

Brothers From Greenville Provide Hunting Apparel Line

By Shannon Chase

There's a new generation of hunter out there – and they are the target of a new line of hunting gear created by a pair of brothers from Greenville.

Tribal Outdoors, a company created in 2007 by Casey Self and Shawn Self, has taken off in the last few years and has released a new line of clothing combining a love of the outdoors with tribal designs that appeal to today's sportsmen.

Their clothing line is being featured in hunting and fishing stores including Dunn's Sporting Goods in Pevely, Mo., and at Buck Stop Archery in Brownstown.

Tribal Outdoors also is in contract dealings with several large stores across the nation that have promised to pick up their clothing line for the fall 2010 season.

Their products have been featured on RNT-TV on the Outdoors Channel, Versus Channel, and Sportsman Channel in about 12 episodes throughout the season.

It all started when Casey Self, who now lives in Overland Park, Kan., began winning duck and goose calling competitions across the nation.

Attention from duck and goose manufacturers soon followed, and it was just a matter of time before he found himself on the Pro-Staff team for Buck Gardner Calls of Memphis, Tenn.

He was promoted to director of video production and then the Midwest Pro-Staff director, which is when he began appearing on hunting television shows and annual waterfowl DVDs. Gardner was looking for a new and catchy design for a call engineered by World Champion Goose Caller Shawn Stahl of Allagoo, Mich.

Turning to Casey Self for ideas on how to appeal to a younger generation, Gardner had little idea of what he would inspire. Casey Self told his boss and new friend Stahl, about his brother, Shawn Self of Greenville, an avid hunter with artistic skills.

The team went through several mock-up designs before settling on a tribal goose created by Shawn

Self. The goose was used on each of Stahl's SS-1 and SS-2 goose calls. With tribal flames shooting from the sides worked in with the SS logo, the design was an instant hit.

It wasn't long before Gardner began manufacturing clothing with the design.

"The hype became so big for this design that Buck Gardner was soon calling up Shawn for another tribal design," Casey Self said.



BOY AND HIS DOG: Casey Self, formerly of Greenville and now of Overland Park, Kan., is pictured with one of his hunting dogs. Self and his brother, Shawn Self, have met with great success in forming a business based in forming designs in hunting apparel.

"This time it was for his newly engineered duck call named the Kryptonic, named after Superman's only weakness."

The Kryptonic logo Shawn Self designed incorporated the Superman logo with a BG in the middle, accompanied by the signature tribal flames shooting out in both directions from the logo.

Both calls have sold by the thousands in store like Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops, and Gardner Mountain. "I was at a hunting store once and overheard a guy trying to decide on a new goose call," Shawn Self said. "The first call he grabbed out of the case to try was the SS-2, and I remember him saying, 'Wow, that's sick.' He purchased the call."

After seeing for himself the popularity of the tribal designs, it began to occur to him that they might have a business in the making. Shawn Self was soon being

contacted by other hunting companies wanting logo work created. In the next few years, he created more than a dozen designs and appeared on the duck-hunting DVD, "Fowl Play, Made in the USA," to talk about the design work he had done for Buck Gardner Calls along with Shawn Stahl.

Casey Self and Shawn Stahl decided to make a move from the Gardner company, and began working for RNT Call Company of Stuttgart, Ark.

They were asked to help revamp the goose call line by designing a new contest goose call.

"Giving up the video production side of the business and going to RNT freed up my spare time quite a bit," Casey Self said. "My wheels were constantly turning with ways to break into the hunting industry in a way that no else had done yet. After seeing the excitement in the waterfowl industry for the tribal designs and turning such a profit for Gardner, it didn't take long for the light bulb to pop on in our heads and see that we could be making more money doing our own garments, and charging more for logo work."

Casey Self was able to create a relationship with Natural Gear Camouflage Company of Little Rock, Ark., and began adding the Tribal Outdoors logos in the winter of 2007. "I went to work on the business side of the house, getting a web site built, setting up our store front and mainly getting the name out there the best that I could."

