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AUSTRALIAN

December 2019

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Shooter

THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS

TAHR TREK

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Talbot on Target: Long Range Precision

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Our December cover
Tahr trek.

NEXT ISSUE



The legendary .308 Winchester calibre along with the .223 Remington are arguably the two most popular calibres for hunting pest and game species in Australia. Their availability in a wide range of makes and models and easily accessible factory ammunition covering a broad

range of bullet weights make them a natural choice for the hunter buying that first centrefire hunting rifle. But with so many choices it's hard to decide what make and model best suits your needs. In our February edition, Con Kapralos takes a look at four contenders.

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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Where did the year go?

Here we are at the end of another year frantically looking back wondering where the time went, attempting to catalogue what has happened throughout that period and at the same instance trying to plan and peer forward to the year ahead.

The tragedy of the Christchurch murders has weighed heavily on us all and we are still working closely with our New Zealand cousins in trying to bring some sense to the debate. We can see much of the same political, self-serving rhetoric and ineffective firearms legislation strategies we have experienced over the past 20-odd years here in Australia, only serving to unfairly restrict and alienate legitimate firearms owners who should be respected as being among the most upstanding community members in the country.

We have expanded our international relationships with an agreement between SSAA, COLFO (Council of Licenced Firearms Owners, New Zealand) and SAGHCA (South African Game Hunters and Conservation Association) to have a Memorandum of Understanding to work together in cooperation wherever possible. To build on our common interests and explore new opportunities we are looking forward to a face-to-face meeting in the New Year that will be an exciting time for the three Associations.

More recently, the SSAA SHOT Expo in Melbourne was another outstanding success. Thanks must go to host SSAA Victoria staff and volunteers, SSAA National staff and volunteers, our major partners Winchester Australia, Swarovski Optik, Polaris and Outdoor Sporting Agencies and our Expo organiser Michael Allendorf and his team from Level Up Events. For those who missed the Expo this year, you will have a chance to share the excitement in Sydney in June 2020.

It was pleasing to welcome a number of visiting politicians who took the time and showed a genuine interest to come and chat and find out first-hand what a great fun, family sport we enjoy. Of course, the unbe-

lievably energetic Senator Bridget McKenzie was there for the whole weekend interacting and offering her unparalleled support as always. The various SSAA websites and Facebook pages have reports, interviews and updates for an array of interests.

Following straight on from the Melbourne Expo was the launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Shooting group of Federal Parliamentarians. An initiative driven again by Senator McKenzie, this event was held in Parliament House in Canberra and is co-chaired by Senator McKenzie and the Hon Rob Mitchell MP. Of course, the SSAA PR and lobbying teams attended and it was a great opportunity to catch up again with World Cup shotgun shooters Penny Smith and James Willett who were guests of honour, again presenting the shooting sports in the best possible light.

Just these few highlights do not really do justice to the breadth of issues covered over the past year and looking forward there are several initiatives already being considered for implementation and improvement in the New Year, so watch this space.

SSAA's lobbying efforts never cease and our integrity and strength of numbers ensure we gain the ear of authorities and legislators and are taken seriously when we do speak. To maintain our collective influence we need you to help us to help you so renew your membership promptly, encourage a mate to join and look to see if you can sponsor a junior. There is no better value for money membership on offer.

I trust everyone has a great Christmas or end of year break however you see it and enjoy a prosperous New Year in 2020. Enjoy your shooting.

G. E. Jones

Geoff Jones

SSAA National President



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Thank you, Mr Ballistics

I READ OF Ian Thompson's retirement from his Basic Ballistics column with much sadness. I thoroughly enjoyed his column over the years and from his obviously sharp intellect and total knowledge of the subject I was surprised to learn he's 86.

His column was always well written and endlessly fascinating and with my rudimentary grasp of ballistics, the 'Basic' prefix encouraged me to read on. I still recall several articles which helped me understand the complexities that happen when I pull a trigger and the fact he has written on the subject for so long is testament to Ian's unplumbable depths! Please pass my gratitude to Ian for a valuable contribution to a fantastic publication.

Andrew Bennett, via email

Solution to Lee loader issue

A FURTHER WORD of advice for Chris Parris on his Top Shots question (*Shooter*, September 2019) about his Lee handloader. There's no need to replace this kit with an expensive press and dies if the quantities of ammo you load are not vast. I've used such a Lee unit for years and added two improvements to this system.

Firstly I set up my de-primer punch in a drill press to speed up this operation. Secondly I don't use the priming punch

since, yes, you get the occasional cap discharge and it doesn't give fine control. Instead I bought a Lee Auto Primer which is hand-held, lever operated and comes with a flat plastic magazine to hold the primers, again speeding up the operation.

The proper use of this gadget involves four rotations of each case in the shell holder while each time firmly operating the seating lever for a very even primer seating. This improves ammunition accuracy according to a former well-known reloading guru for *Shooter*, Ross Williams, who specialised in benchrest competition.

Save yourself a lot of dollars by getting a Lee hand primer tool and forget the press. You don't need to full-length resize your own new-fired cases for use in the same rifle, the Lee Loader resizes only the necks thereby increasing case life as a bonus. Using fire-formed cases rather than continually resized ones is another key to improved accuracy of handloaded ammunition.

Dr Matt Draisma, via email

Feeling a bit left out

I'M INTERESTED IN buying a centrefire rifle as advertised in the pages of your excellent magazine from time to time. Problem is they're all configured in right-hand action. I bought a Tikka TX3 left-hander in .223 and added a bipod, pistol grip and good scope and am now able to keep my

right hand firmly attached to the grip and trigger, left hand cycling the action with my eye remaining fixed on the target ready for the next shot.

To me it makes sense to have this configuration as it follows my training on Bren for years in the Citizen Military Forces and is a most comfortable way to bring down game at distances. I've been in touch with all the local suppliers and manufacturers but to no avail. No left-handers in 6.5 Creedmoor etc with pistol grip as factory built. I'm peeved.

Can I suggest a campaign of agitation or friendly nudging as more than 10 per cent of the world is left-handed anyway. It wouldn't hurt to ask.

Mike Smith, via email

Skills worth tapping into

IN THE LETTERS pages of your May edition, Mike Slattery suggested forming a search and rescue group for people who get lost in the bush. What a great idea. In Victoria this is most applicable as hunting can take place where bush walkers can and do get lost.

Fit and active hunters having bush skills and the ability to navigate without a marked path would be a useful resource to be tapped into in times of need.

Greg Kent, Qld



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q Is my firearm covered when being transported and what can I do to cover myself when it comes to transporting firearms in general?

Steve, Vic

A The SSAA Members' Firearms Insurance does extend to cover your firearm while in transit but it must be accompanied by you, the insured. The insurance does not extend to cover the firearm if it's being transported from dealer to

dealer. My advice would be to discuss what insurance options the dealer has in place to cover goods they have when shipping firearms around Australia.

I also recommend arranging insurance through Australia Post and you should contact the firearms registry in your state for further information. Finally, contact us at SSAA General Insurance Brokers as we can take your details and forward them to various underwriters for their terms and conditions, including premium. It's important to

note that with transit insurance the policy must be in place and paid for before transportation begins.

If you have further questions or would like a quote for any insurance needs, visit our website at ssaaib.com.au or call us on 08 8332 0281.



Just flagging this

IT'S A FEW years since I've attended a range but I assume red and green flags are still in use. I'm guessing I'm not the only one who's seen the green flag go up and thought "beauty, I'm good to shoot". Obviously wrong, it means the range is safe to walk on but the very fact I have to think about this is a concern.

Red flag means danger: Stop. But does it mean stop shooting or stop walking? That depends on your perspective. Even the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is considering reversing the colour of stop/start buttons so this is a bigger issue than it might first appear.

Perhaps two colours - black for range closed, yellow for range open - might be worth considering to avoid the stop/go confusion. Or would that just lead to more confusion?

Nigel Norton, via email

Birds tackling toad menace

TO ADD TO what Gavin Adams said about white-tailed rats killing cane toads (*Shooter*, April 2019), my son and I worked on a property near Bowen in north Queensland and one morning as we were riding out we spotted two crows flying out of a dry creek.

We investigated and found a large toad, still alive, on its back that had been picked between its front legs and down over its stomach area, so the crows would have to

take credit for this one. We've also seen more than a dozen medium-sized toads pinned by their backs on a barbed wire fence with their guts taken out, which suggest butcherbirds are playing their part in tackling these pests too.

Doug Hoffmann, Qld

A sport for all ages



I THOUGHT I'D share the above photograph with you - it's my great-granddaughter and her dad reading *Australian Shooter*. We get a lot of enjoyment from the magazine so thank you.

Royston Downs, via email

Sterling effort appreciated

WHEN MYSELF, MY brother-in-law and a mate turned up at the Belmont range looking for a bit of clay target action, the clay thrower wasn't functioning properly. Our day could have been over there and then but the range officers on duty put in an iron dog performance to make sure they got it working for us and that we took away memories we'll have for a long time. It was an awesome shoot and lesser individuals could have thrown up an 'Out of Order' sign

and killed our day. They didn't. Thank you - the SSAA is awesome.

Ken Bunker, Jason Runde, Scott West

Online map service 'flawed'

TO FOLLOW UP on David Porter's letter on the new Victorian Game Management Authority online hunting maps (*Shooter*, September 2019), I also find the maps very handy but there's one aspect of them all deer hunters should be aware of. There are large areas of State forest shown as being under licence for grazing and these maps clearly show that hunters require permission from the grazing licence holder.

On repeated enquires to GMA I'm yet to receive an answer on how hunters can obtain contact details for grazing licence holders to actually seek permission to hunt. GMA appear to be silent on this and are effectively locking out hunters from huge areas of public land in eastern Victoria.

Mick Beckers, via email

Jumbunna motivation

COULD YOU PLEASE let John Dunn know I've been very much enjoying his Jumbunna column in *Australian Shooter*. In particular, I found his July 2019 column 'As someone once said: Enjoy every sandwich' both heartfelt and motivating. I look forward to reading more from John.

Alex Wisbey, via email

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Victoria opens up kangaroo harvesting

In October, the Victorian Government announced the start of a permanent kangaroo harvesting program, the aim being to better manage populations across the state and support the kangaroo pet food industry. It replaces a kangaroo pet food trial program which had been running for five years.

The program allows accredited shooters to harvest kangaroos where they can remove carcasses to be processed offsite for pet food by licensed businesses, and will make it easier for farmers in terms of mitigating productivity loss and asset damage caused by overabundant kangaroos as well as minimising the waste of culled animal carcasses. The permanent program will support jobs in regional communities now and into the future.

The kangaroo harvesting program will be administered by the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions with strict safeguards in place to ensure all harvesting is carried out in a sustainable way - in a manner that animal welfare standards are met - and that local farmers' livelihoods are protected.

To ensure sustainability of harvested kangaroo populations the program has introduced seven designated harvest zones covering areas of Victoria which currently have significant kangaroo numbers. Each zone has an allocated number of animals available for harvest and accredited shooters holding tags will be the only ones allowed to harvest them.

The maximum harvest levels for each zone will be set by the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, these levels being sustainable and updated annually depending on changes in kangaroo numbers determined by a statewide population survey.

Those looking to participate must become registered harvesters via authorisation by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. Applications will be assessed and potential harvesters notified as to whether or not they're successful or further information or competencies are required. The program assists



The new kangaroo management zones.

landholder who wish to take part to make contact with registered harvesters.

The harvester will then be paid by the pet food processor upon delivery of carcasses to them, not the landholder, and non-compliance with any of the program's conditions will be investigated and anyone acting outside the conditions laid out on their authorisations may face suspension and significant penalties.

If landholders don't wish to opt into the program but want overabundant kangaroos on their property reduced, they can still obtain approval to do so through the authority to control wildlife (ATCW) program. Applying for ATCW will enable landholders to control kangaroos themselves or use others on their behalf, such as members of the SSAA Famer Assist program.



Send questions to: wildlife@ssaa.org.au



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Savage Arms so rich in history

Founded by Arthur W. Savage in 1894, Savage Arms Company joins the likes of Winchester and Marlin as one of the few firearms manufacturers who've been around for more than 100 years. Originally based in Utica, New York, Savage made a range of pistols, rimfire and centrefire rifles, shotguns and ammunition and during this period bought out or amalgamated with several other firearms manufacturers.

In collaboration with the Colt Manufacturing Company, Savage produced its Model 1892 rifle to compete for the US Army contract with a replacement for the Springfield Model 1873 Trapdoor rifle. Sadly they didn't win the contract so that model never went into production. Soon after though, it further developed the 1892 into the Model 1895 and, in .30-40 Krag, won the 1896 competition for the New York National Guard contract, beating Winchester's Model 1895 submission. Unfortunately after some political wrangling the contract was cancelled and the National Guard were equipped with the then-obsolete single-shot Springfield Trapdoor.

The company's next offering was the Savage Model 1899 which, due to its popularity, soon became known simply as the Model 99. A firearm ahead of its time, unlike the Winchester and Marlin lever-actioned rifles which used external ham-

mers and had tube magazines, the Savage was designed with a hammerless action and built-in rotary magazine.

This rotating magazine design enabled spitzer-type projectiles to be used in the Model 99, unlike its competitors which could only use flat-pointed cartridges for safety reasons in their tube magazines. The rotary magazine held five cartridges with another in the breech, the fired cartridge case ejected out the side at an angle, something which was to prove very handy years later when telescopic sights became popular. It's also a credit to its original design that in 1998, when production of the Model 99 ceased, more than a million had been sold.

The Model 99's action was exceptionally strong and the first cartridge offered was the .303 Savage which had similar ballistics to the popular Winchester .30-30. Next came the .22 High Power, a small calibre cartridge designed by Charles Newton which pushed a 70gr projectile at about 2800fps, outstanding for the time and to its credit still popular in Europe where it's called the 5.6x52R.

Soon after the Savage .250-3000 was produced, the first commercially manufactured cartridge with a velocity of 3000fps was achieved by using an 87gr projectile. Next cartridge along was the .300 Savage, probably the most popular short action

.30 calibre deer cartridge of all time, and the basis many years later for the now extremely popular 7.62mm NATO/.308 Winchester cartridge.

Savage still manufactures a large range of firearms including many rimfire cartridge models for not only .22 rimfire ammunition but for the .22 WMR and .17 HMR cartridges. Models are available in both bolt-action and self-loading and come in a multitude of stock configurations, with barrel type and length choices available. They're also one of the few manufacturers left who market combination guns, their Model 42 Takedown having both a rifle and shotgun barrel makes them ideal for field hunting.

Savage also produces a centrefire bolt-action repeating rifle - the Model 110 - designed by Nicholas L. Brewer, which has been in continuous production since 1958. Now with the closing in 2007 of Winchester's New Haven facility, it has overtaken their Model 70 as the oldest continuously manufactured bolt-action rifle in America.





