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This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete Country Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

Love For Wilderness, Animals Helped 'King' of the Outdoor World Find His Crown

Rob King has always had a deep and enduring love for the great outdoors and the animals that roam Utah's wilderness.

He used to do pencil sketches of monster mule deer and bulls just out of sheer admiration for the magnificent animals. Whenever he saw the animals mounted or on display, he used to imagine what they must have looked like living free and undisturbed in the wild.

But he never expected his dreams and sketches would evolve into a full-time business.

Fast forward a decade and a half.

King now is the president and owner of King's Outdoor World, a graphic art and hunting merchandise company he opened in 1995. Known throughout the United States and Canada, the Mt. Pleasant-based business sells wildlife calendars, prints, re-created photographs, decals, T-shirts, software, camouflage clothing and even wooden toilet seats engraved with wildlife scenes.

And it all started out of King's love for the outdoors.

King first started thinking about ways to turn his animal sketches into something more around 1990. His idea was to re-create images of "world-record size" animals in photographic form, based on actual photos, mounted heads and body fragments of the animals. But the only way to re-create the images would be to use a computer, and King hated that idea.

"I hated computers back then," he says. "But the only thing I hated more than computers was the thought of having to find a job that would take me away from the outdoors."

So he bought a computer and taught himself the trade, working on his computer and graphic design skills every morning before work and long into the night each evening.

Soon, King produced his first photographic image of a monster mule deer. "To see the animals back in true living form was truly magnificent," he says, adding each image took between 60 to 120 hours to produce. "The images were pushing the envelope of computer technology back then."



Within a couple of years, King had developed eight different reproductions and then spent about two years putting together a product line, starting with hunting guides. He officially opened Kings Outdoor World in 1995.

“Since our humble beginnings, King’s Outdoor World has become a major force in the hunting/outdoor industry,” he says.

King’s image reproductions are featured in one of the company’s best-known and most popular items, their King’s Mule Deer, Elk, Whitetail, and Bucks & Bulls Calendars. The calendars are the best-selling “bucks and bulls” series in the world. They’ve received national awards for seven years in a row and have become a household item across the United States and Canada. In fact, they’ve become so popular that organizations like the North American Hunting Club have asked King to create calendars for their organization.

King has also designed some best-selling wildlife images, including the Magnificent 7, “a photo that has come to signify the company”. It shows seven monster mule deer on the ridge of a sandstone cliff. More than 40,000 copies of the image are in print around the world.

“All of the bucks you see in the print were real bucks that once roamed the Earth,” King says. The idea for the image came to him while he was visiting a friend who had giant mule deer mounts on his wall. The two started talking about what it would have been like to see the animals living all together.

In 2003, King expanded his company to include the sale of camouflage patterns. It’s first, the Desert Shadow Camouflage pattern, is a perfect blend of earth tones and brush that allows the hunter to blend perfectly into his/her environment. “It took the hunting industry by storm,” he says. In 2005, the new Mountain Shadow and the extremely popular Snow Shadow patterns were released. “We have taken hunting concealment to an all new level and will be unveiling two new patterns for 2007,” King says.

The company also produces software and developed Map Academy, an easy- to- use topographical mapping program. “When other companies were selling programs for thousands of dollars for a state, Map Academy was under a hundred dollars. Today, it is still the program to beat for price and quality,” King says.

King’s Outdoor World also publishes its own magazine, Hunting Illustrated, which was launched in 2001. “Since that time, it has grown into one of the industry’s leading big game hunting magazines,” he says. It’s written by hunting and outdoor enthusiasts, and includes articles and stories on monster mule deer and elk but also focuses on the issues hunters face today. It’s also known for its stunning photographs and design. The magazine can be found on newsstands all over North America and Canada.



For more information on Kings Outdoor World, visit the website
www.kingoutdoorworld.com

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