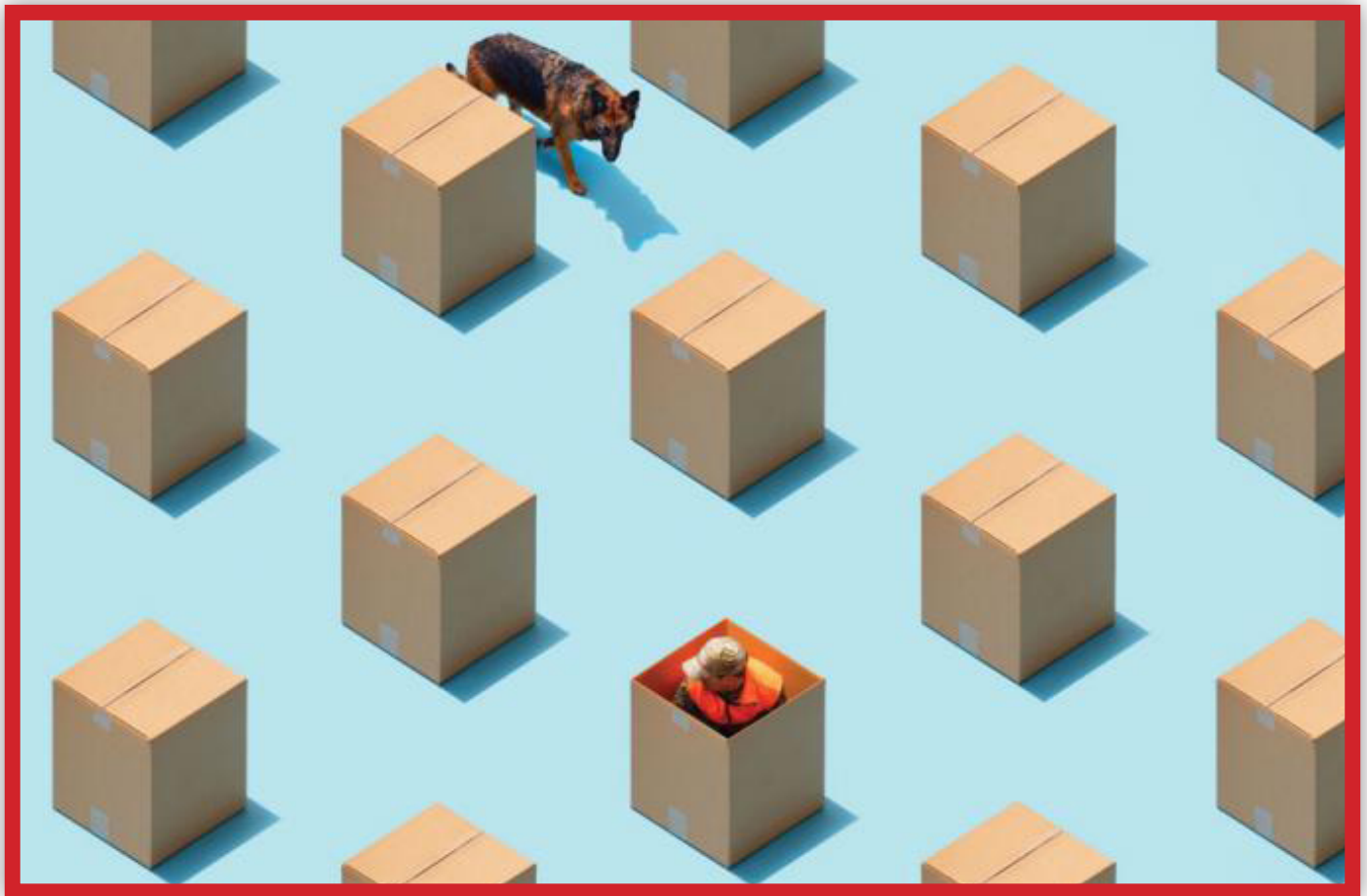




Kill odors **BEFORE** you step into the field.



Our ScentPURGE products are designed for hunters to create small "clean room" areas before they go into the field to hunt.

