

Il va là! La Forêt et la Chasse

La Vénerie (la chasse à courre), the hunt on horseback with a pack of dogs, in other words: chasing deer and similar animals, is a controversial form of hunting. Even in France, where, in the countryside, during the winter, hunting is part of everyday life. In Great-Britain, this form of hunting has been banned since 2005, following the hunting act of 2004. In Belgium and Germany, it was abolished in 1995. French people involved in this form of hunting now fear their country will be next.

By leaving out footage that could be used as ammunition for those who want this form of hunting to be abolished, we were allowed to follow 'la chasse à courre' for stag and everything around it in the state forest of Châteauroux, over a period of three years.

We were told that we could film anything, but were asked to leave out the actual kill in the editing, thereby leaving that aspect to the imagination of the viewer. We thought it was more important to show this activity with all its aspects, without showing footage of the actual kill, because those are the things that can be found on the internet anyway, often published by those who are opposed to the hunt.

That's how we were able to film this centuries-old tradition with all its rituals - both 'on stage' and behind the scenes, and also to get the people involved to speak about it on camera.

Featured in the documentary is the Crublier de Fougères family, who lives in the 'Château de Fougères' at the edge of the forest. They've been living there for about six centuries.

Mr. François-Xavier de Fougères is the master of 'l'Equipage Boisshot-Bas-Berry', the squad that hunts for stags twice a week, from mid-September until the first of April.

We show this form of hunting in the context of all that is going on in the forest during the hunting season, which of course also includes the hunt with rifles, twice a week.

This is a film about rites and traditions. A film about everyday life in la Forêt Domaniale de Châteauroux, in the middle of France.
A fascinating subject, whether you like it or not.