

# Reflections of the Wild

Written by **Dan Whetzel**

A bobcat peers suspiciously from the cover of shrubs, a pheasant ascends toward the sky with a flurry of color, and a mountain goat clings tenaciously to rocks in a steep descent. These unique scenes can be viewed at one location and are the creation of Dan Martin, Master Taxidermist, and Missy Martin, owners of Reflections of the Wild taxidermy, located in Garrett County, Maryland.

The Martin's family owned business has been growing since its establishment in 2003 and features animals from many continents around the globe. From a traditional deer head to entire trophy room designs with mountain scenes and indoor waterfalls, their business attracts customers from the Tri-State region and beyond. Many customers drive their animals to the showroom, while others ship them because of time and distance.

Dan and Missy carry out all phases of the business, while colleague and professional taxidermist, Jeff Gregory, assists and is an integral part of the taxidermy service. Missy believes the business has grown because of customer satisfaction and Dan's passion for artistic taxidermy. Dan believes that each trophy is a prize of nature. With his creation of realistic habitat and attention to specific detail he captures the animal in its nature environment and brings back the excitement of the hunt!

Recreating a natural habitat adds artistic value because it creates life-like settings. When bobcats, birds, turkeys, and other animals are framed in rustic settings, a moment in time is captured—the moment when hunter meets prey. As Dan states, "A trophy may come once in a lifetime; let us preserve it for another." Being an avid hunter with trips around the world, including two trips to Africa, Alaska, and New Zealand, Dan understands the thrill of the hunt and the desire to capture that experience.



**Dan Martin at work in his studio on a Himalayan Tahr from New Zealand. Photos by Lance Bell.**

Dan's professional skills were acquired from an accredited taxidermy school. Those skills combined with extensive experience and artistic ability have brought success and awards in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia Taxidermy competitions. He has won many 1st place blue ribbons in Master division and a list of specialty awards including Most Artistic, People's Choice, Best Habitat, Best All Around, Show Stopper Award, Safari Club International (2006 & 2007) and the most sought after, winning National Champion in 2007.



No design is too small or large, as evidenced by the African Elephant above. These are just a couple of the many beautiful mounts Dan has created.

**Inset: White Tail Deer.**

Some of the award winning mounts may be viewed at the Garrett County showroom in the Shawnee Trading Post, 1076 Pysell Crosscut Road, Oakland, Maryland. Currently underway is a new showroom that is expected to be completed by the spring of 2012.

For more information see  
[www.reflectionstaxidermystudio.com](http://www.reflectionstaxidermystudio.com).

