

# OUTFITTER REVIEW:

## Majestic MacKay Lake



**By Sandi Mellon**

Late August in Alberta is only giving hints that the fall season will soon be upon us. Rich and I and our camera man, Tim, set out on a beautiful August day on the first leg of our trip to MacKay Lake, NWT. We had booked caribou hunts with True North Safaris and were anxious to get there.

We arrived in the late afternoon in Yellowknife and had an overnight stay at The Yellowknife Inn. We toured around a few of the local shops close by and then spent a restless night trying to imagine what lay in store for us when we finally reached MacKay.

We boarded Air Tindi's single engine Otter floatplane for our

journey from Yellowknife to Warburton Bay Lodge on MacKay. I had never flown in a float plane before and was a bit nervous, however the flight was uneventful and our landing at the lodge very smooth. If you look at a map of the Northwest Territories, you can see that there is a lot of water, but it doesn't prepare you for the view you get from

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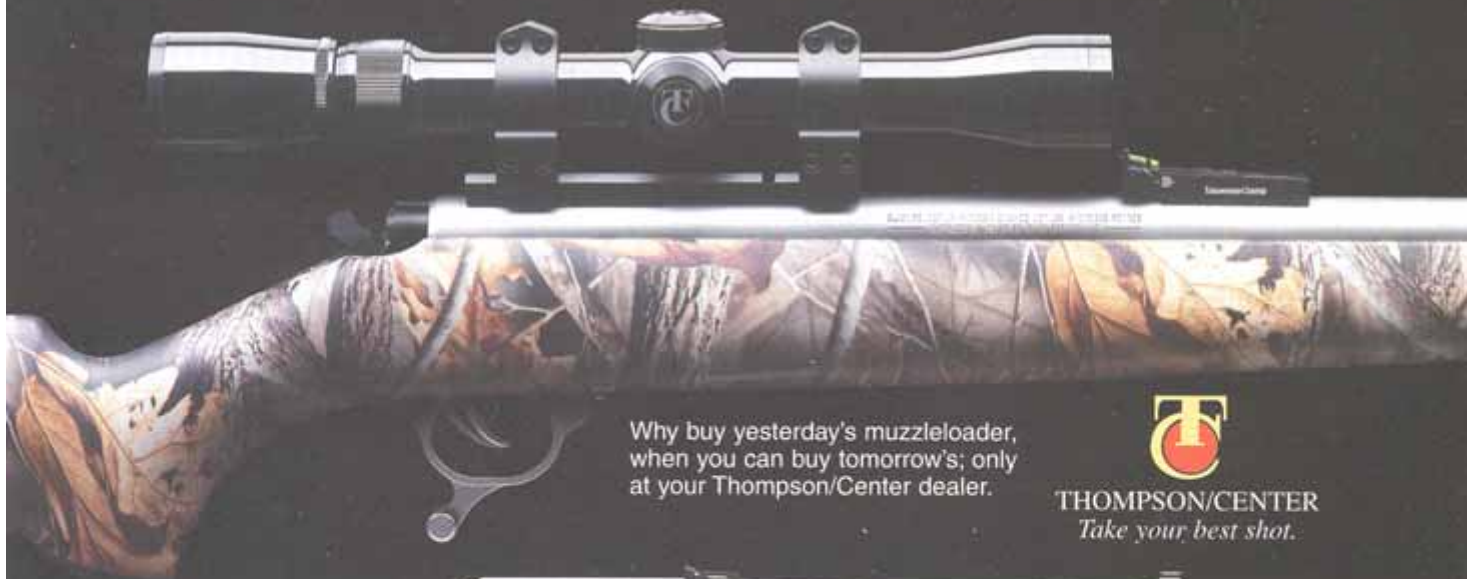


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there's exploring to be done. After a bear warning, we took off with our spinning rods (and a rifle) to the creek in search of Artic Grayling. The fish were cooperative and spectacularly hued. Fishing trips can also be arranged during the months of July and August from the big lodge at Mackay where Lake Trout to 51 pounds (lake record) are available.

the air. I can't imagine what it was like trying to navigate this area before air travel.

We were greeted at the floatplane dock by the group of happy hunters would be returning to Yellowknife on the planes return trip. While the camp personnel were busy unloading our gear and supplies for the camp, we had a chance to visit with the hunters getting ready to leave. Most of them were from Calgary and surrounding area. One of the hunters from Calgary had taken a very large caribou in velvet with his bow. The bull had been green scored over 400 Pope & Young points (velvet archery) and he was quite sure it would be close to the record for velvet antlered caribou. You can imagine how

excited we were to get our own hunt underway at that point.

Hunters cannot hunt on the same day they fly in so we still had some waiting to do until we could get a look at what we came for. It was still relatively early in the afternoon and Rich is not one to sit around when

Both Warburton Bay Lodge and MacKay Lake Lodge offer guided caribou hunts from approximately mid-August to the end of September. Warburton Bay Lodge is the smaller of the two camps owned and operated by True North Safaris Ltd. It is located on the south west side of the lake and is right at the tree line. This camp caters






Barren-ground Caribou by Boone and Crockett. Small bodied as compared to their larger relatives in Alaska these majestic animals sport impressive antlers. We saw a couple of bulls that our guides estimated would go in the 400 point B&C class. Caribou we saw thousands of, some places it was like a flood as the animals poured over the ridges and through the valleys on their unceasing migration across the tundra.

mostly to archery hunters because of the cover it offers. The two other hunters in camp with us were from Montana and were both archery hunters. The camp has three guest cabins, one main cookhouse cabin and two guide cabins. They can accommodate 12 hunters, but prefer to have eight in order to provide the best experience for the hunters.

The next five days of hunting flew by with us traveling many miles by boat upon the 100-mile long lake Mackay. The lake twists and turns and is positively riddled with islands all of which can be covered with caribou. Our first caribou bull was spotted less than 10 minutes into our first morning hunt and this was only the tip of the iceberg. These caribou belong to the Bathurst Inlet


Caribou herd, which is over 400,000 animals strong and is classified as Central Canada

We were treated like family at this camp. Since it is smaller, everyone meets for breakfast and supper in the main cookhouse. It's a great time to visit and get to know the people in the camp, both hunters and guides. We were only there for a week, but it felt like we knew the people so much better than that. I look forward to another trip to MacKay.



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