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Look and listen - it could save your life

In my view it never hurts to be reminded of the actions needed in an emergency. I caught up recently with Allan Burnett who was presenting his very authoritative review of reptile awareness at a local field day. While his array of healthy and good-looking reptiles (as much as they can be) was as impressive as they've always been, his good-humoured and informative demonstrations reinforced the actions that must be taken if snakes are encountered in the scrub.

Of course the main thing to do is avoid an encounter if you can as prevention is always better than cure, but it's important to understand the 'wrap and immobilise' method of preventing envenomation from becoming a major emergency.

What's most important is having an elastic crepe bandage immediately available so it can be applied directly to the bite area and bound up the limb to immobilise it as soon as possible. It's encouraging to know that since this method of initial treatment has been introduced there hasn't been a fatality in any instance where this first aid method has been used. Naturally, attendance at a hospital or medical centre is part of the ongoing management of envenomation by any of our bush nasties, but correct first aid is the start of the process.

I'll never forget a visit by a coastal taipan to my mate and I crouching under a very



Close encounter: A coastal taipan.

small shrub while surveying game beside the Burdekin River not far from Charters Towers in Queensland. It wasn't much more than a metre long and was determined not to deviate from its chosen track, which was right between two statue-like hunters who never moved a muscle as it flicked its forked tongue in and out a few times before continuing straight between us.

We took this as evidence it was turned off eating by the stench of two hulking giants who smelled of campfire smoke after a few days living under canvas in the bush. Or perhaps it was like Allan said - it wasn't going to waste a good bite on something it couldn't eat! We both had snake-bite bandages with us but were pleased not to have to use them. The season of adequate hydration and awareness of the potential for reptile encounters is now upon us so keep your water intake up and your eyes peeled.

I received another timely reminder from

reader Alain Remont who wrote in a letter to the editor (*Shooter*, October 2019) that hand-held two-way radios form a useful communication addition to a hunter's safety equipment. I must confess to leaving out this most useful item from the list of suggested kit I made earlier in the year.

It's surprising how relatively inexpensive small hand-held units have become and now they can be charged in a number of ways, not just from 240 volt power, and their usefulness certainly outweighs the inconvenience of carrying one more item on your belt or on the outside of your day pack.

While the models we use are not equipped with them, it's possible to find models of a common brand with earphones, meaning that during a tense moment in the stalk, game is not alerted to your presence by a blaring voice from the other side of the creek being broadcast from your unit. But to advise others in the party of a difficult or dangerous situation, there's nothing like good radio contact. Thanks for the reminder Alain.



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Clay Target Q&A

WITH RUSSELL MARK

Q I'm curious as to why all over-and-under shotguns fire the bottom barrel first. To my way of thinking the top barrel is closer to your eye so using this first would make the firearm more accurate. Can you explain why this is the case?

Sam Grech, NSW

A The answer lies within the laws of physics more so than accuracy. You'll find over-and-under barrels are designed to shoot pretty much in the same place or same point of aim at around 25m so it really is irrelevant which barrel you use first in relation to accuracy.

The higher the barrel lies above a firearm's central balance point the greater the chance the barrel will have of flipping up when the shot is fired. The bottom barrel is more in line with the central balance point of your firearm which you'll find is generally located around the hinge pin that connects the barrels to the gun's mechanism. By firing the bottom barrel first the recoil will be 'perceived' to be softer as it's being projected in a straight line back through the mechanism of the shotgun.

If you exaggerated having the top barrel of your shotgun another 30cms above the bottom barrel then muzzle flip in this instance would be far greater as the central balance point of the gun would be way below the point where the shot leaves the

barrel, causing the barrel to move upwards more.

You'll notice I use the word perceived instead of actual when explaining this as the amount of mathematical recoil is exactly the same through both barrels, it will just feel softer on your shoulder and face when being forced back parallel through the centre of the shotgun.

There are of course circumstances where it can be advantageous to fire the top barrel first if your barrels are constricted with a tighter choke in the top tube as opposed to the bottom. If shooting at targets or game that's being driven towards you (so the first shot is further away) I'd advise using the top barrel first if you have the luxury of a barrel selector that gives you this option.

If your shotgun has adjustable chokes and this is the type of target you'll be consistently shooting at, I suggest changing your chokes around and once again shooting the bottom barrel first for the simple reason of perceived recoil and barrel control. The less muzzle flip you have on the first shot will only help your accuracy, not to mention comfort, for the second.

Q I'm reasonably new to Sporting Clays but one thing I've noticed is how often some of the better shooters complain to and even bully referees when they miss. On many occasions I see them given the

chance to re-shoot targets that should be scored as 'lost'. Is this a culture in the sport and what should I do?

(Name and address supplied)

A I wouldn't say bullying and cheating is a 'culture' in any of the shooting sports and without being there and knowing all the facts I wouldn't like to comment specifically. Independent referees is a possible solution but this needs manpower and money to sustain and in a sport where the culture really is about honesty, like golf, this shouldn't be needed. I wouldn't be truthful if I said your case was isolated, sadly it isn't. At a recent World Sporting competition a participant was disqualified for tampering with a scoresheet. I suggest you make the officials aware of the situation so if there's a consistent pattern of complaints appearing against a group of shooters, action can be taken.



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• John Dunn • Paul Miller • Greg Riemer • Geoff Smith • Barry Wilmot • Rod Pascoe

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Q Could you assist with identification of a shotgun handed down to me by my grandfather. It's a C.G. Bonehill, Birmingham, Belmont - interchangeable with very few marks and in extremely good condition.

Mick Robinson, via email

A Christopher George Bonehill was born in Birmingham in 1831 and became indentured to a Mr Aston as a gunmaker. By 1851, at just 20 years of age, he had established his own business, moving several times before settling on a factory at Belmont Row. War was kind to him as he was successfully contracted to make thousands of military rifles.

By the late 1870s the UK government established its own weapons factory at Enfield, cutting private suppliers out, so in 1877 Bonehill moved into making double-barrelled shotguns and was one of the first in Birmingham to use machinery in place of hand bench work. In 1878 he patented the 'interchangeable' presumably as parts could be interchanged, continued making improvements and by 1887 the 'Belmont Interchangeable' was released. This is the same model as yours.

In a curious twist of fate US President William McKinley, a staunch Republican, introduced the Tariff Protection Act of 1890, forcing a 35 per cent loading plus \$6 each on guns imported into the US to protect American manufacturers (McKinley was assassinated in 1901).

The tariff effectively wrecked Bonehill's US market so they changed direction and began making rifles, importantly the 'Britannia' air rifle series. Christopher died on January 14, 1920 at the age of 89 having only retired from his business the previous July. He was described at the time as "the father of Birmingham's gunmakers". The firm closed in 1962.

Your gun is valuable, in fact any C.G. Bonehill products are highly collectable, though most old hammer shotguns are virtually worthless unless in good fireable condition. It's difficult to date Bonehill guns



as all production records were apparently lost, but from the supplied photos it seems your gun wasn't nitro proofed so would likely have been made between 1890-1900 or thereabouts - I wouldn't attempt to fire it! Yours would probably sell for between \$250 and \$600 depending on condition.

With thanks to *Birmingham Gunmakers* by Douglas Tate, Safari Press, California 1997.

Geoff Smith

Q I have a Beretta S55 12-gauge shotgun with no screw-in chokes and barrels marked 'F over M'. Can I safely use slugs/solids in the bottom barrel marked M for modified?

Peter Lytwynenko, via email

A Your question is very timely as I've just received some Federal Power-Shok solid slug 12-gauge loads from importers Nioa in Queensland as part of a future 'shotgun shells for hunting' review for *Australian Hunter*. Ken Stevens, national marketing manager at Nioa, tells me these slugs can

be fired through any choke but are usually more accurate when fired from open chokes like cylinder or skeet.

My limited use of these shotgun shells in the past with solid slugs has been through skeet and quarter chokes. They're dynamic on pigs at close range and I believe their use on deer is equally effective subject to accurate placement which means very close range shooting.

These Federal loads I'm testing are loaded with a rifled slug that weighs 28 grams or 1 ounce and are supposed to start out at 1610 feet per second. They sound awesome and it will be interesting to see if there's any difference in recoil firing a 1-ounce solid slug compared to a 1-ounce load of 7.5 or 8 shot.

I think you'll be fine with the bottom barrel in your Beretta S55 but I remember those Berettas being fairly lightweight therefore they don't soak up recoil like a heavier shotgun but they are very portable and quick to handle. Why not buy a packet or two of these five-per-box slugs and shoot at a paper or cardboard target, draw a black circle the size of a clay target from 25 and 50 yards and see how they go in your modified choke. You could also try your full choke but I'd stick with the modified.

Check out YouTube for info on safety with solid slugs and what performance you can expect. As these slugs are rifled they should be reasonably accurate with air resistance causing them to spin as opposed to rifling imparting spin to a smooth bullet in a conventional rifle barrel. I'm looking forward to giving them a go and reporting back to readers who are keen on close range pig or deer shooting.

Paul Miller

Q I recently bought a Ruger revolver in .45 Colt (aka 45 Long Colt). I currently reload all my handgun and rifle loads including .45ACP for my 1911, so have a wealth of experience with reloading different calibres.

My question is: Can I use the .45ACP



(.454") projectiles with the 45 Colt - with new 45 Colt brass of course. Doing a little research online there seems to be a lot of confusing information. I'm hoping to shed some light on this conundrum from folks who load .45 Colt for revolver and what projectiles and recipes they use.

Paul Featherstonhaugh, Qld

A I understand your frustration in trying to obtain the right information. Having opinions thrown at you from all sides, especially online forums, I find generally unhelpful. I'm not currently loading either .45ACP or .45 Colt however my advice to you would be the same even if I was. What I suggest is you have a unique set of figures for your guns and ammunition.

As a start, slug your barrel(s) and that will determine the groove diameter for them. Let's say the groove diameter of your Ruger measures .452". Lead bullets of .455" should swage well into your barrel but remember to work up your loads and observe pressure signs as you do.

Once you find a round that works well for you, make up a dummy cartridge - no powder or primer - and keep that as a sample along with your barrel slug for future reference. For your information, SAAMI specifications for .45 Colt shows a groove diameter of .450" and a range of bullet diameters from .450" to .456".

You haven't mentioned the bullet type you're using in the ACP though I'm assuming they're lead as recommended for the .45 Colt. The ADI online loading data has many useful loads using Trail Boss and lead round-nose flat-point (LRNFP) bullets between 160 and 250gr.

Had your question been the other way round - using .45 Colt bullets in the 1911 - that would require a different set of figures and considerations as the .45ACP cartridge headspaces on the case mouth and not the rim.

In this case, in addition to slugging the barrel, if you have access to chamber casting material, a cast of the 1911 chamber allows you to see the space and shape of

the area in front of the case mouth that may dictate bullet shape, diameter and seating depth required of your bullets. Again, this cast will be a permanent record of your guns' chambers.

Rod Pascoe

Q I bought a Lithgow LA101 .22WMR and would like to know how many rounds, on average, can be fired with this barrel? I pull the barrel through and wipe the bolt face every 50 rounds. So far I've fired 9000 rounds with this barrel and the rifling looks good with no visible pits. I fire 250 rounds at a session and thoroughly clean and lubricate after every use and have had no problems or misfires. Any information appreciated.

Dave Johnson, via email

A Dave, I'm glad it's you paying for the ammunition and not me! According to Lithgow Arms, a number of LA101 rifles in .22LR and .22WMRF were tested with a variety of ammunition brands to 10,000 rounds with zero degradation in terms of accuracy or measurable wear. At that point the testing was stopped.

I doubt very much there's any chance of wearing the action out. Your cleaning regime suggests you're taking good care of the barrel and provided that's maintained I don't think anyone can make a reliable estimate of how many shots a barrel is capable of delivering.

I have a Savage combination gun in .22WMRF/.410 Magnum that would've had at least 10,000 rounds through it since it was made in the mid-1960s and it shoots as well today as it did when my late father owned it, which would seem to suggest the cartridge is not particularly harsh on barrels when adequate maintenance is applied.

Perhaps somewhere along the line your LA101 will provide us all with information about how long a .22WMRF will survive, as at present no-one really seems to know.

John Dunn

Q I was wondering if you can tell me anything about this scope. I've had it for years and it came from my grandfather's garage, one of many things I inherited when my grandmother moved out of the house.

Rodney Taylor, via email

A Your riflescope is a Japanese model made for Tasco in Australia under the Bentley label. It has 4x magnification with 28mm objective lens and is nitrogen filled. It's fitted with a built-in mounting bracket, suitable for use on firearms which have a $\frac{3}{8}$ " dovetail. When marketed, around 1970, it was an affordable scope suitable for .22 calibres and air rifles. Your scope appears to be in excellent condition and with its original box could be of interest to a collector. I'd say it was worth in the region of \$100 or so.

Barry Wilmot





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SSAA SHOT Expo

back with a bang

The anticipation which greeted October's SSAA SHOT Expo in Victoria was summed up almost immediately, with Winchester Australia selling their first rifle of the day within four minutes of the doors opening at the Melbourne Showgrounds.

Thousands of shooting sports enthusiasts flocked to the two-day event and were treated to a host of new products launched to tie in with the Expo. Brian Mortensen, national sales manager for Winchester, one of four major sponsors, was delighted when one of the first arrivals snapped up the latest CZ 457 rimfire rifle.

Said Brian: "Could hardly believe it actually. The doors had been open for less than five minutes and the first of the CZs was sold. So many people had been telling us how much they were looking forward to the Expo and that customer knew exactly what he'd come for. He was a happy man - and so was I."



Senator Bridget McKenzie with the amazing SSAA working gundogs and their handlers.

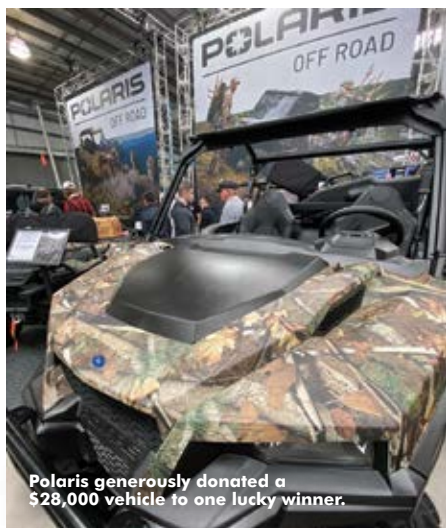
And CZ's 457 family wasn't the only new face at the Winchester stand, with plenty of visitors keen to view the latest Meopta Meopro 6 Series of riflescopes and the Steyr Zephyr II rifle.

In keeping with this year's theme - Pathway to the Shooting Sports - among newly-launched products from the other major sponsors, Outdoor Sporting Agencies introduced the Diana MK38 shotgun by Miroku, aimed at entry-level youngsters and female shooters. Swarovski were kept busy all weekend thanks to their exciting Z8 series of scopes and Polaris took the wraps off the new Ranger EV all-terrain electric ute which proved popular with hunters.

