

Taxidermy tips

Here are a few tips with regards to choosing your taxidermist and also choosing your poses.

Before I begin, I would just like to mention that while you may only hunt for 10, 14 or 21 days, you will look at your trophies for the rest of your life. It's better to make educated choices and have them done with high standards than to try and save money and end up with a mount that's "straight up and bug eyed"!!!!

Here are some questions to ask your taxidermist

1/ What is your turnaround time?

The answer needs to be less than 6 months. The reality is that it only takes a few days to mount an animal. Large delays are usually due to understaffing and system issues.

2/ Ask to see pictures

Look at close-ups of the eyes. Are they aligned correctly? Does the face look good? Is the muscle structure correct?

3/ Do you use natural habitat?

The answer should be no on this one. Organic material within a few years is dusty, broken and in need of care.

Taxidermists who don't use anything organic are superior, as their mounts will last. They won't fade or break down and can easily be cleaned.

4/Discuss poses carefully

Oftentimes its best to allow a very artistic taxidermist to do the pose he or she really likes. That way you know you will get the best work. It's always important to have an idea of where you want to put your trophies before you have them mounted. That way the forms can be altered and designed to fit your space.

5/Have a written agreement

Even if it's just an email confirmation that outlines the expected turnaround time, costs and poses discussed, this will be valuable in the case of any dispute.

6/Look at their cats

If their cats are good the rest will be fine. Leopards and mountain lions are the hardest to do well and will show if the team has any talent.

7/ Ignore awards

World and national champions are the only awards that mean anything. Ignore all "best of show" awards and others.

Truth is that over 60% of the participants at taxidermy shows will receive ribbons and local shows are very liberal with awards. The pictures and quality of the work is far more important than awards.

8/ Delivery options

Enquire about delivery options. Great taxidermists will have delivery crews. This may not be necessary for you; however, I have often heard complaints of a huge crate arriving, many of the pieces within requiring two or more people to hang.

All in all, even though hunting is your passion and you are excited to have your taxidermy done, look at it like any other business, be selective and remember cheaper is not always better!

Good hunting!