

Hunting with hounds

Hunting with hounds “on foot or on horseback” is a tradition that remains very much alive, and is even gaining in popularity. It takes place on numerous hound hunting estates in France.



Hunting with hounds (or vènerie) is an art and a skill that has been passionately passed down the generations for almost 600 years. Today, there are more than 470 hunting packs, found pretty much all over France.

Large games animals such as red deer, roe deer and wild boar are hunted on horseback, while smaller animals such as hares, foxes and rabbits are tracked on foot.

Most hound hunting estates are located in the center, northeast and northwest of France. There are, however, estates of this kind in Gironde, Vendée and Charente.

The best opportunities

Hound hunting sales opportunities are frequently found in **western France**. Ile-et-Vilaine, Indre-et-Loire and the Anjou and Touraine forests, Sarthe, Côtes d'Armor, Eure-et-Loir with the Senonches and Rambouillet forests, Calvados and the Brotonne forests, Orne and the Ecouves forest, and Eure with Lyons forest, all boast hound hunting estates

There is a very **vibrant market for hound hunting estates in Oise and the Compiègne sector, Yvelines (Rambouillet) and Aisne** with, for example the large forest estates of Chambord and Villers Cotteret. There are also opportunities in Loiret (Orléans forest) and Loir-et-Cher.

You can also acquire some magnificent hound hunting estates in **Central France**, especially in Allier near the Tronçais forest. Further east, in Nièvre, Saône-et-Loire and Ain, there are quite a few hound hunting estates too.

A TYPICAL DAY HUNTING WITH HOUNDS



In the morning, the hunting horns and other brass instruments ring out to mark the start of the hunt, with the *â€šlimers* (or scenthounds) held on leashes by a handler who identifies the trail of an animal and attempts to isolate it, without it running away.

The handler comes back and reports to the huntsmen in the lodge. The hunting horn sounds to signal the start of the chase, and the huntsmen set off on horseback, with their hounds running beside them.

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The huntsmen and dogs guide one another, the first drawing on their knowledge of the estate and the hounds using their noses!

The hunted animal is forced to flee, or is put to flight, as we say. Each of the game animal's maneuvers is indicated by a different sound of the horn, keeping everyone informed on how the hunt is going.

Finally the animal is brought to bay for **the kill**. The animal is **dispatched**, or put to death by one of the huntsmen. This form of hunting is governed by an age-old set of codes, which you need to learn by heart!

Economic view

It is rare to find a hound hunting estate on sale in France. Most hound hunting estates are public land. You are most likely to find what you are looking for in Sologne.

Prices remain high in these areas. The 'cost of entry' is about €10,000/hectare for a decent hunt. You need sound finances if you want to enjoy this kind of hunting on your own land!

Forêt Investissement is an agency specialized in forest valuations and hunting estate transactions. Get in touch to learn more about opportunities for buying a forest estate.