

# HUNTING ETIQUETTE

## I. PROPER ATTIRE

A. Hound Exercising from July 6<sup>th</sup> until the last Saturday before Labor Day when the start of The Formal Cub Hunting begins in September. Just casual work clothes that are comfortable and tidy i.e. **no tank tops or shorts**, but sleeveless shirts and blue jeans are fine even headgear is casual like a cowboy hat or baseball hat- whatever one wears while working in his stable.

B. Cubbing in September and October until opening meet, the first hunting day in November, hacking jackets and ties or turtlenecks with breeches and preferably brown boots (but not too mandatory if one has regular black boots – even with brown tops) or jodhpurs with high lace shoes or jodhpur boots.

C. After opening meet: **LADIES** – Black or blue riding coats or black hunt coats with plain black buttons – four (4) in front, two (2) at waist line at back (don't worry about cuff buttons), bowler hats are preferred proper attire, but Calientes will be tolerated. Breeches can be any color, but to be especially formal, you may wish to wear yellow. To be totally proper you should wear dummy (not sharp with rowels) spurs with straps that buckle in the middle of the front of your ankle joint and the spur up on the seam at the ankle joint (not at the heel of the boot) like those you would wear at your heel if wearing a jockey's boot for racing. A white stock properly tied (so there is a criss-cross of the material over a square knot at your Adam's apple at your throat with a safety pin fastening the criss-cross to the square knot in a vertical **NOT HORIZONTAL**. The horizontal position is acceptable for ladies riding sidesaddle whose stocks are tied differently because their coats are cut differently and they need the stock tie to cover their chests almost like a scarf for protection from the wind and weather. Black boots without tops. **GENTLEMEN** – black riding coats with any colored breeches except white or black hunt coats with four (4) plain black buttons in front and two (2) behind at the waist with white stocks (properly tied as for Ladies astride as above, with a bowler, if nervous a Caliente) OR pink hunt coats with their four (4) hunt buttons in the front and two (2) at waist behind – if, really correct, the member-of-the field's pink coat should have a rounded hem at the front (as different from a member of a hunt's staff whose coat is square cut at the hem). This last version of what-is-correct can be forgotten because the square cut hem can keep your thighs from getting wet in rain and are, maybe, a fraction warmer. If a gentleman wears a black coat with breeches of rust, tan or any color except white, his boots should be plain black without brown tops. If he wears white breeches, he should wear black boots with brown tops and a top hat as if he was wearing a pink coat.

## II PREVAILING CUSTOMS AT ALL TIMES

Be aware that a car on a public road that is courteous enough to slow up when passing you should be recognized for his courtesy by a wave of your hand in "Thanks." Be aware of those around you and your approach should always be courteous and

considerate. Always go straight. **DO NOT** run up on someone or pass another at a fast gallop if in close quarters. You may kick someone or be kicked yourself or you may unavoidably upset another's horse. **REMEMBER** – everyone is supposedly out here for fun. **DO NOT SPOIL IT.**

If **HOUNDS** and **STAFF** approach you, be sure your horse's head **FACES** them so your horse cannot kick them.

At the meet just as one would always greet his host, one should politely (maybe one would call it, unobtrusively) say Good Morning to the staff and field master and ride away so someone else can do the same. However, use your judgment, and if you have something of interest to say don't be uncomfortable about being polite, or friendly, but don't prolong your greeting if unnecessary. At the end of the day it is customary to say "Good Night" to staff and field master – or probably, if entirely convenient to both, you might, if you were going in before the end of the day, casually say to the field master, "I've got to go in now, this horse has had enough" or whatever the reason may be and "Good Night."

### **III MANAGEMENT OF THE KENNELS**

Hound **DISCIPLINE** is learned, without punishment, but gentle chastisement, by consistently doing the same routine daily in the same way learning the basic commands like "stand" and "go in" from weaning until, when as young entry, hounds approach a cover to be drawn for the first time and when told **STAND** because they understand what that means and when given the command **GO IN** the young entry follow the entered hounds into a cover (which is a woodland to be hunted) which by previous knowledge of the country, the huntsman has picked with reasonable assurance will hold a fox. So from the first time a young hound enters a cover he is rewarded by finding a fox, his quarry for the rest of his hunting career. The young entry, whose basic instinct, is to hunt something (even as puppies in the grass yard they will put their noses to the ground and hunt a mouse, a mole, or even a cricket). If nothing happens immediately, the young hound may be confused as to what is supposed to happen and may run back to the safety of his huntsman which he has learned from a puppy is where he is suppose to be. Then, if an entered hound opens (or speaks or barks the young hound may run to his cry if only out of curiosity, to see what is going on. Then, he may get a slight trace of an odor to which a lot of hounds seem to him to be addressing in their cry. Out of exuberance, he, too, will bark and perhaps run along with the pack or have the opposite reaction – he may be scared by the commotion and run away from it to the safety of his huntsman's side. After the whole cubbing season, he will probably get the idea of what hunting a fox is all about and also lean that his quarry is **FOX** not deer, not rabbits, not birds, loose horses in fields or cattle – **ONLY FOX**. The young hound learns this by being stopped any time he puts his head down on the line of anything other than a fox. All during the time spent at hound exercise this has been drilled into him (even before the day he learns about hunting) when he tries to run after a beautiful house dog and with the crack of a whip

