

## Filson

[filson.com](http://filson.com)  
800-624-0201

### Sportsman Utility Bag – \$450

- U-shaped top zipper allows easy access to gear
- Bridle leather handles and shoulder strap
- Exterior full-length zippered pockets with interior slot pockets
- 16½”L x 11½”W x 8”H

We gave Filson’s Sportsman Utility Bag an extended workout last fall and can report it performs admirably in any role assigned to it. Filson mentions it can be used as a blind bag, field bag, shooting bag, camera bag or travel bag. Its uses are limited only by your imagination.

The Sportsman Utility Bag is a little bigger in every direction than a traditional gym bag, plus it has both zippered and stow pockets on the exterior. This means it can also function as a carry-on bag on an airline flight with plenty of room for a couple of days’ worth of clothes and toiletries. It’s perfect for hunters on road trips who don’t relish dragging their huge suitcases into motels each night. It’ll hold sleepwear, a change of underwear and socks, perhaps some casual clothes for dinner, toiletries and electronics so you can take everything you need in one trip from your vehicle to your room.

We used it mainly as a tote for our electronics – both human and canine – and photography gear. The bag’s size is great because it’s just a *little bit* larger than one usually needs; that means when you inevitably have to add more items, the bag can handle them and still will zip shut easily.

The bag is built of Filson’s traditional water-repellent, abrasion-resistant rugged twill that protects contents from wind, rain and snow. In addition to all the pockets for specialty items, the bag features



internal dividers that can keep things separated. If you need more room, you can simply remove the dividers to create one big, open area. The adjustable strap allows shoulder or cross-body

messenger carrying and can be removed when you want to carry it by hand.

The Filson Sportsman Utility Bag immediately earned a favorable review and a spot on our “travel team.”

## *The Sporting Art of Eldridge Hardie: Paintings of Upland Hunting, Angling, and Waterfowling*

by Eldridge Hardie

Stackpole Books  
[stackpolebooks.com](http://stackpolebooks.com)

192 pages

ISBN 978-0-8117-3839-2

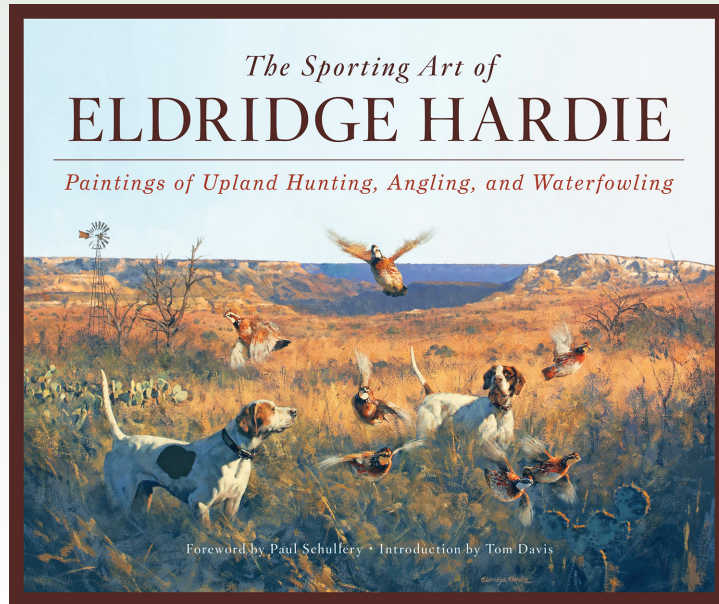
– \$75

It’s one of those things that you don’t realize until you do; and once you do, you can’t ignore it. Fortunately, for the reader of this book, Eldridge Hardie mentions it a couple of times, so it becomes sealed in one’s awareness. If you’ve ever wondered why Hardie’s paintings draw you in so deeply, it’s a result of the way he perceives his paintings. In many of them, he says, he focuses on creating the authentic-looking scenic backgrounds and then

adds uplands birds, waterfowl or fish. And that’s why it’s so easy to get lost in one of his paintings, to spend more time than normal just gazing at it and dreaming. The action in the foreground captures your attention. The beauty and appeal of the background embrace it for a while.

As an example, consider what Tom Davis writes in the introduction to the book:

“A print of one of these paintings, depicting brook trout in a classic North Country setting, hangs on the wall of a remote Wisconsin cabin where I’ve spent some of the happiest days of my life. And while I’m pretty sure Hardie’s never fished any of the wild, moodily enchanting streams that rise in that forgotten corner of the world, I know a good half a dozen there that *could* be the one he painted. The image rings true in every detail, which I think is one of the



cornerstones of his work’s appeal whatever the subject matter may be.”

That’s not to say he just blows off the subject matter in the foreground.

Hardie says, “I’m essentially a landscape painter. But because I’m painting landscapes with a sporting narrative, the figures and the action have to be right. I enjoy that challenge and the satisfaction that comes from knowing I have gotten it right.”


For example, in an effort to get things right when commissioned to paint a client’s dog, he consulted books on animal anatomy. Davis reports that Hardie had “dozens if not hundreds of pencil drawings he’d done, literally from the skeletal level up, of the individual ‘pieces’ of canine anatomy. . . . Many of the drawings were accompanied by notes Hardie had written as reminders to himself . . .”

Fortunately for the reader, some of the pages in the book include many, many samples of such initial sketches, and not only of dogs. Pages of preliminary studies and notations from the artist’s workbooks are reproduced side by side with several of the paintings and offer a look into the artist’s creative process.

The book’s 150 paintings represent Hardie’s lifework with a variety of sporting scenes – Wisconsin grouse hunts, Atlantic salmon camps, southern quail plantations, angling waters in Tierra del Fuego and Scotland, waterfowling on the Santee Marsh and Chesapeake Bay, fly fishing the Bahama Flats and many trout rivers of the West. In descriptive text, he recalls these times and the paintings that capture them.

Another remarkable quality of Hardie’s work the book illustrates is how he slips so effortlessly and effectively between watercolor and oil painting. And that’s by design.

He says, “I’ve kept my hand in both mediums. I like to play with a full deck and not limit myself to one or another. Some subjects lend themselves more to watercolors, some more to oils, but there’s no hard and fast rule about that. People always talk about the immediacy and spontaneity of watercolor, but you can achieve those same effects with oils if you know what you’re doing.”

This book is coffee table-sized and is definitely one you’ll want to keep on display. The images are so engaging, it’s impossible to just casually flip from one to the next. 



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