

The NEWDALE DUCK Club

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #147 —

"If you get all the way to Newdale, you've gone too far." Those were the words of my good friend and host John Baregi, as he provided instructions to get to the place we would be staying. "On the right side of the road, you'll see a clump of trees and inside there's an old farmhouse. It still has electricity, but no running water."

We were to be duck and goose hunting near Newdale, in Manitoba Province, Canada — about three hours west of Winnipeg. If you look at this area on a map, there are probably more potholes than people, but in the fall it offers some wonderful waterfowl hunting — both over water and in the pea fields.

But, there are even problems in paradise; you see, the number of hotel rooms in Newdale was not designed to accommodate the influx of waterfowl hunters in the fall.

My friend and Air Force buddy John, always the innovator, found this abandoned house while scouting for ducks, and talked the farmer into letting us stay there.

Sometimes

camp is the most memorable part of a hunting trip. This old farmhouse had been abandoned in 1977, 24 years before my first visit. There were raccoons living in the attic, part of the roof leaked, and the ceiling was starting to fall in. But the most interesting thing about this house was the restroom; of course that's not how we referred to it. Yes, there was a stool, behind a lockable door; and there were plastic bags and zip ties and an open window behind the stool.



The 'Lodge' at Newdale Duck Club; abandoned in 1977, this old farmhouse is where we stayed on the hunting trip.

You can use your imagination to finish the restroom story. Of course, at the end of the hunt, all the bags were disposed of properly.

A typical day was up at 4:30 am, quick snack for breakfast; in the field just after 5:00 to set up decoys; first flights about 7:00. Hunt till 9:00 or

10:00 or noon, then back to the 'clubhouse' for lunch and rest; then set up again in the afternoon about 4:00,

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possibly in a different place. The hunting was great; my Winchester Model 12, with Bismuth shot, accounted for more than its share of ducks and geese. I made that trip four times, the last in 2007, before the roof completely collapsed one winter. The second year we gave it a name "The Newdale Duck Club", and it will always be in my dreams.



Larry Potterfield

The Newdale Duck Club
Newdale, Manitoba Province
Canada
8 October 2004



(l-r) Michael Gaudet, John Baregi, myself and Lloyd Smith



Matt Fleming and I pose with a mixed bag of Mallards, Canada geese, snows and blues — in 2004. That's my Model 12.