

MACNAB: 2012'S REAL SPORTING CHALLENGE

Forget gold medals and Olympic glory, success in *The Field* and Hunter Balmoral Macnab Challenge is the ultimate in fieldsports achievement, says **Alexandra Henton**

DURING a month in which London 2012 dominates the headlines, the fieldsportsman may feel ignored. Fortunately, August also sees the launch of the third *Field* and Hunter Balmoral Macnab Challenge. Once again, we invite those intrepid adventurers to take to the hills and bag a Macnab in just one day. The ultimate sporting achievement for a right-thinking man – or woman – with a gun, rod or rifle in hand, this is fieldcrafts' Olympian challenge. For those who find geography conspires against the classic combination of grouse, stag and salmon, there are 10 other categories at which they can try their skill. Like the Classic Macnab, all must be completed in one day.

If you opt for a Classic Macnab then planning where to attempt the challenge is vital. One doesn't need to take a helicopter from beat to moor; it can be done much more sensibly by speaking to an agent who knows his stuff and following his advice. It needn't break the bank to go for a fieldsports' gold.

Over the past two years Allan Hemmings' estate, Gannochy in Glen Esk, Angus, has taken the honours for the number of Macnabs produced: six in 2010 and another six in 2011, including one by *The Field's* Editor. Hemmings has breathed life back into the sporting estate and, since 12 August 2004 – when Hemmings

PICK YOUR MAC-CHALLENGE

- The Classic Macnab: a stag, a salmon and a brace of grouse in one day.
- The Real Macnab: a salmon on the fly and a stag, as the trio did in John Buchan's *John Macnab*. They must be "poached" in a legal sporting manner from a pre-warned owner who accepts the challenge.
- The Southern Macnab: a couple of snipe, a sea-trout and a roe buck.
- The Macmarsh: a foreshore goose, a pike and a fallow buck.
- The Macvermin: an impressive rat, a pike on the fly and a brace of magpies (shot).
- The Macscandi: a moose, a capercaillie and a trout on the fly within 24 hours.
- The Macargentian: a golden dorado, 100 brace of doves and a wild pig; this is the northern Argentinian Macnab.
- The Macafrican: a brace of sandgrouse, an impala and a tigerfish in one day.
- The Maccharlie: riding to foxhounds, harriers and staghounds.
- The Corinthian Macnab: riding to hounds in the morning, shooting a brace of partridges in the afternoon, and then catching a trout on the fly.
- NEW The Macnorfolk: a brace of wild greys, a fallow buck and a bass on the fly.

In the past two years 12 Macnabs have been bagged at the Gannochy estate in Angus

achieved his own Gannochy Macnab – the Roll of Honour hanging in the Gannochy gun room has recorded the successes. Auchmull Lodge on the Gannochy estate is available to rent with fishing (there are six rods available) and further sporting packages, including the Macnab and driven grouse as well as walked-up and over pointers.

Robert Rattray from CKD Galbraith has had "two of the three ingredients on a number of occasions. I do think it is a great thing to do – a great sporting challenge. Getting the salmon early in the day is the key." He has picked a selection of properties ideal for attempting a Macnab. Amhuinnsuidhe and Aline in the Outer Hebrides are perfect Macnab territory. Both are available on a short-term basis so there's no need for a week-long excursion if it is a Macnab you are after. In fact, when undertaking a Macnab the fewer the distractions the better.

Amhuinnsuidhe is a luxury, fully catered castle on North Harris. Although it is available for a full party of 18 on a weekly basis, it also offers the opportunity to pare down costs and go on a per person or per couple short-break basis – ideal for the man with Macnabbing in mind. The castle offers a variety of loch ➤



MINSTER SCHUBERT

and river systems for salmon (so often the most trying part of the Macnab), grouse and stalking on the estate. Price: £212 per room per night based on single occupancy; stags, £400; fishing, £175 per rod per day; grouse, £150 plus VAT per brace.

Aline, on the boundary of Lewis and Harris, is a modernised and refurbished fully catered lodge that sleeps 10. There are also self-catering cottages on the estate, available by the week or on a short-break basis. The variety of river and loch systems for salmon, and the grouse and stalking on the estate make a Macnab ready for the taking. Price: £3,450 per week including fishing; stags, £365; grouse, £100 plus VAT per brace.

On mainland Scotland, Rattray recommends Inverinain on the South Chesthill estate. This self-catered lodge sleeps six to eight and is available by the week. With salmon fishing on the River Lyon, walked-up grouse and stalking on the estate, the three vital ingredients are present. Price: from £1,183 per week; fishing, £25 per rod per day; stags, £396; grouse, £128 plus VAT per brace.

