

From 1909 Havana, Cuba to 2003 Miami, Florida

The History of the Club de Cazadores Cubanos (CCC)

Ninety four years ago, 90 miles south of Key West, Florida 25 men formed a shotgun and hunting club which is still in existence today, El Club de Cazadores Cubanos (CCC) located in Miami, Florida. The year was 1909 when they founded the club in Havana, Cuba. They bought a farm called "La Mulata" in a small town of "El Cerro" situated in Havana, Cuba. This became their home club. At this time they named the club the "Sociedad de Cazadores del Cerro". Most of these founding members were decedents of Spain where there is a love for hunting and shooting. Picture "A" circa 1925, shows the founding members. One of the founding members was Juan Ibarguen Avellanal (seventh from the left) shown in picture "B" where he is joined by other members and their wives in front of the score board. Besides being past presidents, Mr. Avellanal's son-in-law Bernabe Macias and Mariano Macias his grandson have carried on the tradition.

In 1923 the club moved and bought property in the providence of Luceros, in Havana, Cuba. At this time the club changed their name to the "Club de Cazadores del Cerro". One of the most famous members was Ernest Hemingway who shot trap, skeet and Flyers. Hemingway had a farm house just five miles from the club. Picture "C" circa 1930's shows Ernest Hemingway shooting at the club. This picture was retrieved from the book titled Hemingway on Hunting. The members kept the club at this location until 1956.

In 1956 the members began construction of their new club located at Rancho Boyeros, Havana, Cuba. They started the building process in November of 1956 and finished the club in February 1957. In order to get funding for this world class facility the members conducted a fund raising dinner which raised \$60,000.00. Mr. Bernabe Macias and three other members guaranteed a bank loan for an additional \$20,000.00 in order to complete the construction of this facility. The \$80,000.00 dollars spent in 1956 - 1957 is equivalent to \$536,000.00¹ in today's dollars. The land for the club was mediated with the help of Dr. Antonio Rodriquez Diaz who was a member of the Cazadores and President Batista's personal physician. President Batista leased the land to the Cazadores for \$1.00 per year on a 99-year lease. This facility was the best known among all the Cazadores facilities. The photo of this facility can be seen in picture "D" circa 1957. There were trap fields, skeet fields,

¹ CPI;<http://www.eh.net/ehresources/howmuch/dollar.php>

a flyers field and rifle range. The facility also had lights for night time shooting. The club had a banquet room, a dining room, a card room, a bar room, and a kitchen facility that could cater to large groups. Some of the other amenities were lockers, showers and an underground vault where members could keep their guns.

There were also many American shooters who enjoyed the club and competed with the Cazadores at this facility. Some of these great shooters from the documentation that we have were; Bob Allen, Homer Clark Jr., J.R. Boyd, Joe Hiestand, Ed Lake, Toby Bancroft, Johnny Downes, Lawrence Truitt, and Teddy Sumsion. During the 1950's upon completion of the Florida Chain Shoots, some of the shooters would drive down to Key West and take the ferry to Havana. Once in Havana they would compete and shoot with the Cazadores Cubanos. The club also had American magazine writers that covered the Cazadores bigger shoots. One of these writers was Ozzi Sweet who worked for True Magazine and covered the 1959 Pan American de Pichon shoot. Photo "E" shows the names of these shooters along with their scores. The Cazadores also had many members who would compete at the Grand. One of these shooters was Jose "Pipo" Cuervo, who was nicknamed "Cuban Crow" by his fellow Grand American shooters. In 1957, the ATA Executive Committee whose President was Mr. Robert W. Smith sent a letter of invitation to Mr. Bernabe Macias to represent the Cazadores in the 1957 Grand. Picture "F" shows the letter of invitation. Other invitations came from the Philadelphia Gun Club for the 1956 - 1957 season. Picture "G" shows the invitation.

In 1968, the Club de Cazadores Cubanos was formed with 23 members in Miami, Florida. They chose Trail Glades Range facility as their home club. Trail Glades Range is a public facility with 6 trap / 6 skeet fields, 1 international skeet field and a sporting clays facility that has 2 different courses and a pistol and rifle range. The club was formed by many of the same members from the Cazadores Club of Rancho Boyero, Cuba. These original members just wanted a place where they could shoot, compete among themselves and bring back the feeling and environment they had left back in Cuba. They would shoot on Sundays since most of them worked six days a week with Sunday being their only day off. When the members would have a trap or skeet shoot they would classify the shooters among themselves since at that time they were not ATA or NSSA certified. The members would set up the registration table under a tree, to shade them from the awfully strong sun in South Florida. There they would register the shooters and later have lunch on the picnic tables. They would bring their own food and refreshments.