Among other major exhibitors, Beretta Australia unveiled the latest 694 sporting shotgun and Spika did brisk business with

their new ranges of both knives and clothing.

High-profile visitors this year included Commonwealth Games gold medallist Laetisha Scanlan who compèred the main stage, while Senator Bridget McKenzie,



Polaris generously donated a \$28,000 vehicle to one lucky winner.



Swarovski Optik was a crowd favourite as always.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, spent the weekend mingling with visitors at “one of my favourite events of the year”.

Said Senator McKenzie: “As a proud legal firearm owner I’m here to support our often maligned and misunderstood sport and butt against these misconceptions. Hard data cannot be argued with and in the national survey carried out earlier this year, it was proved the shooting sports are not only beneficial to our physical and mental well-being, they also contribute \$2.4 billion to the Australian economy each year.

“Our gun clubs are very important in breeding talent, Laetisha Scanlan just

one example of how far you can go in this sport, but the recreational side of shooting cannot be understated. I’m off hunting next weekend and will be buying a few pieces of equipment here at the Expo and am pleased to see so many people also supporting these proud Australian businesses.”

She also took time to discuss the dangers Australia faces from the lethal African swine fever, highlighting the fact the disease has now infiltrated Southeast Asia and stressing the need for Australia to be ever-vigilant to the threat it poses to our borders and calling on local hunters to report any sightings of what could potentially be infected animals.

Senator McKenzie lent a hand at one of the hugely popular demonstrations by the Victorian branch of the Working Gundogs Association of Australia, other crowd-pullers including cooking displays by Jason Spencer of Hunt Catch Cook who rustled up several mouth-watering creations from the SSAA Field to Fork cookbook, and the deer hunting panel discussions which drew plenty of reaction and feedback from a large audience.



The Winchester stand was busy all weekend.



The 2019 SHOT Expo was superbly organised by Michael Allendorf and his team at Level Up Events and hosted by SSAA Victoria who signed up hundreds of new members to the Association, and New South Wales won't have long to wait for their turn with the 2020 event scheduled for Rosehill Gardens Racecourse in Sydney from June 20-21. ●



SSAA SHOT EXPO
ssaashotexpo.org.au



Shooting group unites our polities

John Maxwell

For the shooting community, confronted by ongoing prejudice in sections of the media and community, it's encouraging to have understanding friends in high places, something amply demonstrated at the re-launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Shooting Group in the new federal parliament.

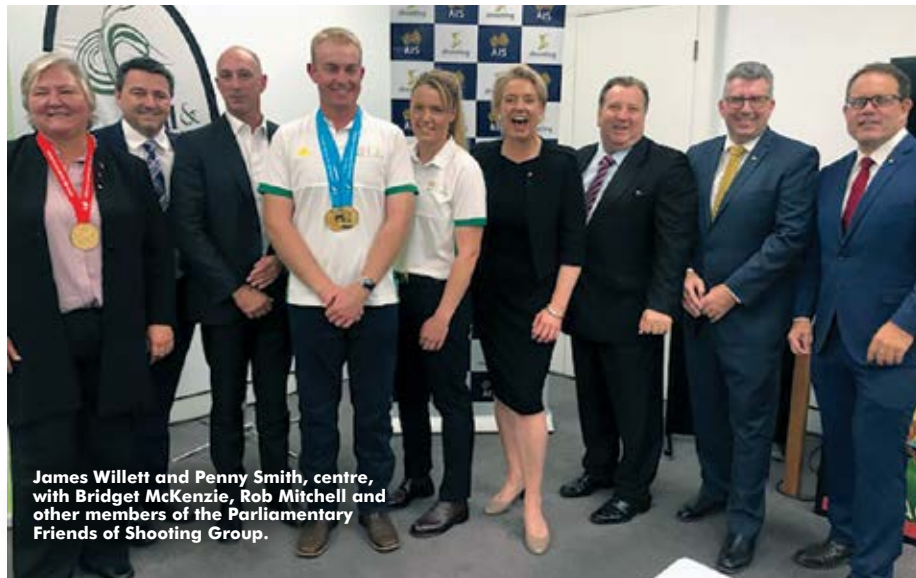
This is a group drawn from across the political spectrum - though the Greens are unsurprisingly absent - and co-chaired by Nationals Victorian Senator and Agriculture Minister Bridget McKenzie and Victorian Labor MP Rob Mitchell. The launch event at Parliament House in Canberra was sponsored by the Shooting Industry Foundation Australia (SIFA) with support from SSAA, Shooting Australia, Australian Clay Target Association and Field and Game Australia.

Senator McKenzie said the Parliamentary Friends of Shooting Group was set up five years ago to promote shooting and hunting and their environmental, economic and health benefits and it had made a difference to conversation around the sport. She said Australians were accomplished shooters as their performances at successive Olympics had demonstrated.

"I want to talk about my love of this sport and a million Australians' love of this sport," she said. "Our proudest day was when every major Australian newspaper had a girl on the front page, a gold medal round her neck and a shotgun over her shoulder."

Mr Mitchell said despite their differing political views, a passion for shooting brought the parties together. "We both know how important the entire shooting industry is to Australia. Whether it be the Olympics, hunting or in environmental controls, we know the people involved are always there doing the right thing for the community and the right thing by the sport and the industry," he said.

The benefits were explained in a report commissioned by Senator McKenzie as the previous Minister for Sport and released in September, which showed the Australian economy is \$2.4 billion and tens of thou-



James Willett and Penny Smith, centre, with Bridget McKenzie, Rob Mitchell and other members of the Parliamentary Friends of Shooting Group.

sands of jobs better off as a result of recreational hunting and sports shooting, while shooters were happier and healthier than the general population.

"That's because we get outside, we're hanging with our mates, loving and respectful of nature and what we do in our sport," Senator McKenzie said. "Arm yourself with this report. It was done so we have hard data against the haters, against the Greens and those who would seek to shut down what we do."

In the type of negative media reporting with which shooters are all too familiar, Ten network's *The Project* put the boot in recently. Among much else, their sneering and biased report showed a shooter firing an SKS semi-automatic rifle, which was banned in 1996, and the Elmer Fudd cartoon character carrying a shotgun and declaring he was hunting "wabbits".

Interviewees included anti-duck hunting activist Laurie Levy who declared it a waste of money, and SIFA's Laura Patterson who valiantly put the case for sporting shooters. Senator McKenzie said there were people throughout the community and our workplaces whose preferred recreational activities were hunting and shooting but there was still encountered prejudice.

"If you saw *The Project*'s response to the release of our economic and social benefits of hunting and shooting to the Australian economy, which I commissioned as sports minister, you will see the prejudice still exists," she said. "It insists young Australians should not be able to be taught how to safely use a firearm, shouldn't be able to learn how to shoot clay targets or pistols or hunt to sustainably gather food. That prejudice still exists."

Senator McKenzie had her weekend away from Canberra all planned out. "I'm heading out to get Christmas dinner and can't wait, for a whole lot of reasons, to be out in the bush with family and friends harvesting sustainable food," she said.

Special guests at the event were James Willett, gold medallist in the Trap event at this year's ISSF World Cup in Mexico and Penny Smith, gold medal winner at the ISSF World Cup in Finland. Both are contenders for the Australian team at next year's Tokyo Olympics.

To win gold in Mexico and become world champion, Willett shot 125 out of 125 targets and when asked what was going through his mind as he prepared for his final target he said: "It's exactly what you think it is - you don't want to miss this last one." ●

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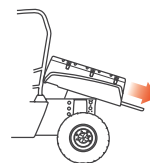
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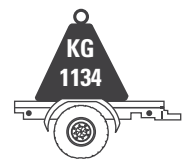
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L'Atelier Verney-Carron bespoke double rifles

Sam Garro

If you've ever aspired to own a mid to big-bore double rifle, a L'Atelier Verney-Carron hand-crafted double with its unique and exquisite features is worth considering. Over the years I've read with fascination the history and use of double rifles - specifically in Africa and India on all manner of heavily built and dangerous game - by professional guides, game wardens and hunters such as W.D.M. Bell (318 Westley Richards), Jim Corbett (450/400 W.J. Jeffery & Co boxlock), President Theodore Roosevelt (custom 450/500 Frederick Adolph) and our own John Dawkins (John Rigby .450NE underlever hammer).

Apart from being fortunate to view some very fine modern doubles at SSAA SHOT Expos, the Big Game Rifle Club (BGRC) Victoria and select gunshops, I was privileged to shoot an 1870s Alexander Henry 12 bore black powder underlever hammer double and a Manton .450/400NE double once owned by noted shooting journalist and author Col Allison, both a pleasurable experience.

In the past few years the French L'Atelier Verney-Carron (LVC) doubles in particular have caught my interest for their exceptional quality, unique features and variations from their round frame action and intricate metal engraving to the calibre range and options, resulting in one-of-a-kind hand-crafted rifles.

More recently Bob, a proud holder of two such beautiful custom doubles, a 450NE and 500NE with round frame colour case hardened actions, was touting the firm's excellence and complimenting Master Gunsmith-in-Charge Jerome Lanoue, having successfully used them on four African hunts on Cape buffalo and other plains game.

His call coincided with my intended write-up on LVC bespoke doubles and I welcomed his timely input, especially as 2020 will commemorate Verney-Carron's family lineage of 200 years of fine gun-making.

In the late 18th and early 19th century, ownership of a double rifle by a maker such as Holland & Holland, Manton, James

Purdey, Westley Richards, John Rigby and others belonged mainly to royalty or the rich. Prices were exorbitant but demand for such rifles to cope with dangerous game in Africa and India was strong. Even today, vintage collectables in very good condition fetch anywhere from \$20,000 to well over \$100,000 depending on gunmaker, calibre and model.

The break action doubles were not only quicker to load, shoulder and shoot, but provided greater certainty and higher confidence with their independent double set triggers, particularly in event of a misfire with the first. Back then they were a revelation compared to the time-consuming and awkward-loading black powder muzzle rifles.

Advances in technology and manufacturing have removed some of the more labour-intensive applications and with more makers competing for a share of the market, double rifles generally are more affordable. Whether the older or vintage blackpowder doubles with hammers or new



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CAL. .22	10	290cc	250 BAR	3.2 KG	76 CM
CAL. .25	9	290cc	250 BAR	3.2 KG	76 CM
CAL. .30	7	290cc	250 BAR	3.2 KG	86 CM

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AIR SPEED	MAG CAPACITY	AIR CAPACITY	PRESSURE	WEIGHT	LENGTH
CAL. .177	12	290cc	250 BAR	3 KG	103 CM
CAL. .22	10	290cc	250 BAR	3 KG	103 CM
CAL. .25	9	290cc	250 BAR	3 KG	103 CM
CAL. .30	7	290cc	250 BAR	3 KG	113 CM

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L'Atelier Verney-Carron bespoke double rifles

ones with modern powders, they retain their charm, mystique and admiration for hunters worldwide.

Not all doubles need to be at the higher end of the recoil chart such as a 505 Gibbs or 600NE. In Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic the .375 H&H is a preferred calibre on driven wild boar hunts. In Africa the 9.3x74R has been a long-standing favourite on a wide range of game and the same calibre is winning favour in Australia for use on Top End wild boars, scrub bulls and water buffalo and bulky sambar deer in Victoria's high-country.

Aside from hunting, mid to big-bore doubles are a favourite at shooting venues internationally and here such as the BGRC, carrying on a tradition with its origins in Britain or Europe more than a century ago.

LVC bespoke double rifles

Like James Purdey, Holland & Holland, Rigby, Sig Sauer, Heym, Westley Richards and others with a history of exceptional gun-making, L'Atelier Verney-Carron uses the best quality materials and highly skilled artisans.

Receivers are machined from a solid block of forged steel then hand 'carved' to their final form, barrel tubes from high-resistant steel resulting in light and



Jerome Lanoue,
Master Gunsmith-
in-Charge.

extremely strong barrels, cut to clients' required length, aligned and manually regulated for accuracy. Throughout the hand-crafting process each firearm receives the attention of a master gunsmith and is rigorously tested to meet the highest standard of safety and reliability, coming with a paper test target showing grouping with open sights at 50m.

BGRC members in a
Double Rifle Stalking
Shoot event at Little River.



The L'Atelier Verney-
Carron rifle display at a
SSAA SHOT Expo.

Verney-Carron's beginnings

The name has been synonymous with fine gunmaking since being founded in 1820 by gunmaker Claude Verney (1800-1870) when, at the age of 20 and backed by a family lineage of prominent gunsmiths going back to 1650, he won first prize in the prestigious French armoury competition Concours d'Armurerie in Saint-Etienne.

The name changed in 1830 to Verney-Carron when he married Antoinette Carron, daughter of another prominent gunsmith. As the years progressed the company adapted and diversified under his son,

The team at QGE wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



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Rigby A Grand Tradition - \$89
Hardcover 203-page book setting out the history of Rigby, from its origins in 18th century Dublin to 2011. Written by historians and Rigby enthusiasts Silvio Calabi, Steve Helsey and Roger G Sanger.



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Rigby Baseball Cap - \$45
Classic cotton baseball cap embroidered with the Rigby 'Double R' logo. Avail in blue, white, green and black.



Rigby Classic Hunting Shirt - \$180
A go-anywhere, go-to hunting shirt that will serve you just as well on plains, mountains or in forests. Woven in a uniquely adaptable soft moss green, the shirt features the Rigby 'Double R' logo embroidered on the button-free breast pocket. Sizes available Small - XXXL



Rigby Polo Shirt - \$90
Durable cotton polo shirt embroidered with the Rigby 'Double R' logo in gold. Available Small - XXXL



Rigby 'London Best' Knife - \$3219
The pinnacle of the Rigby knife collection. Handmade in England, mammoth ivory handle, exquisite Damascus blade with engraved Rigby logo. Individually serial numbered. Purchaser's name will be entered into the Rigby ledgers the same as those buying rifles.



Rigby 'Tsavo' Knife - \$1325
A hunting knife made from AEB-L steel with a Rigby blue maple handle and stainless steel pommel. Each of these knives is engraved with the famous Rigby 'Double R' logo. This knife comes complete with a handmade leather sheath also embossed with the Rigby 'Double R' logo.



Rigby 'Garhwal' Knife - \$1250
Hunting knife, handmade in England. Maple wood handle with mammoth ivory bolster, 4.75" blade with engraved Rigby logo. Individually serial numbered. Purchaser's name will be entered into the Rigby ledgers the same as those buying rifles. Handmade leather sheath.



Rigby 'Caprelous' Knife - \$985
Deer processing knife, handmade in England. Maple wood handle, 4" blade with engraved Rigby logo. Individually serial numbered. Purchaser's name will be entered into the Rigby ledgers the same as those buying rifles. Handmade leather sheath.



Rigby 'Zambezi' Knife - \$985
Handmade in England exclusively for Rigby. Blue maple wood handle, 4.3" blade with engraved Rigby logo. Purchaser's name will be entered into the Rigby ledgers the same as those buying rifles. Handmade leather sheath.



