

Faeth's Pheasants & Diligent Dogs

Faeth's Fowl Play takes us on a firsthand experience of pheasant hunting in Iowa



Rob Faeth and I walk the fields with his guide dogs until one "points" the direction in which we should be prepared for a pheasant to be flushed.

Aaron Bruns
Special Section Editor

Positioned just off of a dense, brushy cover consisting of cornstalks and grass, we come to a sudden halt. The well-disciplined Jenny, a German Shorthair dog of Faeth's Fowl Play has her eyes (and nose) on the prize that awaits in the thicket's abyss.

With tail stiff as can be and determination in the eyes, she remains ever so patient until we are prepared. I place the Benelli shotgun against my shoulder securely, align the sights, and anticipate the path on which the hidden game will retreat. Jenny pounces towards the concealed sanctuary beneath, then comes the flush!

A magnificent male ring-necked pheasant emerges from its hiding and takes flight in the opposing direction in which we are standing. I quickly follow his trajectory, bringing the sights slightly in front of the bird's path, squeeze the trigger, and down he comes.

Did I know what I was doing prior to the events of that day? Absolutely not! I had never done pheasant hunting in my life. The only thing that qualified me for this experience was having taken a course in hunters education and having possession of a habitat stamp and hunting preserve permit.

But, after a quick and informative lesson in pheasant hunting from Rob Faeth, owner of Faeth's Fowl Play, I was ready to hit the upland terrain for a new hunting adventure, the likes of which I had never done before.

Faeth's Fowl Play hunting preserve, located just west of Fort Madison, has been organizing upland hunting excursions now since 2002 and tons of hunters, experienced and new to the sport, have made pheasant hunting a pasttime.

Faeth's offers an ideal habitat for gamebirds on 715 acres of land, 400 of which is preserve and the other 315 is wild. Keeping pheasants

KENT'S CUSTOM STRINGS
STOP IN & SHOOT! 2013 PSE BOWS ARE IN INCLUDING THE NEW DNA MODEL!
319-372-8170
 GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

SALES · INSTALLATION
VAN BUREN
CABINETRY
 KITCHEN REMODELS
 Located at 1302 Broad St., Keosauqua, IA
641-919-0147 Mike Jester, Owner

consistently stocked is how their operation has remained such a success for hunters who have come to this part of southeast Iowa.

“We have gone to a lot of work to manicure our property for hunting,” said Faeth. “We stock our property with pheasants just like the State of Iowa stocks trout and charges you a fee to fish. Therefore, we stock pheasants and charge a fee to hunt.”

Although it has been a hunting preserve the last 10 years, the land has been enjoyed by the Faeth family for well over a hundred years and sharing this piece of land with others was the goal of establishing Faeth’s Fowl Play.

“Everybody in my family hunts and helps out,” he explained. “It’s a family business.”

The amount of services available in the Faeth’s Fowl Play pheasant hunting experience is unrivaled. Any and everything that you would need can be supplied by the staff, from the mandatory bright orange clothing and shotgun to trained dogs and experienced guides. Other services include discounts for active military hunters, reduced rates and field transportation for disabled hunters, and bird cleaning and packaging services on site.



Two of the guide dogs at Faeth’s Fowl Play, Jenny, a German Shorthair and Red, an English Pointer, although unseen by the naked eye, each recognize that a pheasant remains hidden in the nearby brush.

“I had a great time a couple days ago guiding a father and son,” shared Faeth. “It was about hunting with his dad, watching great dog work, and taking some birds home to cook up. They had ample opportunity at their limits, some got away and that was ok. Success to them was not about getting their limit.”

According to Rob, just having a good time with family and friends is the greatest benefit people have with Faeth’s guided hunts.

I was fortuitous enough to be invited to experience Faeth’s Fowl Play pheasant hunting firsthand as

Rob guided me through this hunter’s paradise with the help of two of his guide dogs, Jenny, a German Shorthair and Red, an English Pointer.

Success would come much sooner than I anticipated that day and I would enjoy myself more than I realized.

Being only out in the field less than fifteen minutes was when the pheasant mentioned at the beginning of this story was tagged. We would go on to see multiple birds the remainder of the day, some we were able to get and others not.

See Faeth’s Pheasants on page 16

Scotts Miracle-Gro

The Scotts Company

1910 48th Street • P.O. Box 426 • Fort Madison, Iowa 52627

The Scotts Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer EOE (M/F/D/V) And a Drug and Tobacco-Free employer



Faeth's Pheasants

The adrenaline rush I would feel from every pheasant flushed was what was most intoxicating about the experience.

For me, the thing that most impressed me was the handling of the guide dogs and the amount of discipline that each possessed.

"Great dog work is magical. It's just amazing to watch these dogs work," said Faeth.

The breeds of dogs that Faeth uses including German Shorthair Pointers, Llewellyn Setters, English Pointers, and Labrador Retrievers. All are naturally intuned with "pointing" the locations of gamebirds in the field. The ability of Faeth's dogs to not flush out the birds prematurely is among the greatest asset when it comes to the number of pheasants harvested.

The dogs are well trained in listening to voice commands of their guides as well as abiding by the beeping tones of the dogs' electronic collars.



After the initial killing frost, pheasants dine mostly on weed seeds and grains to carry them throughout the remainder of the winter.

Occasionally, a dog may stray too far away and a simple touch of a button on Rob's controller triggers a tone through the dog's collar signaling him to return closer to the guide handling him. Furthermore, the stamina and determination of the dogs to retrieve the game itself was unrelenting.

Because Faeth's Fowl Play is a licensed hunting preserve through the state of Iowa, pheasant hunting preserve season extends between September 1st through March 31st instead of the usual last week of October to January 10th like the remainder of the state.

According to Rob, this works great during the holiday season when gift certificates for their hunts are available. This makes it possible for those who get one for Christmas to be able to redeem it the following few months or when the season comes back around in September.

Pheasant hunting is an amazingly social activity too. That's why Rob also encourages you to invite family and friends along for the adventure.

"It is all about sharing the day with friends and good dogs, and harvesting something for the table is a bonus," said Faeth.

Rates for Faeth's Fowl Play's pheasant hunts depend on if you choose a 1/2 day or full day hunt, need a gun, have to utilize the service of a guide and his dogs, and more. Contact Rob at 319-470-1502 or visit www.faethsfowlplay.com to learn more about prepping for a pheasant hunt through Faeth's Fowl Play.

FAETH'S FOWL PLAY

Let's Go Hunting!

Christmas Gift Certificates at Faeth's
832 Avenue G
319-372-2792
FORT MADISON, IA
1-877-BIRDHUNT
WWW.FAETHSFOWLPLAY.COM