Newly refurbished Langwell estate lodge in Wester Ross can sleep 14 and Glen Cottage sleeps six self-catering. The salmon fishing is on River Kanaird, with walked-up grouse and stalking on the estate. Price: from £3,000 per week for the lodge and from £500 per week for Glen Cottage; stags, £380; fishing, £50 plus VAT per rod per day; grouse, £120 plus VAT per brace.

For £900 plus VAT per person per day, a Macnab can be taken at 7,500-acre Balavil estate situated just outside Kingussie on the A9. It is owned by the Macpherson Fletcher family. The day involves a 6am start on the Spey, followed by breakfast at 10am and then on to the hill for the stag and off to the moor for the grouse. A much-needed break for tea is followed by another attempt on the river if the salmon has been elusive so far. "Mid to late September is usually the best time to attempt a



WHERE TO SIGN UP

GANNOCHY ESTATE

www.gannochyestate.co.uk

Available to rent through George Goldsmith or Savills, Brechin.

GEORGE GOLDSMITH

Tel 0131 476 6500

www.georgegoldsmith.com

CKD GALBRAITH

Tel 01738 451600

www.sportinglets.co.uk

EJ CHURCHILL SPORTING

Tel 01494 883227

www.ejchurchill.com/sporting

ROXTONS

Tel 01488 689788

www.roxtons.com

SAVILLS BRECHIN

Tel 01356 628600

www.savills.co.uk



Macnab on Balavil," says Mark Adams of EJ Churchill Sporting. "The estate can comfortably accommodate two sportsmen per day on the trail of a Macnab." To stay in the house full board costs £180 plus VAT per person per day. "This Highland estate is an exceptional place to visit and even has its own remains of a downed Lancaster bomber, which is represented on the estate tie worn by the keepers."

Roxtons' recommendation is Meall Mor Lodge on the 19,000-acre Kildermorie estate in Ross-shire. "It is known for its magnificent scenery and mixed sport." Its trout and salmon fishing on the Alness and Loch Morie, walked-up grouse, ptarmigan and stalking for sika and roe as well as red deer make a Macnab a tangible prospect (though we will accept nothing less than a red to clinch the Classic). The main lodge houses 20, with the price starting at £5,000 for the week, including one day's walked-up grouse, three red or sika stags, unlimited loch fishing and two rods on the Alness. Smaller self-catering cottages are also available on the estate.

"At Morsgail we don't charge for the Macnab, it is purely a bonus if guests achieve one," says George Goldsmith. The estate lies in the Outer Hebrides and Mark Molyneux, the owner, bagged his Macnab there in 2011. He had to drag his stag home, which made for a late start after the grouse, the final shot coming at twilight. A week at Morsgail in August to include salmon fishing and two afternoons of walked-up grouse costs £6,995 including VAT on a fully catered basis for up to 10 guests. Stags are charged at £350 plus VAT each.

If an estate holds the holy trinity of salmon, stag and grouse then a Macnab could be on the cards. You might take a lodge for a week or organise just a couple of days. However the challenge is undertaken, it is a once-in-a-sporting-lifetime opportunity. ■

For *The Field's* video tips on how to bag a Macnab, visit the Macnab Challenge website, www.macnabchallenge.co.uk

THE FIELD MACNAB CLUB

■ This year sees the launch of *The Field* Macnab Club. We invite applications from all those who have been courageous and, most importantly, successful, in their Macnab attempt. Potential members can download an application form or apply online at www.macnabchallenge.co.uk.

■ We ask that each application be supported by two witness letters. All witness statements will be verified before membership to the club is ratified. We will contact you to let you know

when your application has been successful. An application to join the Macnab Club is not an entry into this year's competition. All successful Macnabbers from 2010, 2011 and this year will automatically become members of *The Field* Macnab Club.

■ All *Field* Macnab Club members will be invited to the Macnab Club dinner in London in December. Members will also have the chance to purchase *The Field* Macnab Club silk tie. The trio of stripes reflects the three elements of the Classic Macnab: silver grey for the salmon, blood red for the stag and heather purple for the grouse. Each tie costs £25, and

can be purchased by members only. To order your Macnab Club tie send a cheque payable to "*The Field* magazine" to The Field Macnab Club, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

Join *The Field* Macnab Club

Scan the QR code with a smartphone to be taken to the Macnab Challenge website for more details. For instructions, see p18. <http://bit.ly/kN3060>