Rigby 'Kruger' Knife - \$499
General purpose hunting knife with a fixed blade crafted from Damascus steel. The wide, slightly round blade and thumb rest make this the perfect knife for hunting out in the field. Engraved with the Rigby logo and individually serial numbered. Handmade leather sheath.



Rigby Pocket Knife - \$499
Handy every-day pocket knife. Damascus steel backlock folding blade with engraved Rigby logo and individually serial numbered. Purchaser's name will be entered into the Rigby ledgers the same as those buying rifles. Handmade leather sheath.



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SIG - 320, P224, P226, P228, P229, P250, SP2022, SP2340, SP2009
Smith & Wesson - M&P
Springfield Armory - XD, XD Mod 2
CZ - P10
Ruger - SR9, SR9c, 9E

Additional magazine retainers for most pistol models listed below are available for individual purchase: Beretta M9/92, CZ75, H&K USP P8, Walter PPQ

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L'Atelier Verney-Carron bespoke double rifles

grandson, great-grandson and so forth, currently Jean Verney-Carron.

After WWII the firm acquired famous barrel-maker Jean Breuil under the name Groupement d'Exploitation des Fabricants d'Armes Réunis (GEFAR) and in 1961 further expanded by procuring well-known manufacturers Berthon Frères, Francisque Darne, Didier-Drevet, Gerest and Ronchard-Cizeron.

When it took over traditional gun-making firm Demas in 2004 it established a separate workshop under L'Atelier Verney-Carron in an effort to return to 100 per cent handmade rifles as we know them, L'Atelier signifying bespoke firearms made to order.

Today's Verney-Carron operations comprise: Hunting - Machine-made rifles and shotguns (La Manufacture Verney-Carron) or high-end handcrafted guns (L'Atelier Verney-Carron). Security and Defence - Manufacture or distribution of firearms, ammunition and accessories mainly for police forces (Verney-Carron Security) and firearms for the military and police markets (Verney-Carron Defense).

Custom fitting

Every bespoke rifle or shotgun is unique and measured to the individual including arm reach, cheek bone structure, manageable firearm weight etc. Apart from the expected features of a high-end double rifle with three-leaf rear sight, ejectors, double triggers, quality walnut stock and fine chequering, a custom build will also vary according to the client's preferences.

My friend and BGRC Victoria member



A side-by-side Azur Safari PH rifle in .375R.

Brian Kilpatrick had a chance meeting with Jerome Lanoue at the International Big Game Rifle Shoot in Donkerhoek, Pretoria last year which resulted in Brian being measured for a bespoke .375 H&H Safari double. He requested 25" barrels, colour case hardened receiver, exhibition grade stock, Prince of Wales pistol grip, skeletonised steel buttplate, 24 lines to the inch checkering, rib inletting and dual pop-up foresight and can't wait to receive it.

Jerome Lanoue: Master Gunsmith-in-Charge

Jerome's passion for hunting and aspiration to become a gunsmith was sparked at the age of four while accompanying his father and grandfather on field hunts. At 18, after completing his tertiary studies, he left France for Belgium to take up trade courses



Azur Safari Elogé double rifle engravings based on the drawings of Marcello Pettineo.



Jerome Lanoue and friend with a mouflon sheep taken in the French alps.

in gunsmithing and stock-making, graduating in both in 1997.

He returned to France to gain practical experience, eventually moving to Normandy and working for nine years at Arachequesne, a luxury gunshop on 25 hectares, before joining Verney-Carron where he became an integral part of the plan to return to fully handmade production of bespoke rifles. Ten years later their success can be measured by the range of calibre rifles produced, from the small and light-framed falling bloc .222Rem or 223Rem (3.5lb) to the hefty .700NE (20lb).

His hunts in Africa and beyond often co-inside with testing various calibre rifles on intended game under real and trying conditions to ensure they perform accurately



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and reliably, paramount for success of the hunter and the maker's reputation. Importantly, Jerome is a firm believer in taking time to understand the customer's hunting needs in order to produce the best working rifle. He is emphatic that, as beautiful or aesthetically pleasing a firearm may be, it must be accurate, balanced, elegant and perfectly fitted to the user.

He's not only a dedicated, creative and hands-on perfectionist but also an avid hunter. His passion for the sport has never diminished making Africa, in particular Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia, some of his favourite destinations to hunt buffalo and other game, together with mountain hunting in France for chamois and mouflon and Kazakhstan for ibex and maral. He also chases roebuck, a fascinating deer species



A colour case hardened round frame receiver double rifle.

he describes as phantom-like and challenging in its maturity.

Through his proactive showcasing of LVC bespoke rifles globally, Jerome has been

instrumental in furthering their exposure and popularity and has a strong following of loyal customers who speak volumes of him and the establishment he represents. On the few occasions we've met he has come across as a very receptive, down-to-earth and approachable person. For contact details or enquiries in Australia, see the Australian Sporting Agencies website. ●

- The author thanks Jean Verney-Carron and Jerome Lanoue for providing information and photographs for this article.



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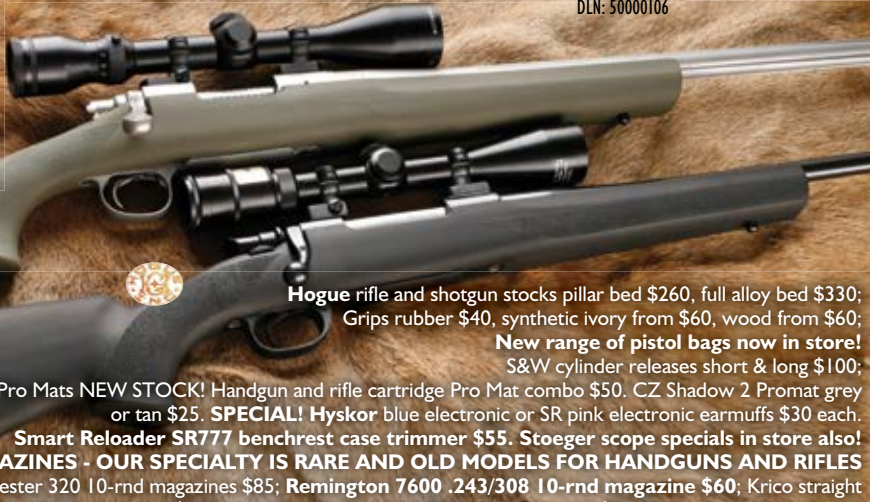
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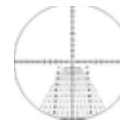
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Talbot on target! Long Range Precision

Communications Officer Sam Talbot had his eyes tested and headed for Port Lincoln on his latest mission to shoot the SSAA disciplines



Long range shooting is becoming increasingly popular so I decided it was time to see what all the fuss was about. Until now the furthest I've shot is around 300m with a .303 rifle but during my Long Range Precision competition I was shooting three times that distance.

How does it work?

Long Range Precision is a handgun, rifle and black powder rifle discipline which aims to refine and develop the accuracy of firearms, ammunition and equipment for shooting extreme distances. Handgun

events vary from rimfire to centrefire calibres and are shot up to 500m, while rifle events cover .22LR to .50 BMG calibres and are shot out to 2000m. Core matches require competitors to shoot five shots from a cold barrel without the use of benches or windflags as they would in a normal field situation.

What do we need?

While just about any rifle can be used it tends to lean towards larger calibres. At my competition .300s, .308s and 6.5mm Creedmoor were by far the most common calibres but what's long range for one rifle

or rifle/scope is relative to other rifle and scope configurations. Obviously scopes are very helpful in Long Range Precision but there are some competitions which don't use them. I've seen Muzzleloaders shoot 1000yds without scopes and while that's good for them, I was happy to be using one. For my competition scopes were limited to 25x but this still gave me a decent view of the targets.

Ammunition for long distance shooting is also important and, as usual, handloaded ammo is almost always more accurate than factory loads. Further to that, some of the 6.5 Creedmoor ammo I used cost \$65 for



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a box of 20 which is just over \$3 a shot versus handloaders who estimate theirs cost about 80c each. Above all else though, a good understanding of the firearm, scope and ammunition is crucial for hitting targets a long way off and all three factors must be in sync along with accurately observed conditions and ballistic calculations.

In no other discipline is it easier to completely miss the target. And since you're so far from the target it's hard to know if you're shooting too high or low or too far left or right (or any combination). Without being able to see the bullet hole you don't know what corrections to make on subsequent shots. Instead of hitting an outer ring and slightly adjusting, you can easily take all your shots only to discover they all missed.

Reactive targets

I was excited to find we'd be using a new special target system - ShotMarker - an acoustic electronic system which lets you see exactly where your shot went on a smartphone or tablet device. Basically, four sensors are placed on the corners of the target frame which detect the shot and instantly display where it went.

This means you immediately see where



Ritter & Stark rifle in 6.5mm Creedmoor Sam used at 500 yards.

your shot landed (unless you completely miss the target) and there's no need to patch or change targets. As you can imagine it makes shooting at long range much simpler and faster and as reactive targets aren't always possible at Long Range Precision events, this new

technology makes the discipline much more interesting.

Competition time

I was at the Long Range Precision National Championships at Port Lincoln Rifle Club in South Australia and while you might

From the right perspective 500 yards is a long way.



All action on the line of fire, with feedback being provided from behind.

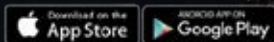
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Talbot on target!

think that's not the best place to try a new discipline, state and national events often have a warm-up day which can be ideal for beginners to gain expert advice from the country's best shots. And you get to see the best of the best in action and maybe learn something through osmosis. I like to think I did at least a little.

Format for the competition was five x five shots (25) at each of the distances - 500, 600, 800 and 900yds, targets the same as used in Combined Services, a large yellow background with black helmet in the middle. Scoring consisted of five rings, each assigned a value one to five with a V bullseye in the centre.

At the beginning of each day there are no warm-up shots except for one 'fouler', the point of the fouler being you don't want a completely clean barrel as a little bit of build-up maintains shot consistency and therefore accuracy. That's what the fouler accomplishes (it's fired into the banking) although not all competitors use it as this discipline really comes down to a deep understanding of your firearm.

Time to shoot

My first shot was at 500yds which is a long way away and the daunting part was this would be the shortest of the competition.



A rare close up of the target. The big numbers behind help line the shooting lanes up with each target.

But in my favour I had a Ritter & Stark rifle in 6.5mm Creedmoor which looked more like those used in Practical but is also suited to Long Range Precision. Most parts of it were customisable but as other people were also using this rifle I didn't make any adjustments. The rifle and scope were not perfectly zeroed into the centre

of the target, but the owner revealed it was shooting about three dots right of centre and I decided to stick with that rather than risk changing the scope and messing something else up.

Like everyone else I shot from the prone position which meant using a shooting mat and bag under the rifle butt. I find this



Trenton Hardie gives Sam some expert coaching.

The range at 900 yards.



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position very comfortable and the rifle fitted me well, allowing me to immediately see down the scope, but while doing so I saw something that shocked me - a mirage!

In warm conditions distant targets can start to move or at least shimmer, a similar illusion to what appears to be water on asphalt roads when driving on hot days. It turns out that in shooting, different weather conditions can create all sorts of mirages and movement around the target. I did my best to ignore it and didn't bother guessing the wind as I lined up my shot and fired. Looking down the scope I wasn't sure where I had hit the target, but thanks to the ShotMarker system I quickly learned I hadn't hit it at all.

A little disheartened I lined up and fired again, same as the first time, and after a few seconds my result appeared on the smartphone. Not only had I made contact, I'd hit a bullseye - maybe this long-range business wasn't so bad after all. Happy with my efforts at 500yds I was ready to take on 600, this time using a .308 wooden stock club gun with handloaded ammo generously donated by the club. Getting back to my prone position with bag on one end of the rifle and unfolded bipod on the other, I felt less comfortable than before but eventually managed a good sight on the target and after five shots had a score of 20.1 - not bad.

For my five shots I registered 4, V, 4, 4 and 3. The perfect score is 25.5 but I was happy to walk away with a 20.1 (the number after the full stop indicates the 'V bullseye' was hit and if scores are equal this is used to break ties).



Scoring made easy.

Even further out

The following day it was time to shoot from 800 and 900yds and along with the distances the weather had changed from sunshine to rain. At least with rain and cold weather, mirages were no longer an issue and the targets almost looked clearer now. A few competitors had problems with their scopes and, believe me, a 900yd target is not the place to find out there's something wrong with your set-up.

Normally competitors aren't given feedback during their five shots but in this competition, and since we had ShotMarker, shooters were shown where their first two shots landed each round. This proved very useful, particularly when a shot missed completely as you could make drastic changes to try and get back on target. Without feedback you could easily miss all five shots unknowingly and that's not fun for anyone.

While I wasn't competing in the championships I managed to sneak in a few shots at each distance after the competitors finished and as far as I was concerned Long Range Precision follows the same principles as any other shooting discipline - the greater distance adds an extra challenge but the fundamentals of shooting still apply. And I should stress you don't need a top-of-the-line rifle to compete, as a shooter with better understanding of less expensive equipment will comfortably beat someone with all the gear and no idea.

Conclusion

Shooting such long distances can seem intimidating. Probably more than most other disciplines, Long Range Precision

requires time and a good understanding of your equipment and for most this is all part of the fun. Working out ammunition and playing around with scopes adds to the camaraderie when everyone is just trying to hit something far away and the majority of Long Range Precision shooters are happy to let beginners try their gear.

Although you might need to travel to find a range that accommodates longer range shooting, it's well worth it as Long Range Precision will give you a greater understanding of your rifle and other equipment - and it's a lot of fun. ●



This little contraption provides the target feedback to the line of fire.



The ShotMarker is placed on the corner of the frames of the target.



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Knifemaking insights at Mother Mountain Forge

Senior correspondent John Dunn

If there's a downside to doing a knifemaker's course it would have to be that once is never enough. That struck me as I made the 400km trip from my home to Dignams Creek on the far South Coast of NSW for a two-day hunting knife program with Iain Hamilton at Mother Mountain Forge. The forge takes its name from nearby Mount Dromedary (Gulaga) which, according to the creation myths of the local Yuin Aboriginal people, is revered as the mother-figure mountain.

Iain has been making knives for 18 years as an adjunct to his blacksmithing and wrought iron business and by his own admission took 12 years to make a knife he was happy with. He's best known for his chef's knives, one of which featured in

the lifestyle show *River Cottage* that ran on ABC TV some years ago. More recently he's been teaching knifemaking, passing on his considerable skills.

Since my personal need to make knives surfaced as a bucket list item some years ago I've been fortunate enough to work with a number of established knifemakers. The Mother Mountain course begins on the Friday night with a meet-and-greet exercise for participants. The safety aspects are also covered to ensure everyone has an understanding of what's required. Numbers are limited to two students per course and my fellow participant was a lady named Meg who had never done anything like this before and was accordingly excited.

