

He Won a One-of-a-Kind Model 89 SpikeDriver. Two Years Later, He Took It After a Tennessee Trophy Boar.

Pennsylvania podcaster and lifelong whitetail hunter Stephen E. won a fully upgraded Big Horn Model 89 SpikeDriver in a 2024 Instagram giveaway. He decided a rifle like that deserved a hunt to match. Here's how it went.

Stephen En. is a whitetail man. He co-hosts Rut and River Pursuits, a podcast for hunters and outdoorsmen based near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and he owns, by his own admission, "more rifles than my wife knows about."

Every year, Stephen and his co-hosts work the NRA Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg: nine days of vendors, outfitters, and special guests from every corner of the outdoors. They record interviews and bring those conversations home to their listeners. Do that long enough and you learn to tell the outfitters selling a dream from the ones selling a hunt.

In the fall of 2024, Stephen entered an Instagram giveaway for a one-of-a-kind Model 89 SpikeDriver, built with every upgrade Big Horn Armory offers. To his surprise, his name was drawn.

He covered the rifle on an episode of the podcast and dug into the company behind it. "Learning the history of the company, the craftsmanship that goes into each rifle and the pride each employee has, I was convinced I had received one of the most spectacular rifles available to the world," he says. Then he decided what came next: "I wanted to hunt something just as special as my new rifle."

Four Years of Booth Visits, One Booking

For four straight years, one booth at the show had pulled the Rut and River crew in: Spartan Hunting Preserve, a family-run operation in the mountains of East Tennessee. The 600-pound shoulder-mounted hogs caught their eye. Owner Mitch Kemmer's way of doing business kept them coming back.

Kemmer runs a no-nonsense operation. Hunters know the full price before they arrive. Family members who come along but don't hunt get the meals, the lodge, and the experience at no charge. And the quarry is serious: trophy boar from 400 to 600 pounds, plus fallow deer and trophy rams.

At the 2025 show, Stephen decided it was time to put up or shut up. He booked a boar hunt for October 2026 and talked a few of his co-hosts into coming with him.

Sighted In Without a Fight

In September, Engelhardt took the SpikeDriver to the range. He checked the FAQ on Big Horn Armory's website for recommended ammunition and got to work.

Some rifles take a box of ammunition and an afternoon of frustration to sort out. This one didn't.

"Unlike those other rifles, this thing shot well right out of the box," he says. "The standard Skinner peep sights were easy to use, and after a few rounds I was hitting consistently in the same spot. A few adjustments and this rifle lived up to its name: SpikeDriver."

A Lodge That Lived Up to the Booth

Spartan delivered on four years of conversation. Three meals a day. Walls lined with mounts. Rooms stocked with every toiletry and linen a hunter might forget. The night before the hunt, the guide walked the group through the plan step by step.

Stephen didn't sleep much. "Much like a child the night before Christmas," he says.

In the morning, a side-by-side carried the hunters to what he calls "one of the coolest, most hunter-friendly blinds I have ever seen." The guide headed into the timber to join his scouts. He wasn't gone long.

The Shot

Two boars had been spotted. Stephen and fellow co-host Brian, carrying a .44 Magnum handgun, slipped in close enough to glass them: a long-haired white boar and a red-haired monster.

Brian gave Stephen first pick. He took the red one. Brian's boar stood a little closer, so Brian shot first, hoping the red boar would hold. It did. Brian's hog went down.

Engelhardt crept to about 40 yards, rested the SpikeDriver against a small oak and steadied himself on an animal he describes as "the size of a VW Beetle."

His first shot hit a little farther forward than he wanted, square in the middle of the shoulder. The boar ran, badly hurt. His second, a 375-grain Armscor load, went through both lungs and dropped it in its tracks.

The boar was finished. On a hog that size, though, the guide recommended a final shot to the now-exposed heart, ending it quickly and keeping adrenaline from tainting the meat. Stephen put the third round exactly where it needed to go.

"Something that may have only taken a few minutes felt much longer," he says. "That's when my adrenaline dumped, and I could have been knocked over with a feather."



The Verdict

Stephen went to Tennessee for one trophy. He came home with two.

"I was able to take a true trophy, using a rifle I also consider a trophy, with my pod brothers there for the entire hunt," he says. "Alongside the tusks and the pictures, I will always have that rifle and the memories I created with it."

The Model 89 SpikeDriver is chambered in .500 S&W Magnum and built in Cody, Wyoming, for exactly this kind of work: big, heavy-bodied game at close range, where the first shot has to count, and the follow-ups have to come fast. Three rounds from a lever action. One red boar. One hunter who will be telling the story for the rest of his life.

To hear the full account, listen to the Rut and River Pursuits episode on the hunt.

Ready to Write Your Own Story?

Explore the Model 89 lineup and contact our team at bighornarmory.com.

Go Big or Go Home.

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