YOU SMELL THAT?

Ozone scent control vs. the nose of a drug-sniffing dog

By Scott Bestul

You've had your head in the clouds if you've missed the de-scenting hype of companies selling ozone-generating products. Ozone, they claim, contains an extra oxygen molecule that attaches itself to other molecules—say, b.o. molecules—and changes their structure. I'm eager to examine any deer hunting trend and, if necessary, flip it on its head. So I enlisted Chance, a highly trained police dog, to test ozone's effectiveness. I've watched Chance's nose zip through every sort of no-scent solution and was fully prepared for an ozone rout. But that's not exactly what I got.

As a refresher: Our scent tests* are set up just like the training exercises used by K-9 officers. In the box test, police dogs are taught to find a "bad guy" hiding in one of six square boxes, spaced evenly across a large field. First, I sat in each box for a full minute, leaving behind a trace of human scent. Then it was up to Chance to find the member of my test team (hunting buddies Bob Borowiak, Tony Houdek, and Tom VanDoorn; and my father, Marv) who had climbed into one of the boxes. To start each trial, the handler took Chance off the leash, then ordered: "Find him!" At this command, I started my stopwatch and timed how long it took Chance to bust the hunter.

TEST NO. 1

SETUP As a control test, Houdek jumped in a box, wearing street clothes.

RESULT Chance barked at his box after only 14 seconds.

ANALYSIS Dogs performing this drill are marked down if they bark at the wrong box, so it's not unusual for them to check every one—even if they get a strong whiff at one of the first. Chance's head snapped around as soon as he passed Houdek's box, but he checked every box before racing back. Had he reacted immediately to that first scent (as a whitetail would have), Chance could have cut this time in half.

TEST NO. 2

SETUP To assess how a classic scent-control method would fare, VanDoorn, an expert whitetail hunter who swears by baking soda, took a shower in no-scent soap mixed with soda and then dressed in clothes washed in a similar combination, plus powdered with soda. He then rubbed more of it in his hair, on his socks, and in his boots.

RESULT Chance found VanDoorn in 19 seconds.

ANALYSIS Chance showed no noticeable reaction the first time he ran past VanDoorn, and he checked all six boxes. Even though VanDoorn's trusted in-the-field system cheated Chance's nose for a few extra seconds, the difference wasn't pronounced. I was a little surprised by this, given VanDoorn's success at fooling deer—but not as surprised as VanDoorn.

TEST NO. 3

SETUP Before the test, my dad took a no-scent shower and placed a ScentPurge 50, an ozone-generating unit designed to infuse clothing with ozone (whitetailr.com), into a plastic tub that held his hat, boots, and two layers of camo clothing for 30 minutes. Dad dressed in these treated clothes just before entering the box.

RESULT Chance needed 42 seconds to find my dad.

ANALYSIS The dog ran the entire course twice before marking Dad's location. Though he did a slight head bob toward the correct box on the first lap, it was clear that the smell of ozone was confusing Chance. This was one of the most dramatic delays of Chance's success in all the years we've conducted these tests.

Sniff Test A dog has about 200 million olfactory receptors; a deer, 297 million



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TEST NO. 4

SETUP Borowiak took a no-scent shower and dressed in hunting clothes that he'd washed in no-scent soap. He carried an Ozonics unit (ozonics hunting.com) meant for mounting near a treestand or in a blind, ran it for a minute inside the box before the test began, and left it on throughout.

RESULT It took Chance 50 seconds to find Borowiak.

ANALYSIS

Even the handler was stunned at how long it took Chance to find Bob. Again, the dog ran two full laps before choosing the right box, and his first bark was tentative—like a guess. This was the most shocking result in four years of testing. We'd put Borowiak's other no-scent regimens under Chance's scrutiny before, and the dog had found Bob almost immediately. Yet the addition of ozone confused that nose for nearly one minute, which amazed everyone.

Nothing—not even ozone—will completely cover human odor. But if you can muddy the olfactory water for 50 seconds, that's plenty of time for you to get a shot at a monster buck.