On Saturday morning we were issued

with a body protective leather apron and safety glasses, our aim to forge and shape a knife to the stage where it could be tempered overnight. Most of that work, around 70 per cent, would be done with the forge and anvil as Iain ran us through the steps involved in forging, emphasising the importance of stance to avoid wrist, elbow and arm damage when working at the anvil.

He gave us a short length of 5x30mm 0175 carbon steel he'd welded to a piece of flat mild steel that served as a handle during construction and did away with the need to use tongs when moving the blade blank in and out of the forge. We were each issued with a hammer, the gas forge was fired up and construction of our knives began.

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Knifemaking insights at Mother Mountain Forge

It takes time to heat the steel to a working temperature yet the period you have to work the steel after each heat is limited. As Iain explains, you have to move with a sense of urgency, even if the knife can only be forged one hammer width at a time so you must know what you want to do before the steel hits the anvil.

Hammer forging is only one way a knife blank can be shaped and Iain also shows how to move and shape steel using a fly press. Essentially it's a screw press with a coarse thread on the ram, wound up and down with a pair of horizontal arms fitted with a large steel ball which allow the ram to be slammed down under force, generating up to five tons of pressure at the working end. The face of the ram and centre of the bench below it are fitted with fullers between which the steel is worked.

Apart from moving metal, the press can also create cosmetic touches on the blade such as the hammer forged finish often seen on knives used by TV chefs. We used the press to draw out the blade and tang on our knives, an awkward process for beginners, and also put a hammer finish on the blades.

Incrementally the blanks began to look more like knives and when we'd reached the stage where we were happy with what we had, the blanks were heated to normalise the steel - essentially a low-heat process that removes all the stresses created within the steel during forging. Integral to the normalising was straightening the blank so the tang and blade were in line and the blade wasn't twisted. The latter can be corrected by hand wearing heat-proof gloves.

When the blades had cooled, finishing on a pedestal-mounted belt grinder began, including finalising the shape of the blade and tang and cleaning up the bevels to within 1mm of sharp. Any scale or unwanted marks left on the flats of the blade from forging were ground off, the blade then finished with a worn 240 grit belt.

The polished blade was reheated for hardening, positioned in the furnace so



Using the fly press to mark the shoulders of the tang and begin the drawing out process.



Approaching the final forged shape of the knife.



Putting the hammer finish on the blade with the fly press.



Finishing the blade shape on the belt grinder.



Grinding the bevels.

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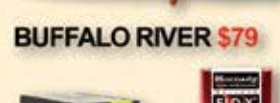
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Knifemaking insights at Mother Mountain Forge

the heat was concentrated in the blade, an important consideration given there was still work to be done on the tang. A good knifemaker like Iain knows from experience when the steel has reached the right colour and temperature for hardening. He also explained and demonstrated that within the critical temperature range the steel loses its magnetism, a useful tip for beginners.

The blade was quenched in a column of vegetable oil, moving it up and down in the vertical bath to ensure it cooled out evenly.



The mild steel handle on the blade was then cut off with a disc grinder and the knife went into an electric oven to be tempered, blade edge-down.

Day two of the course began with grinding down each side of the tang to reduce thickness and ensure the tang was still in line with the spine of the blade. A hardened filing guide was fitted to the front of the tang, the shoulders filed flat

and square so the bolster would sit square when the handle was fitted. The corners of the shoulder/tang interface were radiused to avoid creating a pressure point and the sides of the tang were also lightly filed to help to hide the joining point when the bolster was fitted.

The knife was set up in a vice and the blade polished using various grades of wet and dry paper wrapped around an old steel ruler to ensure each side was finished flat. Next step was to make and fit the bolster and handle. The bolster or finger guard was made from a piece of brass, drilled, slotted and filed to be a firm drive fit over the tang. I decided to fit a two-piece handle, a short front section made from gidgee followed by a copper spacer backed up by the remainder of the handle made from a nice piece of bloodwood.

The copper spacer was made the same way as the bolster and up to a point so were the wooden sections of the handle but they were finished using an entirely different technique. After the wood had been drilled



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Knifemaking insights at Mother Mountain Forge

and roughly slotted to remove most of the excess, each piece was secured in a vice. The tang of the blade was heated to a bright orange and pushed through to burn itself a channel. It created a lot of smoke and flame, heat-proof gloves were essential but the finished slot was a perfect fit to the tang. Finally a thin piece of leather was cut to fit between the bolster and front of the handle, the position of the tang marked out on one side of the handle and a hole drilled for the stainless steel pin.

The next step was to epoxy glue everything together and leave it to set over lunch before shaping of the handle began. Shaping created a lot of dust so a mask and eye protection were required and as it was with the forging, a hasten slowly approach needed to ensure the job was done properly.

After shaping it was back to the bench with strips of abrasive paper and plenty of elbow grease, the finished handle anointed with a generous dollop of Iain's special wood butter and the knife placed in a warm oven to help the substance penetrate the timber. While that was happening, Iain showed us how to mark out and cut a leather sheath for the now finished knife. Sewing the sheath together proved to be a bit of a problem with his sewing machine playing up.



The finished knife - a good weekend's work.

The final act of the day was to sharpen the knife and buff finish it on a cloth wheel. Meg and I had each made a knife we could be proud of and walked away on something of a personal high and strong sense of achievement.

Iain Hamilton is both a gifted artisan and teacher, a willingness to share his passion for his craft with others typical of all the knifemakers I've been fortunate enough to meet and work with. Little wonder the

popularity of knifemaking courses continues to grow. For anyone with any interest at all in how knives are made it really is a must-do venture. Find a course locally and make a booking - you won't regret it. ●

• At writing, cost for the Mother Mountain Hunting Knife Course was \$715 per person. The forge can be contacted at mothermountainforge@gmail.com. More at mothermountainforge.com. Iain can be contacted on 0401 004 481.



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Tikka and Steiner

a winning combination

Pete Kincade



The all-new TIKKA T1x MTR in .22LR - shooting off the bipod and field-style butt bag the rifle gave consistent accuracy.

In a previous edition of *Australian Shooter* I reviewed the Tikka T1x rimfire rifle chambered in 17 HMR which came as a package including bipod, scope, rings, sling, gunbag and flashlight with scope mount, all accessories coming from the Beretta group of brands including Burris. This time round the review rifle was from the same T1x series and chambered in .22 Long Rifle and I chose to evaluate in the same manner as the 17 HMR by shooting various brands of ammunition and resting the stock on a bipod and field-style butt bag.

I won't go into the various configurations available for the T1x rimfire series as they were covered in my previous review, but I must make mention again of the way the T1x (rimfire series) and T3x (centrefire) have the same receiver and bottom-metal footprint. Because of this, stocks and stock options from Tikka and the aftermarket readily interchange with both series and perhaps the best way of illustrating this is

with the picture of the T1x 22 MTR rimfire rifle mounted in the camo centrefire stock from my Tikka T3x chambered in 308.

Review products

- Tikka T1x Multi-Task Rimfire (MTR) chambered in .22 Long Rifle
- Contessa Steel Picatinny rail
- Steiner 30mm rings
- Steiner Ranger 4-16x56 riflescope (second focal plane, illuminated reticle)

Rifle

What I like about these T1x rimfires is they don't really feel like a rimfire. What? But they are rimfire rifles? Yes, but a small beef I've had over the years with some rimfire offerings is they 'feel' a little cheaper and not as refined as centrefires from the same manufacturer.

Not so with the T1x series. Because they share much in dimensional configuration with their bigger centrefire brothers, I can shoot offhand, prone or from the bench just

as comfortably with the T1x series as I can with the centrefire T3x series. In other words, these are full-size rifles in rimfire chamberings. Length of pull can be adjusted with factory spacers optionally available from Beretta Australia. Add to this the same adjustable trigger in the T1x series as the centrefire T3x and you're ahead of the game before you start.

The 10-round polymer magazine is easy to load and engages positively in the magazine well by feel without the need to look each time it's inserted. Some rimfires can be lacking in this respect but not the T1x. I fired more than 800 rounds with no feeding or extraction failures, testament to the action, polymer magazine and seven varieties of test ammunition.

Contessa steel Picatinny rail

The Contessa-branded steel Picatinny rail supplied was of premium quality - \$165 for a Picatinny rail machined specifically for the T1x receiver is great value. The rail

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Tikka and Steiner - a winning combination

aesthetics match perfectly and avoid the look of a 'one size fits all' solution. As soon as the rifle arrived I removed the barrelled action from the stock, cleaned it and checked the trigger pull which broke crisp and clean with no hint of creep at 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ lb.

Steiner Ranger 4-16x56 scope

On reassembly I torqued the action fasteners to 30-inch pounds (dry threads) then fitted the Steiner Ranger 4-16x56 scope and set eye-relief. The supplied rings also bore the Steiner brand and were of excellent quality. The 30mm medium height H-Series rings are light but dimensionally substantial and finished in an attractive matte black hard anodize with Steiner logo. The top ring fasteners torqued up evenly without canting of the scope reticle during the torqueing process, a sign of round and true internal dimensions of the top and bottom rings. Recommended retail price of the H-Series rings is \$135, good value for high-quality items.

Once the reticle was squared and eye relief set I torqued the top-half rings to 25-inch pounds, side fasteners on the bottom half of the rings (two per ring) torqued to 40-inch pounds. Light thread lock adhesive was used only on the Picatinny rail fasteners, not the scope ring fasteners.

For the lifetime of the product Beretta Australia will repair or replace the scope at no charge though the Steiner Heritage Warranty doesn't cover loss, theft, deliberate damage or cosmetic damage that doesn't hinder performance of the product. No warranty card needed, no receipt required and the warranty is fully transferable to future owners.

This scope, because of its features, adds versatility to any rimfire rifle. The 4-16 magnification range and positive side-mounted parallax adjustment mean sighting can be set for walk and stalk in various scenarios in the morning then dialled for longer range, still hunting shots in afternoon and early evening. I found



T1x 22 MTR mounted in the camo stock from a Tikka T3x stainless 308. Receiver and bottom-metal footprints are the same, both series share the steel recoil lug with stocks interchangeable.



Trigger broke crisp and clean at just over 3lb.

the illuminated red dot in the centre of the reticle sharp and fine, just like the cross-hairs. A feature of the cross-hairs that aids in faster target acquisition are the half-heavy posts left, right and bottom that become fine posts to the central red dot.

Dot intensity adjustment was positive and precise as was parallax adjustment. Although dot intensity is marked for moonlight and daylight settings, I didn't need to refer to these markings, I just set

the desired intensity based on what I saw through the scope. There was no backlash in either the parallax, dot intensity or turret adjustments which speaks volumes on the internal quality of the scope. Dioptre adjustment gave a perfect sight picture when wearing my specs and I can't say this about every scope I look through.

Windage and elevation adjustments were precise and repeatable and I like the fact this is a 'metric' scope. All my long-range centrefire shooting is done with first focal plane scopes and milrad reticles and turrets. The Steiner Ranger (second focal plane) turret adjustments are metric with each click equating to 10mm at 100m. The metric system just makes sense and I find it easier to work with for precision shooting with either focal plane.

What about the glass and perceived light transmission? This is a mid-priced variable power scope with all the features required for precise shooting out to medium ranges. It lends itself well to still and walkabout hunting from dawn to dusk and doubles well



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Tikka and Steiner - a winning combination

as a club-level competition scope. The glass exceeded my expectations for light transmission and clarity in a mid-priced optic and combined with the lifetime warranty, peace of mind is guaranteed.

An important attribute for any scope is the size of the 'eye box' behind the ocular lens. This one has more than ample which contributed greatly to lack of eye strain when watching wind indicators on the 100yd target frame and the same would apply in the field.

Ammunition

Seven brands of popular rimfire ammo were fired on several bench sessions at 100yds - Sellier & Bellot 40gr subsonic lead hollow-point, Sellier & Bellot 40gr standard velocity lead semi-spitzer, Sellier & Bellot 38gr high velocity hollow-point, CCI Mini-Mag 36gr copper-plated hollow-point, RWS Sport Line Target Rifle 40gr lead round nose, Winchester Subsonic 40gr lead hollow-point and Winchester Power-Point 40gr copper-plated hollow-point.

Conclusion

Tikka's T1x MTR in 22LR, like the previously reviewed model in 17 HMR, is an excellent rimfire rifle suitable for precision small game harvesting and club-level rimfire competition and feels like a quality piece of hunting equipment. The bolt cycles smoothly and pick-up and extraction were flawless for the more than 800 rounds fired during several sessions.

The trigger is crisp, creep-free and breaks cleanly every time and because it's adjustable (same group as the T3x centre-fire series) can be set up for hunting one day and lightened for competition the next.



The safety sits under my thumb as it does on Tikka's centrefires and this familiarity of fit, form and function make the rifle feel comfortable and intuitive. The barrel profile is neither light nor heavy, it's a well-balanced hybrid that makes the rifle fast into action off-hand and precise from bench or prone. The polymer stock is interchangeable with other Tikka T series stocks and there's a great choice from the aftermarket should you wish to customise beyond the Tikka factory options.

Bottom line? This is a well-made,

well-balanced, solid, accurate 22 rimfire and the one reviewed was not a fussy eater when it came to ammunition. Combined with the Steiner Ranger 4-16x56 this rifle's not a plinker it's a serious rimfire hunter and club level rimfire competition rifle all in one. The Multi-Task Rimfire moniker sums up the market this high-quality rimfire is aimed at. I enjoyed shooting the T1x 22 as it was consistently accurate with several brands of ammunition although as is generally the case, one or two shot a little better than the rest. ●

T1x 22 MTR Specifications

Total length: 1020mm

Barrel length: 510mm, threaded muzzle and steel thread cap

Barrel material: Chromium molybdenum

Twist/lands: 1 in 16.5" - 6

Weight: 2.6kg

Open sights: No

Receiver: Dovetail 11mm drilled and tapped for rail

Trigger: Single stage, same as centrefire T3x Series

Detachable magazine: 1x10-round polymer

RRP: Rifle only \$1019 inc GST

Steiner Ranger 4-16x56 scope

		Parallax adjustment	50m bis infinity
Magnification:	4-16x	Reticle	4A-I
Objective tube diameter:	63.5mm	Focal plane	Second focal plane
Effective objective:	56mm	Reticle adjustment per click at 100m	10mm
Weight:	720g	Max adjustment in cm at 100m - elevation/windage	85-55cm
Length:	368mm	Centre tube diameter	30mm
Exit pupil:	12-4.5mm	Eye piece diameter	44.3mm
Field of view at 100m:	9.2-2.3m	High Performance Optics	High contrast
Eye relief:	90mm	Water pressure proof	Up to 2m
Diopetre setting:	-3 to +2	Steiner Nitrogen Pressure System	Yes
RRP:	\$1989 inc GST		
Scope warranty:	Steiner Heritage Warranty for life of the product		



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Top brass

Jagemann are on the case

Daniel O'Dea

Jagemann might not be a name that first jumps to mind for Australian shooters who reload their own ammunition but this relatively new entrant to the Australian market is in fact one of the largest rifle and pistol brass case manufacturers in the US, producing more than 300 million cases a year.