Shawn Self stayed busy creating new designs and logos for upcoming garments. The new 2010 clothing catalog is available for viewing on their web site, www.tribaloutdoors.com. A lot of people have come together to help these brothers make the dream for their company a reality.

"Many great people in the hunting industry have helped us out by wearing our gear every time they stepped out in a decoy spread to hunt or film for television shows and DVDs," Casey Self said. "Tribal Outdoors gear has been seen on

more than a dozen RNT's television shows along with RNT's DVD 'Fowl Mood', and Shawn Stahl's 'Fowl Pursuit 6 and 7,' 'Waterfowler-TV,' and several other hunting DVDs."

Watching the company grow has been the biggest success for Casey Self.

"We started the company on \$4,000 from a personal savings account," Casey Self said. "We knew it was a big gamble but we were hoping it would pay off. Now we have four world champions wearing our gear on television shows, on the contest stage, along with 65 Pro- and Field-Staff members."

The Pro-Staff members can be attributed to much of the success of the company. "They are basically the face of Tribal Outdoors in all the states," Casey Self said. "They are the guys who get after it on the Internet forums, Facebook, MySpace, DVDs, and TV shows. It's really cool to launch a Pro-Staffer in one city, and then watch sales start to trickle in from that area all because that guy believes in our product."

Trevi's Curry of Greenville is on special accounts manager and handles all orders that come in from the Tribal Outdoors Pro-Staff. She also answers their questions and helps with shipping. Shawn Self's wife, Stephanie, has been involved heavily with the catalog work and attending outdoor shows.

"We also have close friends, Josh Dothager of Vandalia, and Ben Smolen of Ottawa, Kan., who are working hard to complete sales with stores across the nation," Casey Self said.



Running a company with family members can create its own particular set of challenges. "I think the biggest problem is that because we are family we can be very candid with each other, which can be good and bad," said Shawn Self. "That is a quality that also has worked to their advantage many times. "When you come from a family with four brothers, you learn to be tough-skinned and to take each other with a grain of salt," Casey Self said. "When we were kids, we would draw lists to work things out. Now that we are adults and we have all grown up hunting, fishing and heading each other up, we know each other so well that we already know how the other one thinks and how they're going to react to things. Other companies might struggle with this because people walk on egg shells and nothing gets accomplished, so this is a huge strength of our business."

Another challenge for the pair is distance since Casey Self and the business is based in Kansas, whereas Shawn Self and his family still live in Greenville. "We make it work through texting and technology," Casey Self said. "We do what we do best in the winter when we hunt together. When we get out hunting, we talk and come up with ideas. Our dad taught us well – to enjoy every minute in the outdoors that we can."

The future of Tribal Outdoors is hopefully going to include expansion into women's and children's clothing.

"Our main goal is to get into some of the big stores like Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops, and to be able to manufacture garments that have pockets and warmth



TRIBAL DESIGNS: A new take on hunting gear was the basis for the business created by Shawn and Casey Self. Tribal Outdoors has a complete line of clothing for hunters with tribal designs featuring waterfowl, deer, and other wild game.

that serve the hunter better than what's currently out there," Casey Self said. "The sky is the limit at this point."

The Self brothers also have made it a point to stay involved in youth hunting organizations to support the future of the sport.

"We just want to take every opportunity to help kids learn the importance of spending time outdoors instead of being home in front of video games all day long. There is nothing cooler than watching a kid's eyes light up the first time after he or she shoots a duck or a goose," Casey Self said. "It's something we were taught as kids and there is nothing like passing on a lifetime love of the sport to our youth."

Casey Self, 28, graduated from Greenville High School in 1999 and later graduated from the Electronics Institute of Kansas City, Mo., in 2001. He lives in Overland Park, Kan., with his wife, Robyn, and daughter Joelle.

Shawn Self, 35, graduated from Greenville High School in 1993 and served five years in the U.S. Army before residing in Greenville with his wife, Stephanie, and two children, Hunter and Avery.