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Woman Taxidermists

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Statistics are proving that more and more women are turning to hunting and shooting sports now than at any time in our history. According to a recent survey by the National Sporting Goods Association, 72% more women are hunting with firearms today than five years ago. At the Colorado Institute of Taxidermy Training Inc. we have also seen a dramatic increase in the number of women who want to become taxidermists.

We have always had women students in our classes but frequently they were women who wanted to help their husbands in their taxidermy business or women who wanted to find a way to save some of the money their husbands spent having their animals mounted. I have been pleasantly surprised while interviewing prospective women taxidermy students, finding they are interested in learning taxidermy for themselves and their families and they have discovered an art form that they can embrace and make a comfortable living with. The days when women were turned off by “dead things” staring at them from darkened rooms are vanishing.

In our experience women become very accomplished wildlife artists because they frequently have a well honed eye for detail. This is not to say that men do not see details, but women are trained from birth to look for small details in how things such as faces appear. How many men

can see that the woman at the next table should have put another coat of mascara on or that the shoes your best friend is wearing could be better worn with a jogging suit not with the skirt she has on.

Women are sometimes a bit more patient with the process than some men and don't try to "force" the mount to work. Sometimes students may have a bit of paralysis in starting the mounting process out of fear of mishap, but with practice they gain confidence and they learn they can fix anything taking great satisfaction in achieving something beautiful, creative and permanent instead of a pile of laundry that never stays done.

Women want to have the freedom to be at home to raise their children. We have trained several women who work at home with their babies right next to them, or women who enlist their kids to help with the work, thus building a career the whole family can participate in.

Jamie Shepherd was pregnant when she came to our school and went through the whole program morning sickness and all! Jamie and her husband have been in the service and she uses the skills she learned in our program in her taxidermy business and best of all she can take her business anywhere they settle. Currently Jamie helps in our shop with little Mallory at her side, while her son Jaylin keeps us all laughing at his bright wit. Jamie's husband Dan is extremely supportive of her work and helps immeasurably. They recognize the potential for a family business and are working together to achieve that goal.

Women can be particularly good at mounting fish and birds. Each of these can be slightly more detail oriented and require more patience. The women we have taught love the smaller size and beauty of the birds and their smaller hands help get into tight spaces. They also really enjoy our

Lifesize and Rug making class, as this allows them a little more creativity with the habitat. The Gamehead class requires a bit of muscle, but the satisfaction of seeing the whole project from start to beautiful finish is worth the extra effort.

Women such as Alicia Rosenbruch have attended our school. Alicia combined her expertise in world game hunting along with the skills she acquired in our school to work along with her family in the Rosenbruch Wildlife Museum in St. George Utah. The museum showcases the gorgeous animals her family has taken for the last 40 years as well as providing educational programs and exhibits for their community.

Colorado Institute of Taxidermy Training Inc. student Jennifer Shumake, told me she was tired of getting her animals back from various taxidermists, and being disappointed in the way they turned out. She said many of them were mounted fairly well, but not in the way she pictured. Jennifer's husband, Brian and two young sons, Lane and Cole are very excited to have her pursuing a dream she has always had; the dream of becoming a wildlife artist. Jennifer said "I am not getting any younger and I just decided to go down the road of a new life change and not look back."

A new trend is for women to take trips or classes together without their families in order to learn new skills such as horseback riding, shooting skills and hunting. Why not consider attending the Colorado Institute of Taxidermy with your best friend and open your world to a new career or hobby? Or consider attending classes with your husband, son or daughter in order to begin a new family enterprise. We are accepting applications for new students and welcome you.