Jagemann Sporting Group as a division of Jagemann Stamping Company was founded in Manitowoc, Wisconsin and has a history dating back to 1946. Initially specialising in short-run orders made on hand-fed single operation presses, taking advantage of the booming automotive industry in the mid-1970s, they moved into automated transfer presses and progressive dies, forming parts to exacting customer specifications.

Today their capabilities extend to more than 70 presses ranging in size from 15-100 tons delivering a wide range of distinct pressing capacities. They're also heavily

invested in plastic injection moulding with a separate Tennessee-based factory producing polymer pistol magazines to precise original equipment manufacturer (OEM) requirements.

In researching this article it would appear perhaps the lack of immediate brand recognition may be due to the fact that, over the years, Jagemann have been more of an OEM for other companies. In other words, they've been a commercial manufacturer selling to the ammunition manufacturing trade as opposed to marketing and selling their own product to the general public. So it may well be you already have experience with Jagemann brass under another name.

The Jagemann Sporting Group website states that standard casing dimensions and tolerances have been modified to achieve maximum performance and the firm's in-house tooling and engineering capabilities provide the ability to customise casing

dimensions for use with specific projectiles. This in effect means if, for example, you're a major ammunition manufacturer and want to start loading a specific projectile, they can tailor case dimensions to suit your requirements. I've also seen reference to Jagemann Brass being used by certain ammunition companies for US Defence contracts.

Here, Tasco Sales Australia are importers and distributors of Jagemann Brass and provided *Australian Shooter* with samples for review. I'd note the Jagemann website lists 15 rifle and 15 handgun calibres available, including all the more popular and prevalent listings. Tasco provided pistol cases in 9mm Luger and rifle cases in .223 Remington, .243 Winchester, .308 Winchester and 6.5 Creedmoor, covering our most prolific calibres in both popularity and sales as well as the recently trending favourite for many in 6.5 Creedmoor.

Cases were measured and weighted for consistency.



Although brass casings for a specific calibre may, in the main, share identical industry standard external dimensions, variation in weight and construction will quite often alter internal volume. Most notably this is the case with military brass which is often thicker in the case head, web and rim areas to withstand the higher-pressure loads required for reliable cycling in fully automatic rifles and machine-guns, along with the additional battering cases experience when firing in such weapons.

A simple way to access consistency in volume is to weigh your cases, the heavier

the case for same external dimensions would indicate a lower internal volume and vice-versa. Likewise a high consistency in case weight would indicate high consistency in internal volume and, in reloading, consistency means accuracy, the reason some competition benchrest shooters sort their cases by weight.

For most of us who just reload for practical shooting and hunting I've heard it said weighing case is like riding a rocking horse - you can do it but it's not going to get you anywhere. But for the purpose of review I thought it was a good starting point to evaluate consistency in manufacture.

I started by weighing 50 Jagemann .308 Winchester cases and found the standard deviation top to bottom was +/- 0.1 grams or 1.54 grains. Worth noting is 78 per cent of the same batch fell within a standard deviation of just 0.05g or 0.77gr. I repeated the same with 50 Jagemann 6.5 Creedmoor cases and the sample for consistency was even tighter with overall standard deviation only 0.07g or 1.08gr. I gave up there and then as it was clear tolerance in this area was held to a very tight standard.

I had a similar experience measuring case length, straining my eyes trying to discern fractions of a millimetre from one case to the next on my Vernier Caliper.



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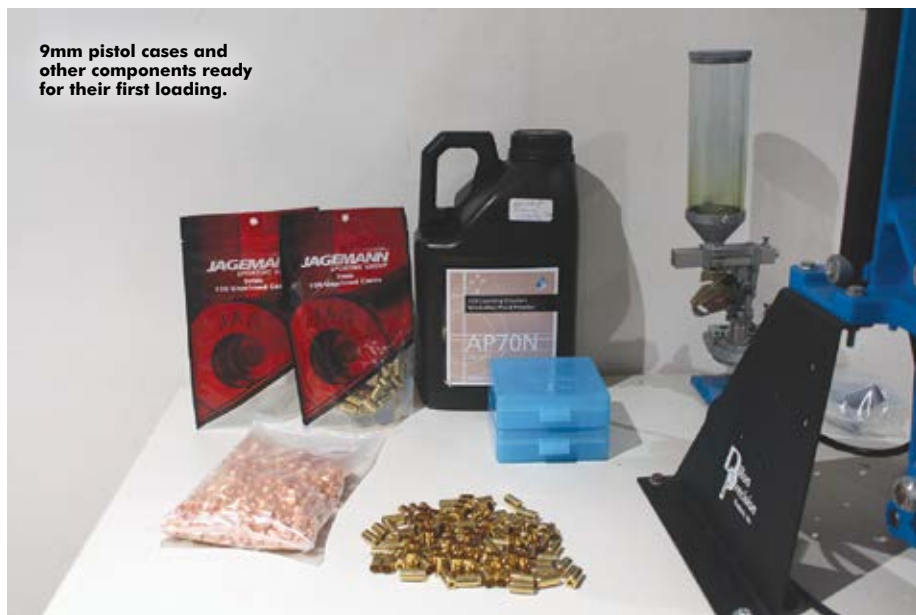
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Top brass - Jagemann are on the case

Primer pockets and flash holes appeared completely concentric and overall all the brass presented as a high-quality product.

Jagemann claim to beat their competitors in three key areas: tighter tolerances, greater concentricity and more reloads per case. To test the latter I set up a reloading press on my range bench and went about firing and reloading the same Jagemann case. Using my Remington 700P in .308 Winchester I selected a single new Jagemann .308 Winchester case and noted both case length and diameter at the head to record stretching and expansion.

I chose a typical load of 45gr of ADI 2208 and used an old box of basic 150gr Hornady Spire point projectiles I had spare with some RWS primers and proceeded to fire, measure and reload the same case 15 times. Commonly you might size brand new brass before first loading, if for no other reason than to ensure concentric case



9mm pistol cases and other components ready for their first loading.



Checking case expansion between firings.

necks, however Jagemann claim their cases are prepped and ready to go so I didn't touch the case to start with, just primed it, charged it up with 2208 and seated the projectile.

Straight out of the bag the case length started at 51.06mm but in first fire forming actually stepped back to 50.90mm, which coincidentally is the recognised trim to length (2.005") for the .308 Winchester cartridge. After the first five firings the case had grown back to 51mm neat, by the tenth go it had stretched to 51.10mm, on the 14th firing it just reached the maximum case length at 51.18mm (2.015") and on the 15th firing finished at 51.20mm, a smidgen over the maximum case length. I stopped the experiment there, mainly because it was

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about 5°C on the range and about the same again in wind chill. I'd had enough!

During the exercise I hadn't touched the case apart from full length resizing between firings, no chamfering the case mouth or anything that would remove material. I did clean the primer pockets after firings five and 10 although this was barely necessary as the pockets looked clean enough, more habit than anything. I use a Lee Auto Primer Hand Tool which gives a good feel when seating primers and the primer pocket felt just as tight on the last firing as it did for the first.

Over the whole experiment there was no discernible expansion at case head which started at 11.84mm (0.466") before first firing and expanded to 11.99mm (0.470") thereafter for each and every firing. Feeding and extraction remained easy from start to finish and I'd note 45gr of ADI 2208 is a medium load and about a 1-1.5gr off listed maximum, depending on the projectile etc. Naturally if loading to maximum you'll be working your brass harder.

As it stood I feel with the Jagemann case as tested, once trimmed I could have likely gone another 15 loadings without issue. As an aside, while I wasn't shooting for accuracy and was reloading with basic components, all 15 rounds landed within about 1.5MOA.

I ran a couple of hundred Jagemann 9mm cases through some standard production pistols then through my Dillon 650 progressive reloading press a couple of times to seamless performance, and I'd wager as I'm shooting Minor Factor for IPSC competition there's more chance I'll lose the cases on the range before I can wear them out!

All the Jagemann brass tested showed a high level of performance in the three key areas the company promotes - tolerances were tight, concentricity was great and the brass held up well to the working of multiple times of full-length resizing,



The test wasn't for accuracy but 15 rounds ran out to approximately 1.5MOA overall.

indicating long case life over many reloads. I paired the Jagemann 6.5 Creedmoor cases with some match grade projectiles and primers with outstanding results while testing the Lithgow LA105 Woomera, proving a good match to the other premium components used.

As stated Tasco Sales Australia are importers and distributors for Jagemann Brass and a check online shows it well represented with the majority of local gunstores. Sold in bags of 50 or 100 depending on calibre, it also appears well priced against many competitors so should prove popular and appears great value for money. More at tsaoutdoors.com.au ●



The Jagemann .308 case (left) after 15 firings beside an unfired case.



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Premium product

CZ's new 457 a welcome addition

John Dunn



Supporting firearms carrying the Ceska zbrojovka (CZ) name are something of a fixture in the Australian marketplace now. That's especially true of their rimfire rifles, successors to the much venerated and still popular Brno rimfires that won the hearts and minds of rabbit shooters nationwide in the 1950s and '60s. These days CZ is recognised as one of the world leaders in development and manufacture of rimfire rifles, thanks in no small way to the success of their 452 and 455 models.

The CZ 457 family is the current evolutionary stage of the CZ rimfire line so when Winchester Australia offered *Australian Shooter* a 457 Premium model in .22 WMR for review I was happy to accept. The Premium is just one of six rifles in the range which includes the Royal, American, Lux, Jaguar and Training Rifle models.

CZ 457 Premium

With its classic European design this is a striking rifle in many ways. Every person I showed it to described it as either good looking or beautiful, not a bad start for any new product on the market. Good looks aside, the rifle also has a number of design features which set it apart from previous lines of CZ rimfires.

Receiver

This retains the modular design of the 455 which allows barrels to be easily changed, though its appearance is distinctly different. The rear portion of the integral dovetail on top of the receiver is longer and instead of being a simple cylinder there's a 'flat' machined on either side of the receiver; the flat on the left housing a bolt stop/release lever, a departure from the 455 that requires the trigger to be depressed

to allow bolt removal. The flat on the right is slotted to accommodate the root of the bolt handle locking the action closed. The flat below the slot has two dots - one red, one white - indicating the ready to fire (red, back) or safe (white, forward) status of the rifle and the mid-section is stamped 'Made in Czech Republic'.

The magazine well and trigger group attached to the bottom of the receiver are the same as those for the 455 models, the receiver secured in the stock by a pair of star screws which engage below the receiver ring and behind the trigger group. A transverse slot at the rear of the receiver bottom houses a rectangular steel stock insert that locates the receiver in the stock.

Barrel

The 60.9cm (24") hammer forged barrel is a



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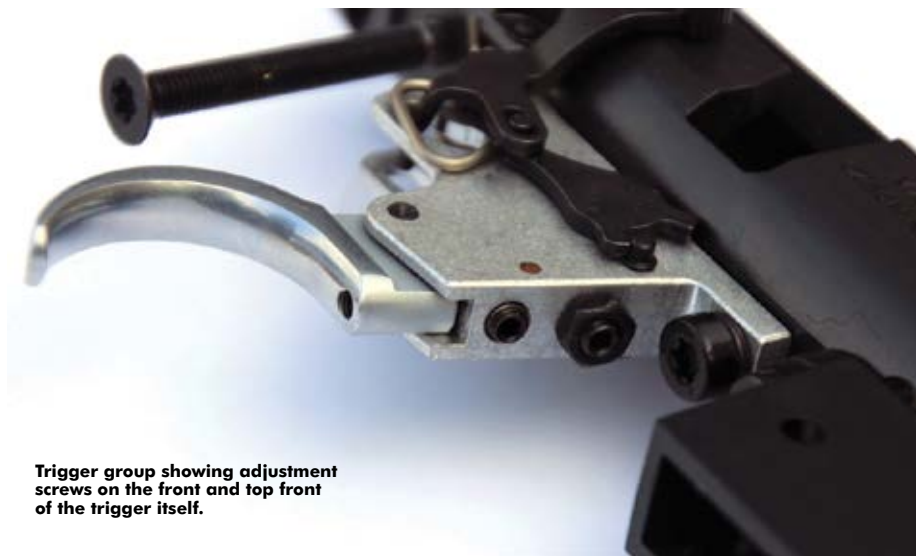


Premium product - CZ's new 457 a welcome addition

slip-fit into the receiver ring and secured by a pair of angled grub screws in the bottom of the ring, a system allowing interchangeability of barrels as required. Barrels chambered in .17HMR, .22LR and .22 WMR are available for the rifle, all interchangeable with those of the CZ 455.

The rear sight on the 457 Premium barrel is elevation adjustable from 25-200m via a slider working along the length of the flat spring-tensioned sight leaf, the sight plate having a U-shaped notch with windage adjustable via small opposed screws on either side. The front sight is ramp-mounted with a high visibility insert, elevation adjustable through a pair of small screws in the front of the ramp. A lightweight spring steel sight protector is fitted.

The front of the barrel is screwed $\frac{1}{2}$ "x20 threads per inch to accept a compensator or sound moderator where legal, a knurled ring provided to protect the thread and the muzzle has a slightly recessed, angled crown. Both barrel and receiver along with all other 'blued' parts have a Bobux surface treatment claimed to provide superior protection.



Trigger group showing adjustment screws on the front and top front of the trigger itself.

Bolt

The 457 bolt has three main parts, the bright steel front half the familiar CZ bolt we all know. It has a recessed face with twin hooks - one the extractor the other a case guide - both secured by a C-shaped spring around the body.

The underside of the bolt incorporates a raised, longitudinal square section bar that runs in a corresponding groove in the bolt guide in the bottom of the receiver above the magazine well. The bolt guide incorporates a hook ejector that runs in the slot machined alongside the bolt guide bar and when the bolt is drawn back, the head of the spent case snags on the ejector and is kicked out of the action through the ejection port right of the receiver.

The blued steel handle makes up the mid-section of the bolt assembly, throw of the handle reduced by 30° which makes it a little faster to operate while allowing larger scopes to be fitted lower on the receiver, a boon in terms of fit and comfort. The bolt cocks on closing, a red cocking indicator protruding from the back of the bolt lock where it's easily seen and felt.

The rear section, called the lock in the manual, is a new design much more streamlined than the original (photos detail the differences better than I can with words). Inside the bolt the weight of the striker has been reduced by 60 per cent to provide a



Rear sight had to be removed to fit the scope, indicating a more compact scope required.



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by Tami Bennett

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Premium product - CZ's new 457 a welcome addition

faster lock time and less impact shock when the rifle is fired.

Trigger

This is completely different to what we've been used to on CZ rimfire rifles. Screwed to the bottom of the receiver, it's designed to provide user adjustments of weight of pull and trigger travel after firing via a couple of screws on the front of the trigger group housing. According to the CZ website, weight of pull is adjustable from 8-15 Newtons (1.78-3.37lb) and trigger travel from 0.5 to 0.7mm. A third screw near the top front of the trigger itself adjusts trigger travel length before firing.