which to him, through experience, means punishment, he has been stopped with the command, “Ware curdog” or stopped, as he tries to take off on a neighbor’s chicken, with the crack of a whip and the command, “Ware Wing” or any other negligence of behavior with the crack of the whip and “Ware Riot”. If a hound speaks on the line of a deer, with a crack of a whip the command is “Ware Haunch.” They soon learn, and become useful members of a Disciplined Pack. Hounds are at their peak in their fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) season. They know their job and they do it well, i.e. how to draw a cover thoroughly without being distracted by other game, how to speak to the line of a fox and fox alone, how not to be too jealous of running their fox, if the pack is running another. They will leave their fox and go to the command of “Leave it with the crack of the whip and go to where ever it is their huntsman has gone with the other fox. This is where a knowledgeable whipper-in can be effective in stopping hounds and getting them on to where they are suppose to go. Hounds will do this obediently if efficiently managed by the whipper-in and as soon as they hear the huntsman’s notes doubling his horn, which means, as he doubles it “I need you **NOW**” or hears the exciting music of Gone Away and the huntsman’s cry of “Come Forward Away” those hounds forget their fox, know they were stopped for a good reason, and fly to the cry of their huntsman’s command and the fox he wants them to hunt. This is the art and science of why foxhunting is such a demanding, compelling and exhilarating sport to be enjoyed by many and understood by few.

The program for feeding these conditioned athletes is also a disciplined activity. The entered hounds i.e. the hunting hounds in the kennels, are fed once a day cooked flesh combined with a mixture of a mill ground prepared meal delivered by truck in 2 ton lots once a month and blown into an overhead attic bin lined with metal to prevent the invasion of rats, mice and other rodents. It comes down a chute into buckets which are dumped into a long stainless steel trough and mixed with the cooked flesh of horse meat and/or beef from a horse or bovine collected from farmers, race tracks or a dairy where they had a disabled animal for us to put down and use as flesh for the hounds. Mixed with this is broth out of the vat where the flesh was cooked, and/or water. We don’t use broth in the summer as it is too high in fat and makes hounds coats coarse and their skin dry. After being mixed it is shoveled back into buckets and before the hounds are drawn to eat (the picky eaters or shy ones first and the gluttons held back) the correct amount is put into the trough again according to the number of hounds being fed. The entered hounds each get roughly 5 pounds of this feed once a day. The weaned puppies and brood bitches get fed twice a day. The weaned puppies are kept in a large grass yard with a house they can go in and out of at their desire. The entered hounds are in lodging rooms with comfortable cement benches (lined with straw in the winter for warmth) and “drawn “ from these lodging rooms to the draw yard where they are then called by name to the trough in the feed room. The weaned puppies are fed in the grass yard in a long trough. Obviously the dog hounds and the bitches are kept separately, but the puppies are all together until they are about six (6) months old when the dog hounds are separate

from the bitches, but they still are in grass yards with comfortable housing they go in and out of on their own.

To simplify our breeding program, I state to you, that you breed the **BEST** to the **BEST**, but it's not that easy. We carefully check the pedigree of each bitch and stallion hound considering his or her faults and virtues of conformation and hunting ability. We don't want to breed ourselves into a pack of curly sterns or fleshy feet or too straight shoulders or too long in their backs. We want a hound that will move with ease and therefore have a well laid-back shoulder. We want a hound with a good rib cage to make room for heart and lungs, but not too round to impede the hound's way of going. We don't mind a hound slightly out at the elbow because then he can freely move his shoulders beyond his rib cage when he gallops. Most of all we look for **BALANCE**.

Then when whelps are about a year old they are named. Each litter, as his buttons in his have become noticeable, and the defts-a flap inside the ear are apparent at about one week; we nip the buttons out and slice a deft with a scissor. Therefore, you have multiple choice in identifying litters i.e. left button (out of the left ear), or right button, left deft or right deft, both buttons, both defts, right button – right deft, left button – left deft. Then we name the individuals in a litter all with the name starting with the first letter of either the stallion hound or the first letter of the dam's name.

To explain the science of a cast, if hounds are at fault, or seem to have lost the scent of their hunted fox, the huntsman will swing in a downwind cast (because his fox can run more easily that way with the wind behind him than running upwind into the wind when the wind is a deterrent – also a fox is clever enough to recognize that his scent is blown back to his pursuers. Therefore, this is the logic of “try a cast downwind first”, then in a wide circle, using the hub of the wheel the spot where the huntsman perceived his hounds to be at fault, come around up wind outside this spot until he is beyond the spot where he figured his hounds had probably overshot the line if his fox was headed, or for any reason, changed his direction. He may have gone to ground and hounds may rush back to an earth. But if this all proves futile, the huntsman knowing the country can make a logical conclusion to cast forward towards where he thought his fox was aiming. At first in his cast, the huntsman will be very quiet using his voice almost inaudibly because he does not want to get his hounds heads up nor have them lose their concentration. He will touch his horn with one short, quiet note, to have them swing his way still with their noses on the ground persistently seeking the scent that has failed. In this last cast forward, the huntsman's voice is slightly more demanding and aggressive as he urges hounds on with a double note on his horn and the command, “Try on, over here.” If they hit off the line, he will encourage and congratulate them with a “Forard, forard, forard and a doubling of the horn.” If this has **NOT** succeeded, he has lost nothing because he is on his way to draw the next cover where his fox – or a fresh fox may be found.

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