in law school at the time, and began to help formulate the business side of the operation, which would solidify during a joint MBA program he and his wife both completed. “My wife Jana actually did her MBA Capstone project on the Hageman Reserve, and that’s when the plan all came together,” said Shane. The family business, operating as the Hageman Group, was to expand beyond agriculture, real estate, and investments, and into the sporting world.

After 5 years of construction, the lodge was completed in fall 2014. Armored in Texas limestone and slate, the striking exterior is complemented by an interior lined with post oak and floors made of wood harvested off the Hagemans’ land. As Steve envisioned, the lodge has 30 guest suites, along with a formal dining room, wine cellar, bar and lounge area, strategy room, member lockers, spa, workout facility, outdoor pool, gun vault, event space, and a gallery stocked with gear from purveyors such as Beretta, Filson, Orvis, Stetson and Under Armour. And beyond what is immediately noticeable are countless

HOME ON THE RANGE

(ABOVE:) The 65,000 square-foot lodge is the staging place for countless outdoor adventures at the Reserve.





details, which subtly reinforce the uniqueness of this property.

“It’s not just what you do, but how you do it that’s important to us. We put a lot of effort into the details to ensure a first-class experience across the board. Even if guests don’t notice it, we are constantly trying to be better and surprise members a little bit at a time,” said Shane Hageman.

Because the concept for the Hageman Reserve was born out of an already highly productive farming operation, the team is neither tied to traditional club models, nor are they in a rush to fill memberships but are focused on getting the right members. “We’re blessed to be financially stable with farming operations and other investments; the club is the fun part,” Steve said with an enormous grin.

“We looked at a lot of clubs, and while many have great upland, waterfowl hunting, or shooting sports, none of them have all three. And backed by incredible bass and fly-fishing opportunities, we really feel that this club is something unique that hasn’t been done before,” Shad Schenck said.

As our property tour continued, Steve showed us the cattle operation and introduced us to some of the cowboys who manage the herd of 500 on the property, with another 1,500 elsewhere. Around each turn, Steve elaborated on the land improvements he had in mind—extensive upland bird habitat expansion, tree planting, landscaping, an orchard, and a gar-

den for the Reserve’s chef, Norma Whitt. We also walked the 16-acre vineyard with 16,500 vines of nine different varieties, two of which are native to Texas. Steve talked of their ambitions to produce wine, and to allow members to participate in custom wine blending and label design.

When our tour was over, Steve dropped us at the front of the lodge and said, “I’m gonna go see my therapist.” We nodded out of courtesy, and then quickly realized he was referring to a tractor and grader blade sitting on the hill.

The next day, we were joined by the rest of the week’s guests. It was to be an exploration of the extensive amenities at the Reserve, over five days—which, to be honest, wasn’t enough time. Once introductions were made and firm handshakes shared, and the luggage was delivered to the rooms, the first order of business was tuning up the shotguns. For this, we head-

A DAY IN THE FIELD

(ABOVE:) Essentials and nourishment for a day afield and afterward—refined sporting-club style, of course.

(RIGHT:) Fortune favored the hunting party in January at the Hageman Reserve with the presence of Filson team members and their custom AEV Jeep Wrangler.

And beyond what is immediately noticeable are countless details, which subtly reinforce the uniqueness of this property.





In addition to the five stand, rifle and pistol range, duck roost game, and crazy quail, you can visit . . . 12 unique sporting-clays stations.

ed to the range house to meet up with Mike Mize, who oversees all upland and shooting sports at the Reserve.

The range house is designed to be an extension of the lodge, adorned in the same design of limestone, slate, and post oak, and feels more like a friend's home than a shooting complex. But don't be fooled—this place, and the man who oversees it, is all about shooting. As one of only 68 Level III certified shotgun instructors in the country, there are few more qualified than Mike Mize to iron out the kinks in your shooting technique. Also being an exceptionally nice guy, Mike has a bedside manner and Texan charm that can soothe even the sorest of shooting egos. Because we all have bad days, right?

In addition to the five stand, rifle and pistol range, duck roost game (where clay targets imitate ducks soaring toward you), and crazy quail, you can visit a one-mile loop through the adjacent woods with 12 unique sporting-clays stations. Piling into converted golf carts, we drove on a gravel path through

thickly timbered terrain, as Mike pointed out various shooting stations, where the clay throwers are tastefully hidden behind trees, wood piles, and rocks. Scott and Corey Mays from Beretta with were us, and they unveiled an array of beautiful shotguns for the group to demo. Once the *awing* and pawing of the finely engraved guns was done, clays were thrown, shots were made and missed, and excuses for those misses were as plentiful as the shells in the shot bags.

