

The Ultimate Whitetail Rig

By Bill Winke, Field Editor

Several readers of *American Hunter* recently asked for my opinion of this year's hottest bow and the most-advanced accessories. But I took it one step further: I assembled the baddest whitetail bow on the planet. Here's what it looks like.

1 PSE X Force HF bow: The new PSE X Force HF definitely meets the criteria because it's one of the fastest bows on the market. PSE designed every feature to produce blazing speed, yet it has an amazingly soft feel during the shot. I shot company owner Pete Shepley's personal X Force bow at the recent Archery Trade Association Show.

At the lane, my first reaction was not awe at the bow's raw speed, though the bow certainly possessed raw speed, rather, I was amazed by how little recoil it produced and how soft it felt in my hand when delivering those very fast arrows. It was quiet too.

PSE advertises that this 33-inch axle-to-axle bow will produce an 180 speed rating between 342 and 350 fps. That is with a 70-pound bow, 30-inch draw

length, shooting a 350-grain arrow. The 180 standard is not a realistic hunting setup and certainly not for whitetails; however, the rating does indicate that the X Force has energy to burn. When we combine that with a hunting weight arrow, that surplus energy will translate into maximum penetration and an exit hole for easy blood trailing even on downward shots from treestands. That is important to me.

The X Force gets its

speed from the new Hybrid Fast Cam and a 6-inch brace height. I like bows with 7-inch brace heights because I feel 7 inches is a good compromise between speed and forgiveness. Generally, it's harder for novice archers to shoot a bow with a very low brace height accurately. I won't recommend the new X Force to everyone that I see at the bow range, but it is a good choice for serious archers. It's likely that you won't see any decrease in accuracy with this bow at typical whitetail-hunting distances. (\$799; 520-884-9065; pse-archery.com)



six-arrow design. (\$34; 866-556-2760; carolinaarcheryprod.com)

5 Easton Full Metal Jacket arrows: FMJ shafts feature aluminum tubing around a tube of hollow carbon fiber. When aluminum is combined with carbon, you get the straightness and uniformity of aluminum and the durability of carbon. Full Metal Jackets are hunting-weight arrows; they will absorb most of the energy in the hard charging X Force and transfer it to the animal where it belongs. These small-diameter shafts promise excellent penetration. It is possible with the X Force and the FMJ that you may be able to convert an accidental shoulder hit into venison. (\$141 per 12; 801-539-1400; eastonarchery.com)

6 Rocket Steelhead broadheads: I shoot mechanical broadheads for the majority of my whitetail hunting. These heads are more accurate for me under a wider range of conditions. The Steelhead is an example of my preference for small diameter (1.25-inch cutting diameter) conservative designs that won't cost you precious kinetic energy when they open. They are very simple and reliable. (\$28 per 3; 800-694-9494; trophyridge.com)

7 G5 Outdoors 1/4" Meta peep sight: In the section on sights, I mentioned my preference for round pin guards; now I'll get to the reason. I use a large peep, such as the 1/4" Meta from G5, and



then center the entire pin guard inside the peep rather than centering individual pins. This produces the necessary high level of precision when aiming but also allows for much improved low-light visibility. (\$12; 866-456-8836; g5outdoors.com)

8 Fuse Axiom stabilizer: Stabilizers don't truly stabilize your bow in a

measurable way unless they are a couple of feet long—too long, in my opinion, for a hunting bow. So I look to my stabilizer to do nothing more than soak up vibration and reduce the recoil and noise of the shot. With its flexible attachment system, the Fuse Axiom does that well. And at 4-inches, it won't snag on every branch and briar when you pull the bow up into your treestand. (\$39; 801-363-2990; fusearchery.com)

Photos: Lloyd Hill