It was not until 1995, that the Club de Cazadores Cubanos (CCC) changed and looked for ways to grow its membership. Under the new Board of Directors of Mariano Macias, Bernabe Macias Sr., Guillermo Diaz Sr., Jorge Solares, Alberto Solares, Heli Montoto, Teddy Montoto, Tony Legorburu, Franz Arrango and Miguel Suarez the club became an ATA, NSSA and NSCA gun club. This helped the club grow to its current membership of 110. The ethnic membership is very diverse; we have members that are from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Spain, Argentina, Colombia, Greece, and of course; many American shooters who love the cultural exchange. Though the club started mostly with members that were Spanish speaking that is not the case anymore. This same Board of Directors negotiated the use of the clubhouse, which was being used by the other gun club, the Tamiami Skeet Club. Picture "F" shows the current clubhouse of the CCC. Today both clubs enjoy not only the club house, but also there are many members that belong to both clubs. Nowadays, the typical trap shoot will be two events usually singles and doubles. Our members really enjoy shooting trap doubles and if there is enough demand we end the day with a handicap event. The shoots usually start at 9:00am and we stop at the end of the first event for lunch. Lunch, which is included as part of our shoot fees are catered; typically comprised of rice, black beans, ground beef, bread rolls, and refreshments. I really believe that many non-member shooters really come for the food even though we throw great targets. Kevin Kirwin who oversees several of our county's public parks plus our own club facility was able to procure a new Pat Trap and over haul one of our other ones. The county spent over \$10,000.00 in improvements to our gun facility. Pablo Peña, who is the Range Master and his staff do a great job in maintaining and running the gun club. Last year the CCC bought Voice Call machines to use for our trap shoots. A survey of our trap members led to us conduct two Thursday night registered trap shoots a month in addition to our regular weekend trap shoots. This year we will have 27 registered Trap shoots along with our Skeet shoots and Sporting Clays, the CCC will sponsor 40 registered events this year.

The culmination of our year is with our four major shoots, which specifically cater to the members. These are called the Copa Cuba Trap Championship, the Copa Cuba Skeet Championship, the Copa Cuba Sporting Clay Championship and the Copa Cuba Flyers Championship. We then have a banquet for our members and their families in which the Copa Cuba Championship Trophies are presented. Once the trophies are presented and dinner is served we spend the rest of the night dancing and spending time with our friends and families. These shoots and the banquet continue with the traditions of our gun club that was founded over 94 years ago.

Besides our regular registered shoots and the Copa Cuba shoots, the CCC also has two shoots, which are fund-raisers for what we believe are great community based organizations. The Liga Contra El Cancer (www.ligacontraelcancer.org) shoot translates to the Cancer Shoot. This not-profit organization donates medical treatment, hospital facilities and medicine to cancer patients that have no other means of receiving treatment. This organization La Liga Contra El Cancer was originally founded in Cuba. The CCC has raised over \$67,000.00 since it held its first benefit shoot in 1997. The other shoot which the CCC sponsors is the Christmas shoot. The purpose of this shoot is to raise money and donate toys to the children of the El Centro Mater. Centro Mater is a Catholic organization which caters to underprivileged children.

The CCC is working hard to keep the sport going for the generations to come. We have members and directors who are third generation. It's amazing to see that what 25 men started in another country over 94 years ago, is still growing strong. It's also hard to believe that the CCC celebrated its 35th year at the Trail Glade Range.

I would like to give special thanks to club the members, the Macías family and especially to Mrs. Beba Macías, whose dedication to her family and to the Club de Cazadores Cubanos had the forth site to categorize and store all the pictures, newspaper clippings, and documentation. With out these people the history of this club would be vanished. On a side note, I also found out that I am also one of those third generation members. My great uncle Calixto Cruz and his hunting partner, Guas Inclan, who was Vice President under President Batista, were also active members of the Club de Cazadores in Havana, Cuba.

If any of you are in Miami, please come and visit us. Visit our website; www.clubdecazadorescubanos.com for our next shooting event or to send us an e-mail.

Eduardo "Eddie" LLado
eddie@ehunter.com
www.ehunter.com