

Carter, shown with another elephant early in 2008. He wore Russell Thula Thula PH boots for 10 straight weeks, covering 217 miles on foot during the early part of the season.

If you want to learn how your product performs, ask a professional hunter to use it or wear it for a season – but only if you can handle criticism.

In our stateside offices and design studios, we may think a product is perfect, but when used in a harsh environment, it may not perform properly.

Russell Moccasin regularly asks top PHs to put new products through their paces because we learn more in a few months than we might learn in years. Why? –because a PH hunts nearly a lifetime every year. The 250-plus days a PH spends in the bush guiding and taking care of client hunters easily equates to 18 to 20 serious safari hunts for the normal hunter. The PH is on the ground every day from the end of the safari show season until the beginning of the next, often eight to nine solid months. What better testing ground could there be than to ask a PH to wear or use your product?

Several years ago we were experiencing a delamination problem with our Safari “PH” II model that sports a super-quiet gum rubber sole. Gum rubber is difficult to cement to a midsole. While most PHs agree that the Safari “PH” II is the quietest shoe available, customers were experiencing premature delamination of the gum rubber sole when hunting in hot sand.

After numerous phone calls and research, our production manager, Doug Herge, formulated a new cement compound. The question was, “How are we going to test the new cement’s effectiveness and get a definitive answer quickly?”

“Did I want a pair made up for me?” No. It was summer in the United States and I had no safari planned for that year. Doug and I discussed our options. I could have a pair made and wear them day in and day out, wear them to the game farm while dog training, wear them while working in the woods, wear them hunting that fall. But too much time would pass to

PH Product Testing

BY RICHARD SANDERS, RUSSELL MOCCASIN COMPANY

PAGE DESIGN BY MEG BENHASE