Incorporated into the trigger group is a lever safety that works in conjunction with painted dots on the right side of the receiver mentioned earlier. Engaged, the safety blocks the trigger but allows the bolt to be cycled and chamber emptied, a huge improvement on the original safety mounted on the rear of the bolt.

Stock

Undoubtedly the most eye-catching component of the rifle, it's carved from a lovely piece of oil-finished Turkish walnut, the styling undeniably European being graceful,



The left of the buttstock has a Bavarian-style cheekpiece.

elegant and easy to handle. The buttstock has a slightly raised but otherwise traditional hog's back comb, on the left a nicely contoured Bavarian-style cheekpiece. There's a rubber recoil pad and, on the toe of the stock, a QD sling swivel base.

The pistol grip is more sharply angled than the American style, hand-filling with a palmswell on the right. There are panels of laser-cut chequering on either side of the grip with a smaller, additional teardrop-shaped panel for the pad of the shooting hand thumb on the right-hand side. From the pistol grip forward the belly and forearm taper gently upward, the stock finished with a rather dramatic Schnabel fore-end tip made from dark laminated

timber, attached at a sharp angle. Both sides of the forearm have panels of laser-cut chequering which include the wording 'CZ 457 Premium'.

Internally the barrel channel and receiver mortice are cleanly cut and lightly sealed against the weather, inletting for the trigger guard and frame excellent with neat wood-to-metal fit. Pillars of lightly compressible bedding material are used around each of the action screw holes and, according to the website, are designed to provide constant pressure on the screws and prevent them working loose. Marks inside the receiver mortice indicate the bottom of the receiver sits tight against the pillars when the screws are tightened.



Front of the barrel showing adjustable foresight and bevelled muzzle with threaded end.



The CZ 457 bolt is quite different to previous models.



Right side of receiver showing location of the safety lever.

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Range and field testing

For testing, a 3-9x40 Meopta Meopro scope with Z-Plex reticle and 452 mounts were supplied along with Winchester and Browning ammunition. Because the 3-9x40 scope was too long in the body the rear sight had to be removed, heads-up that a more compact sight like a 6x42 would perhaps have been more appropriate. Initial sighting-in was done at 25m before moving the targets out to 50 then 100m.

All up I tried seven different ammunition types and as is always the case with rimfires, not all suited the 457's requirements. Group sizes at 100m ranged from around 20-50mm-plus with fliers the primary reason for some of the larger groups along with some wind-drift problems during my second range session. Like all rimfire calibres the .22 Magnum doesn't travel too well at longer ranges when there's any sort of breeze and for what it's worth, the ammunition loaded with the lighter 30gr bullets seemed to fare better than those pushing out a 40gr projectile.

Rabbits are as scarce as hens' teeth in my part of the world at present so I didn't get to use the rifle on game, not that it matters. The .22 WMR has been around long enough for experienced hunters to know what



The bolt stop/release on the left rear side of the receiver.

it's capable of and, given the choice, I still prefer the cartridge over both the .17HMR and .17WSM. That makes me old school I know but, in my experience, the .22 WMR is a far more consistent performer.

Overview

I've always liked the CZ rimfire range and the 457 Premium hasn't changed that. It looks great, handles well and will no doubt provide years of reliable performance given a little TLC and regular cleaning. It takes the CZ story another step forward and it will be interesting to see how the marque develops. Watch this space - I doubt the story is over yet. ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Make: CZ

Model: 457 Premium

Action: Bolt-action

Calibres/twist: .17 HMR/9, .22LR/16, .22WMR/16 (tested)

Trigger/safety: Trigger user adjustable for weight of pull and travel, side lever safety

Barrel: 60.9cm, hammer forged

Sights: Adjustable front and rear, dovetailed receiver for scope mounting

Magazine: Five-shot polymer

Stock: Turkish walnut, classic European styling with Bavarian cheekpiece

Overall length: 108.4cm

Weight: 2.9kg bare

Distributor: Winchester Australia

RRP: \$1195 - talk to your dealer



The receiver mortise is cleanly cut and finished - notice the pillars of bedding material around the action screw holes.

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The unforgiving beast

Help our drought-stricken farmers

Dave Burgess

In a normal season crops would be waist high in this paddock.

Another rainy day on the coast has me wishing with all my might the rain would fall for my farmer friends. This drought is so draining - physically, financially and mentally - that I struggle to understand how anyone can fight their way through it. Indeed, according to the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, the suicide rate in rural and remote Australia is 50 per cent higher than in our cities. Not to mention anxiety, depression and good old-fashioned worry.

Yet despite all this our farmers continue to open their homes and hearts to us. So how can we find a way to help them when they're struggling through drought conditions? I must state up front I'm not trained in psychology in any way nor in any field of mental health treatment, what follows is

based purely on my own observations after many years of visiting farms.

Nor do I want to give the impression I think farmers are sitting in a corner crying into their coffee - farmers are the hardest working, most resilient and inventive group of people I have ever had the pleasure to spend time with. But drought is a relentless and unforgiving beast.

There are lots of things we can do to help ease the situation without even visiting a farm. One way to help farmers, which we're all capable of doing, is to buy Aussie-grown produce and there are support programs to consider like *Buy a Bale* or *Parma for a Farmer*. These not only provide tangible assistance but send the message that people do care, and if you're friends with a farmer, take time to give them a call and check in.

What about on-farm support? Of course there's feral and pest animal control and the SSAA Farmer Assist program which brings our caring members together with rural people, but during my past couple of visits to friend's farms I've hardly fired a shot. It seems the feral population is as badly affected by drought as the farm stock, so what else can you do?

Perhaps bring a special meal with you (my mates like seafood), cook for your hosts or buy them lunch in town. This shows your gratitude and takes a little bit of pressure out of the kitchen and is something that will be remembered and talked about for a long time, trust me.

If you have special work skills like plumbing or mechanics I'm sure the offer of help would be greatly appreciated or if, like me, you don't have special skills,

The arrival of this hay truck is good news for stock but at \$150 a ton a real worry for the farmer.



This creek crossing usually holds 45cm of water but has been bone dry for two years.



think about what else you might be able to offer. I can ride a bike or quad bike so can help muster, check fences, stock, dams for bogged animals and water levels and most of us can drive a ute, so we can move water to dry paddocks and deliver feed to hungry animals.

I won't lie - this is hot, dusty, dirty and sometimes dangerous work but I'm sure the farmer will give clear instructions and keep you out of harm's way. I can say from experience that a cold beer after a warm day in the yard with six or seven hundred sheep is just about heaven.

Probably the most important thing to do, in my humble opinion, is to communicate with the whole family. The wife or partner is generally a business partner as well, so would fully understand the ramifications of this prolonged drought and no doubt feel the same level of pressure. There would also be added stresses on the family like putting food on the table, household chores and caring for children who need to get to and from school which may require bus trips, pick-ups and drop-offs. This might be something you could help with to free-up parents to do other things.

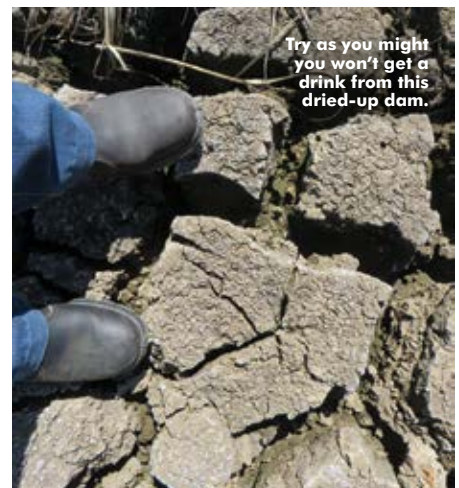
Country youngsters are pretty tuned in to how the farm works and while they may not say much, I'm sure they understand the difference between getting a low price for stock at the sales and seeing stock waste away in paddocks due to lack of fodder. Just for a moment put yourself and your family in that situation - how would your children get through it? I'm sure you'll agree that in times like these there's no such thing as too much support. In my own case I didn't feel I had the ability to counsel kids through this type of catastrophe but what I could do was make my trip fun for them.

I was invited to visit our friend's farm nearly 30 years ago. At the time their two children were in primary school and we became instant buddies (I guess we were



the same mental age!) We used to tell jokes, play games and generally be silly and I was like a crazy uncle. Those two are now in their early 40s and we still get together from time to time and at a recent dinner one of them told me how much they'd look forward to my farm visits, actually cheering when they saw my car rolling up the driveway. The point is, you can have a positive impact on youngsters if you make time and put in the effort.

You can't do all these things in one visit but maybe you can manage one or two and I can assure you the effort will not go unnoticed. You'll make lifelong friends which in most cases far outweighs any shooting experience you'll ever have. It certainly has in my case. ●



The new 686CL Sports from ATA

John McDougall



John McDougall puts the ATA 686CL to the test.

This is the second ATA shotgun I've reviewed since they were introduced into Australia about seven years ago by distributor Nioa of Queensland. I must say the guns have been highly reliable as an import from Turkey, both models based on a copied Beretta action and named after the popular Italian 686 series of shotguns. I'm not sure how this arrangement came about but the guns seem well made and are backed by a five-year warranty, reflecting the confidence Nioa has in ATA shotguns. I haven't been able to fault them.

The 686CL has a black chromed barrel rather than a blued one, something obviously done to avoid any corrosion say, for example, in brackish swamp water where the gun would come into its own as a waterfowl hunter's delight. The case hardened finish on the receiver along with its black matte barrels avoids any unnecessary glints that may spook ducks.

I'm impressed by the price of this gun at around \$1650 along with its case and full set of internal choke tubes, again modelled on the popular Mobil chokes used by Beretta and other manufacturers, and the quality of the walnut in the stock and fore-end of the 686CL is also striking for a gun below \$3000, the price level at which I'd usually see such excellence.

Barrels

At 760mm (30") the barrels of the ATA 686CL look amazing with their matte black chromed coating. Topped with a 7mm parallel ventilated rib that's also black chrome plated and instilled with a stipple finished (non-reflective pattern on top), the ATA 686CL has all of the makings of a gun suited to sporting clays but additionally hunting, waterfowl in particular.

At the muzzle, the top rib has a red transparent filament sight which attracts light under most conditions to give the shooter some idea of the relative placement of the muzzle in respect to the target, even in

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The new 686CL Sports from ATA

lower-than-normal light conditions. There's no mid sight fitted to the rib to avoid gun canting.

The ribs joining the barrels are solid as opposed to ventilated and contribute nicely to the overall weight of the barrels at 1.48kg. There are no signs of residual solder from assembling the barrels, quality assurance in this area seemingly excellent which is not always the case with lesser-priced guns from Turkey. Fully internal Mobil chokes are installed at the muzzle, five supplied with the 686CL from skeet to full choke. Also supplied is a propeller-style choke tube spanner which is easy to operate and positive in its action.

The chamber end is suited to 76mm (3") cartridges in both steel and lead shot loadings and speaking with a representative from Nioa, it's recommended no more than half-choke should be used with the



Great combination - the ATA 686CL and Eley Superb shotshells in size 8 shot.



686CL when employing steel shot loads and that all shot sizes are compatible with that combination. This is a reassuring directive as the guns are not proofed under CIP but guaranteed by the Turkish Government.

Also at the chamber end I particularly liked the jewel polishing around the monobloc, great for maintaining lubricants to avoid unnecessary wear as metal against metal operates. I prefer a light Teflon-based oil rather than grease which will attract grit. The ejectors are strong and well timed, expelling empties well clear of the breech in readiness for quick reloading, again much like Beretta.

Receiver

Many shooters will like the colour case hardening on the ATA 686CL and I don't

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The stylish ATA 686CL.

believe it has been done in the traditional manner with charcoal and bone under high temperature but nonetheless, whether it has been done with cyanide or through another heat treatment process then lacquered to preserve the case hardening, the finish is one of the better ones I've seen

on such heat-treated gun receivers.

I feel it necessary for the benefit of newcomers who may be looking for a first shotgun to mention that side-plated guns don't always equate to much more expensive 'side-lock' options. Side-plated guns are more often a boxlock gun with the firing

mechanism located behind the breech to the rear of the monobloc, whereas side-lock guns have the firing mechanism attached to the side-plates. The ATA 686CL is actually a boxlock gun with side-plates to accommodate greater coverage by the colour case hardening - the firing mechanism is not attached to the side plates and it's not a side-lock gun.

The monobloc of the 686CL is like Beretta's, from the locking pinions extending from the breech face to close the gun to the bifurcated trunions that join the barrels to the action/receiver, the similarities are amazing. Probably the only major difference ATA have adopted as opposed to the Italian giant on which the gun has been modelled is the adoption of mechanically operated triggers.

I have a preference for such a trigger system to enable selection of the second barrel to fire independent of the first to

Stylish lines are complemented by extensive colour case hardening.



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The new 686CL Sports from ATA

shift the inertia block in an inertia-operated system. With a mechanical trigger system you'll always have the ability to fire a second shot, which I like not only in a sporter but also a hunting shotgun.

Design of the top lever for opening the gun is well tensioned and comfortable to use, placement of the barrel selector-cum-safety catch also conveniently located on the top tang to the rear of the breech. This operates positively with some resistance which means it can't easily be shifted from its selected position. The barrel selector has one dot to indicate firing of the lower barrel and two dots for firing the upper barrel first, such as you'd use for an incoming target.

The size of the triggerguard is generous and complements the lines of the 686CL. It's not colour case hardened but black chromed, again to provide protection from unsavoury elements. Shape of the triggerfoot is good with triggers adjusted to release at around 5lb each which, although I found a little heavy, can be adjusted by a competent gunsmith to around 3½-4lb for better control.

Stock and fore-end

The walnut woodwork on the review gun was sound and according to Nioa is Grade 2 woodwork, the character and colour excellent. Chequering about the stock and fore-end is not overly generous and was obviously done with a laser-guided machine as overruns were absent, the ATA shield carved into both sides of the 'tulip' or Schnabel-shaped fore-end. Chequering is completed at around 18 lines per inch with a single line border struck around the fore-end and stock chequering.

It's comforting to see a significant recoil pad fitted to the the stock, this one a 'slip pad' style whereas the top segment is hard plastic polymer to brush over clothing without catching loose garments. I was appreciative of the 15mm rubber recoil pad as I shot some heavier recoiling loads during assessment whereas the Eley



The ATA 686CL's choke tubes and spanner.

Superb loads I mainly used were a delight, well matched to the weight of the gun and smashing targets with ease.

In the field

A visit to several gun clubs during horrendous weather provided a great deal of enjoyment and shooting Eley 28g Superb loads in size 8 shot seemed a perfect match for the quarter and improved modified chokes I installed in the barrels. The wind played havoc with targets but the 686CL with its lighter weight at 3.5kg moved about and if anything I shot in front of targets I missed due to the liveliness of the gun. Scores posted around 17/25 to 20/25 were pretty good for a gun straight out the box under such testing conditions.

