

CHARACTER an outdoor life

Barb Genge

PERSEVERANCE and true Newfoundland spit and grit helped Barb Genge succeed in the male-dominated outfitting business. As owner/operator of Tuckamore Lodge on Newfoundland's northern tip, she offers both luxury and wilderness accommodations—and, of course, special packages just for women.



» **ON LEARNING TO HUNT**

I always loved the outdoors and fishing, but hunting didn't come until my husband bought me a .30-06 for my birthday. Being out in the woods was a chance to be part of something I liked. You see how skilled the animals are, how they survive and how smart you have to become to outsmart them. I can see now why the big ones get big.

» **ON RUNNING A LODGE**

I started out with a screwdriver and a wrench. Back in 1986, my husband had an aviation company. I borrowed the money to buy his plane before we even had a house. He flew hunters into remote lodges that were in horrible shape. We figured we could do better, so I borrowed again and built Tuckamore Lodge. I was working 18 hours a day with a full-time job, managing the flying company, cooking and cleaning in the lodge. A year later, we split. He got the plane, I got the lodge and a \$250,000 debt. My son was 12 and I had to keep my head above water, so to help pay bills, I collected beer

bottles from the ditches after dark so no one would see me.

» **ON FIGHTING FOR HER RIGHTS**

Back then I did black bear and salmon guiding, but there weren't enough people coming. I knew if I could get moose and caribou licences, I could make a go of it, but the government guys didn't want me to have big-game licences. I was a woman in a non-traditional role, see. It was an awful big buddy system and I wasn't anybody's buddy. But I was in a tight jam money-wise, so I was in their faces all the time like a broken record. That's how I got 'em in the end. They just wanted me to go away. I don't think they looked at me as a man or a woman, just a big mouth, right? If you're persistent and don't give up, they'll either kill you or give in to you; one or the other.

» **ON BREAKING WITH TRADITION**

I want women to have a place they can come and learn fly fishing, hunting, firearm safety, wilderness survival, too. To be an outdoorswoman so they can take care of themselves. Hunting was a men's club, but now it's trendy for women. We take small groups to our remote wilderness lodge for this. And they're good at it. Women are quiet, great stalkers. They have patience. In hunting, patience is number one and quietness is second. They're fast learners because they don't think they know it all already. Conditions have to be perfect before they take their shot. They work harder to prove themselves. They know their limits and are not afraid to admit them. When I first had female hunters coming, none of the guides wanted them. Now they all fight over them.

» **ON NEWFOUNDLAND CULTURE**

It means freedom, being nice to people and sharing. In Newfoundland, it always feels like home—that's what we're all about. The government owns 95.6 per cent of the land. It belongs to the people, so you can go anywhere. Non-fenced land is the biggest freedom anyone can have.

—Interview by Deborah Carr

PRO-FILE



ICE GUYS

Meet brothers Norm and Mike Burden, four-time winners of the Canadian Ice Fishing Championships, held each winter on Ontario's Lake Simcoe. Although we went to press before this year's championships got underway late last month, we did get the chance to ask the pair to share a few insights into their hardwater prowess.

NORM BURDEN

AGE: 55 **YEARS FISHING:** 45
HOMETOWN: Ajax, Ontario
HOME WATER: Lake Simcoe
CAREER HIGHLIGHT: Four-time CIFIC winner
RECORD CATCH: 15-pound lake trout
FAVOURITE TECHNIQUE: Vertically jigging for lake trout with a Williams Wabler (sometimes tipped with a minnow)
FAVOURITE LURE: Williams Wabler
FAVOURITE FISH: Lake trout
ESSENTIALS: Lowrance X67C Ice Machine

MIKE BURDEN

AGE: 45 **YEARS FISHING:** 37
HOMETOWN: Jackson's Point, Ontario
HOME WATER: Lake Simcoe
CAREER HIGHLIGHT: Four-time winner of the CIFIC. Top Scoring Male in 2004
RECORD CATCH: 18-pound lake trout
FAVOURITE TECHNIQUE: Vertically jigging for lake trout with a minnow on a small hook under a splitshot
FAVOURITE LURE: Williams Whitefish
FAVOURITE FISH: Lake trout
ESSENTIALS: A compass, GPS and fishfinder

For results from the 12th annual Canadian Ice Fishing Championships, go to www.cifc.org, or call (905) 722-5425.

Photo: Norman Genge; www.cifc.org; Norm and Mike Burden