Early the next morning, we gathered in the strategy room around a mural-size illustrated map of the property, outlining each habitat and wildlife area (a work of art in itself) to discuss conditions, safety mandates, and hunting groups in the quest for quail. I shadowed a small group hunting behind the points of Bo, a German shorthaired pointer, and Patch, an English pointer. A young and enthusiastic cocker spaniel named Bandit would flush, providing the shooting opportunities. The quail were plentiful, largely due to successful habitat



improvements and conservation efforts. Currently, there are about 500 acres of upland bird habitat, made up of native prairie grasses (bluestem, Indian, and switch grass) with integrated food plots, which will be tripled in area before next season. With the Reserve's plans to continue expansion and management of upland habitat, Mike is confident that their story of quail conservation will be one of great success.

Beyond the upland bird, deer, and hog-hunting opportunities, the crown jewel of the Hageman Reserve is their waterfowl operation. With more than 40 different blinds and several thousand acres of surface water, there are few places (if any) that could rival the diversity of conditions, or duck species. "What we've created here is incredibly unique, and allows hunters to effortlessly experience what is otherwise a very complex sport. We have more ducks here than any facility I've ever seen," Shane Roethle said.

We were fortunate to experience this diversity of species firsthand, as several of our groups split up to hunt on a particularly cold, rainy, and icy January morning. With setups in flooded crop fields, pit blinds, riverbanks, boat blinds, and in the ghost timber

CHOICE GUNS

The hunting party at the Reserve got to choose between shotguns including Beretta DT-11s, a 28-gauge Jubilee, a 20-gauge Silver Pigeon V, and even SO-10s.

reservoir, every group experienced a different type of hunt. As the torrent of wintry rain continued, flocks of ducks soared within range, cueing a symphony of shotgun fire, with spent shells freezing upright in the muddy mire. When the smoke cleared, and the AKC champion Labs showed their retrieving prowess, we had our full limit, and saw a spectrum of species—mallards, pintails, teal, gadwall, widgeon, and wood ducks. This was a testament to the groundbreaking habitat improvement and wildlife management methods of Roethle and his team.

Before dinner in the evenings, we'd meet in the great room for aperitif cocktails and an array of charcuterie boards, and warm our cold hands by the wood-burning fireplace (one of five in the lodge). Each night, before being led into the formal dining room, Steve or Shad would address the group to reintroduce each person, talk of the day's activities, and thank us for being there. It was a touch of class that reinforced the family atmosphere, and made everyone feel genuinely welcome.

Apart from the main dining room, a wine cellar can be reserved for special occasions, where lavish eight-course meals are served by candle and firelight with an old-world sophistication. Members can also choose to dine at the Chef's Table, located in the heart of the kitchen. Here you get to observe Executive Chef Norma Whitt and her team craft your meal from start to finish, often providing insight into technique, origin of ingredients, and wine pairings.



Over the course of the five nights, I had the honor of sitting next to Steve Hageman at dinner, and listening to him talk more about his grand vision for the Reserve, and the pride he takes in the team they've assembled. "It's all about the team. We've managed to find some of the top people in their fields, and they've really done an amazing job of making each area their own. It's my opinion that if someone knows how to do their job, you give them the resources they need, and get out of the way," he said. Shane Roethle told me in one of our conversations that the most fulfilling part of being on the team was Steve's management style: "Steve Hageman is extremely genuine, trustworthy, and if he believes in you, he doesn't question your actions."

Nowhere is this clearer than in the kitchen. Directing the culinary program with focused fervor, Chef Norma has crafted a cooking philosophy at the Hageman Reserve that is simultaneously sophisticated and pastoral. Drawing from local sources, Chef Norma utilizes fresh, natural ingredients to create unique dishes that are often tailored to guests' flavor preferences. Combining the wild-game fare provided by seasonal hunting with the produce from her recently completed on-site garden, Chef Norma will continue to evolve her kitchen mission unheeded, bringing it closer to the international acclaim it will undoubtedly attract.

On our last night at the Reserve, I once again sat next to Steve, and he now took an interest in my affairs—asking about my experience there, my long-term goals, my career, and how he

might be able to help. The leadership, passion, and humility that everyone ascribed to Steve became crystal clear during that meal, as he offered me advice, encouragement, and even opportunity. Whether Steve knew it or not, his example was inspiring, leaving me affirmed I was a better man than when I arrived. Simple agricultural philosophy, at least in the case of the Hagemans, pervades even the people who enter the Reserve, where the standard of all is raised a little bit at a time. Beyond any world-class accommodations or hunting opportunities, this is why the Hageman Reserve seems destined for historic achievement—because the man in the driver's seat has made a career of improving things, increasing value, and making sure that value lasts for generations to come.

As we pulled away from the Reserve on the final day, the sun sinking behind a prosperous countryside, we could see Steve back on a tractor on a distant hill. As his forefathers taught, he was improving the land, shaping it with his vision and dedication to work—and, most importantly, his dedication to his faith and family. ✨

FAMILY GATHERINGS

(ABOVE:) Fine dining at the Reserve features the culinary creativity of Executive Chef Norma Whitt. (RIGHT:) After dinner, guests relax in front of one of the many fireplaces in the main lodge.





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