In conclusion, I'd be hard pressed to find another shotgun that offered the features of the ATA 686CL as standard. The forcing cones could be lengthened to cut back a touch on recoil and the triggers adjusted marginally but otherwise this brilliant shotgun from Turkey with a five-year warranty is top value. I'd have enjoyed some field shooting on ducks or quail

but sadly the review coincided with the off-season.

During the NSW rice shooting season for example, I'd recommend the 686CL or try it as an-entrance level gun for sporting clays. Just like the last ATA shotgun I reviewed the 686CL is very good to excellent value for money especially with suede case and all accessories. Recommended retail price is about \$1650 but if you shop around you might find it for a little over \$1525. More at nioa.com.au ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Maker: ATA Turkey

Distributor: Nioa

Model: 686CL

Overall length: 1205mm (47½")

Barrel length: 760mm (30")

Barrel weight: 1.48kg (3lb 4oz)

Chamber: 12-gauge, 76mm (3") chambered

Proof: Recommended for use with all steel shot sizes with no more than half/modified choke

Bore size: Under 0.722", over 0.722"

Chokes: Skeet 0.720", Imp. Cyl. 0.715", Modified 0.703", Imp. Mod. 0.672", Full 0.688"

Stock dimensions: Length of pull 370mm (14½"), drop at comb 35mm (1⅜"), drop at heel 55mm (2¼")

Trigger pulls: Under 5lb, over 5lb

Warranty: Five years

Accessories: Suede case, all chokes and spanner in plastic case and gun socks

Price: RRP \$1650 but shop around



The walnut stock on the ATA 686CL is exceptional for the price.

Warne scope mounts and rings

Daniel O'Dea

The selection of
Warne products for
review.



Mountain Tech rails come in standard and 20MOA.

US-based Warne Scope Mounts has been on the scene producing quality scope-mounting solutions since 1992 but interestingly the company has a uniquely Australian connection dating back as far as 1947. So what is that connection? Well it's all in the name - founder John Llewellyn Warne, otherwise known as Jack Warne, is the same Jack Warne who in 1947 founded Sporting Arms Ltd in Adelaide. He died last October.

Sporting Arms was famous for the 'Sportco' range of products with Jack Warne designing a firearms and accessories

range which at the time would not only enjoy 30 per cent of the total Australian firearms market but whose designs would also be sold to and marketed by US giant Winchester. Warne would later licence with US firm Omark Industries to manufacture all their fastening guns for the construction industry which led in 1966 to Omark buying out Sporting Arms in a friendly takeover.

In 1968 Jack Warne would move to Portland, Oregon to take up a senior management role with Omark where, as Chief Operating Officer, he oversaw Omark's acquisition of companies such as

CCI, Speer, RCBS, Outers and Weaver. By retirement in 1985 he'd ended up as the President and Chief Operating Officer of the company having built Omark's sporting equipment division from zero to more than \$100m in sales per year in 1985.

The story goes that after 38 years in the industry he became bored with the idea of retirement, as in 1991 he founded the Warne Manufacturing Company to focus on the design and manufacturer of a quick detachable scope-mounting system. The rest, as they say, is history and today Warne makes an extensive range of rails, mounts, rings

Warne scope mounts and rings

and associated tools and products. Locally, Warne products are distributed by Tasco Sales Australia who sent *Australian Shooter* some of the latest offerings for review.

Warne Mountain Tech

Warne's Mountain Tech range of rings and bases offer a lightweight precision option for scope mounting and, according to their website, were designed working on the principle of the old tenet 'ounces are pounds and pounds are pain'. They're CNC machined from 7075/T6 aluminum for high strength and low weight that's then hardcoat anodised for a Mil-Spec finish which offers great resistance to wear, tear and corrosion and protection against the elements.

The bases are available in one- and two-piece as well as tactical rail with variants and options for just about all current model firearms from all major manufacturers. The tactical rails come in both standard and 20MOA configuration and feature self-centring hardware for precise alignment to your receiver and are both 1913 (Picatinny) and NATO-STANAG compatible.

The Warne Mountain Tech rings are of a conventional horizontal split-ring design available for 1", 30mm and 34mm scope tube diameters and come in Low, Medium, High and MSR Ideal, the latter designed specifically for use on Modern Sporting Rifles (read US civilian AR15 variants) which generally require extra-high scope fitment which perhaps aren't so relevant to our domestic market.

The rings include an integral stainless

The TW1 and TW65 would make a handy addition to any tool kit.



steel recoil lug cross bolt with a Mil-Spec 65in/lb (torque) ½" tactical nut for secure rail or base clamping. The top ring split is clamped around the scope tube via four Torx style T-15 socket cap screws with recommended torque of 25in/lb. All rings are good for fitment to both Weaver or Picatinny-style bases and rails and again are NATO-STANAG compatible.

Maxima Horizontal

From the very start in 1992 Warne have been best known for their Maxima vertically split, steel scope rings. more recently came a more conventional style all-steel horizontal split ring variant in the Maxima Horizontal range. The new rings are made

inhouse using proprietary sintered steel technology, a process of powdered metal-lurgy where powdered metal is moulded by compaction in a closed die before being heated and treated to produce a product of high strength and uniformity. It's a process commonly used by the automotive industry for making gears, clutches and parts.

Maxima rings feature four screw ring caps, again with Torx-style T-15 socket cap screws and permanently installed recoil keys (lugs). The rings are clamped in place by twin T-15 screws instead of the ½" tactical nut on the Mountain Tech rings, giving a neat flush finish to the side of the ring and excellent holding strength. Incredibly, Warne guarantee return to zero



Maxima Horizontal all-steel fixed scope rings have four screw ring caps and permanently installed recoil lugs.



The TW65 with ¼" square drive can be used for other purposes requiring fixed torque of 65in/lb such as the action bolts mounting this Howa 1500 action into a Southern Cross Small Arms TSP chassis.



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Warne scope mounts and rings

on all their rings when removing and reattaching your optic.

Maxima Horizontal rings come in 1" and 30mm variants and as with the Mountain Tech are good for fitment to both Weaver or Picatinny-style bases and rails and are also NATO-STANAG compatible.

Warne torque wrenches

As well as rings and bases Warne offer a select range of tools including two special-purpose torque wrenches. Over the years I've mounted more scopes on rifles than I could count and quickly discovered one of the greatest considerations is locking down scope rings. Of course you want to make sure you have enough tension on the ring screws to prevent shifting under recoil while at the same time you don't want to torque them down so tight you crush or damage the scope tube. The Warne TW1 is a purpose torque wrench made specially for the job and takes all the guess work out of the process.

Warne recommend a torque setting of 25in/lb for both their rings and bases and the TW1 is a simple T-shaped 'break away' torque wrench that lets the operator know when the proper torque setting is reached by free spooling once 25in/lb has been applied. The TW1 features a comfortable oversized grip leading to a T15 Torx drive bit. T15 Torx-headed screws are not only used on Warne rings and bases but are prominent throughout the industry so this clever little tool would make a great addition to any shooter's tool kit.

It's worth noting that while Warne encourage use of a non-permanent thread locking compound (like 222 or 243 Loctite) on their bases they do *not* recommend the use of such compounds on scope ring screws. They claim it's unnecessary as it



The TW1 with T15 Torx drive is perfect for locking down scope ring screws to the recommended 25in/lb setting.

can lead to possible scope damage from the overtightening of screws and limits the ease of scope removal. Likewise, Warne claim their rings are made with such precision that, if properly installed, lapping is of no benefit and if alignment was found to be out it would be a greater issue than anything lapping could possibly improve.

Besides Warne's TW1 scope mount torque wrench is also their TW65 tactical scope mount torque wrench, a unit specifically designed for tightening those large hex nuts predominantly found on Long Range Tactical-styled scope rings and mounts. These have a recommended torque setting of 65in/lb and, as the name suggest, that's what the TW65 is preset to. The TW65 is an electronic unit where once the 65in/lb setting is reached it illuminates a red light, emits a beep and provides a tactile click. You'd think that just might be enough to put the idea across

you've achieved said desired setting.

The TW65 has a 1/4" drive and comes with what would appear a longer series 1/2" socket, however the unit can be used with other 1/4" drive sockets to torque to the same setting. Warne rings use 1/2" nuts hence the socket, but some manufacturers use 12mm in which case you'd provide your own socket. Torque setting is not adjustable but I can't see why the wrench couldn't be used in other applications requiring 65in/lb torque as that's often recommended as an action screw torque setting by several manufactures.

The TW65 runs on two CR2025 batteries supplied in a tray in the base of the handle and although the electronics provide those audible and visual indicators, the wrench will work fine without batteries as you can still rely on the tactile click or felt break away as with the TW1. The TW65 can also be used for loosening nuts with no impact on electronics or torque operation and has an oil-resistant rubber coating which feels good in the hand and is easy to use. It also offers a warranty for the life of the product.

For the single gun set-and-forget rifleman these tools might not see much use but for those with a few rifles who like to tinker and find themselves changing scopes or adjusting mounts frequently, once used both the TW1 and TW65 wrenches may well become indispensable. And the use of such tools also goes a long way to assuring return to zero where bulky optics might be removed for transit or storage. More at tsaoutdoors.com.au. ●



Once the fixed setting of 65in/lb is reached the drive spools free with a beep and bright red light.



Tahr man

High hopes in thin air of NZ

Chris Redlich

I had just finished a chamois hunt in the mountains of New Zealand and with just as much excitement and now more acclimatised was off to the same valley, guide Dave Campbell and I back to target a bull tahr last seen with his nannies. After some glassing with binoculars and spotting scope we couldn't trace the tahr and as we made our way up the ridge we spotted fresh bootprints in the mud. "I think someone has beaten us to it," said Dave, "unless they're spooked tahr don't usually travel far."

Our fears were confirmed as we rounded the bluffs further up the valley and spotted something out of place on a scree slip - the tahr we'd been hunting, a dead bull without

his cape and horns. Someone had been there the previous day. We changed plan and headed for home, hunting wallabies on the way out. Introduced from Australia some time ago, wallabies are a major pest in NZ, required to be shot on sight and this was a good way to put in some practice with the .300WSM.

Two days left of a six-day hunt and Dave made plans for a chopper to fly us to the top of another mountain where tahr were frequently seen, an alternative to hiking a few hours to their altitude. As time wasn't on my side I opted for the chopper, that way I could concentrate more on hunting than trekking and day five found me with pack,

rifle and guide flying towards a snow-capped mountain before sunrise. The chopper landed and we stepped out on to snow, the little Robinson R44 disappearing into the valley and, as the sound of the motor faded, the mountaintop fell eerily silent.

First light was upon us and in the chill mountain air Dave led me off the mountain towards a saddle below, on the way glassing bull tahr making their way out to the bluffs to enjoy the sunrise. On reaching our destination we had to be quiet now, we were hunting tahr on the southern face of the valley and the wind was not favourable. Climbing again, we stayed out of sight on the other side of the ridge, avoiding the



Tahr man - High hopes in thin air of NZ

skyline and our scent being carried to the targets.

We spotted a lone bull on our side of the ridge, a youngster with small horns and unaware of our presence as he fed away from us around the ridge and out of sight. This underlined how important it was to remain stealthy as a wary tahr could ruin the stalk. Every so often we lay face down and peered over the ridge glassing for bulls, a few good ones closer now so we planned our strategy.

Up the ridge we climbed to the top and peering out again spotted the tahr we'd glassed earlier. Staying out of sight we made our way down the back of a steep and rocky knife-edge ridge to the end of a bluff. On our way down a startled bull tahr gave a 'whistle' and bounded effortlessly over the rocks and off to safety in the opposite direction, thankfully not alerting the bulls we were after.

I moved into position to glass the two bulls as Dave and I debated their size. They were busy working their nannies and had no idea we were perched high above them at 150m. Their dark-coloured shaggy capes looked magnificent and in my opinion a bull tahr cape is a trophy on its own.



Two NZ pest wallabies fell to the .300WSM.

With both having the same dark cape the decision was made to take the one with the best horns and I worked myself into a comfortable firing position on the jagged rocks. Now settled, I aimed at the tahr as he was about to disappear with his nanny and as I fired, the suppressed .300WSM shot didn't startle any surrounding game as the bull was well hit with a single 165gr projectile to the chest. I was ecstatic

having secured my first bull tahr amid some truly awesome scenery and didn't move for a few minutes, taking it all in.

Before retrieving the trophy we rock-hopped across some bluffs and slips to check out more bulls to the east. I was happy with my lot but enjoyed watching these majestic animals as they made light work of really tricky terrain, their hairy capes blowing in the wind as each bull



Ready for caping - Chris is hanging on tight to the tahr to stop it rolling back down the chute.

stood high on a rock in a display of dominance. A few photos later we made the nail-biting climb across the face and down to my tahr in the scree chute, clutching whatever tussocks I could.

He was an awesome creature much larger than I expected, his cape beautiful and horns just topping the benchmark 12" meaning all the effort had been worthwhile. Photos and cape taken, we stowed the 30kg load in my pack and as Dave had given the chopper pilot a time to pick us up we had to hike out of there and back to the saddle.

The steep drops below made me nervous so I figured a hard but short stomp up the ridge would be easier than sidling the slips and with the decision made it was pack on, rifle slung then the climb back to the landing zone. A faint roar of engines and the chop of rotor blades signalled the Robinson making its way up the valley and in no time at all we loaded up and headed for home.

I didn't think the weather was going to hold but with my six-day window drawing to a close I'd secured both my intended trophies. Before this trip I held high expectations and Dave and Hayley Campbell of Outback Hunting New Zealand helped me exceed all of them. The last day was spent on final preparations,



There's nothing easy about caping a tahr on the side of a mountain.



Cape off, ready to pack for the climb out.

including cleaning my hunting gear and trophies thoroughly for the trip home, skulls boiled and bleached and horns treated for bacteria.

I packed them carefully in my suitcase luggage and on arrival at Brisbane Airport breezed through Customs with my declared goods, Australian Border Security staff polite and unassuming. It pays to do your homework on import and quarantine requirements before you leave the country and this information is on the Australian Border Security website.

The capes were tanned in NZ and mailed to me a few months later and I must mention how receptive the Kiwi public are to hunting. The locals I met could tell I was an Aussie and would often ask whether I was hunting or skiing. "Hunting," I'd say. "Great, what did you get?" would be the reply, which highlighted the difference between our cultures and how engrained hunting is there, something I was very encouraged by. ●



Removing horns from skull cap after boiling.



With rifle and trophy loaded it's time for the chopper ride home.



Make your own trophy mounts

Sam Garro

For the DIY enthusiast or handyman, full or shoulder mounts for your trophies can be impractical for a whole range of reasons. Firstly, it's a learnt craft, then there's the need for appropriate working implements and equipment incorporating tanning tanks and solutions, various artificial animal forms and moulds and associated assembly bits and pieces. Hence European skull mounts are an alternative that require less effort and equipment and are much more affordable.

I'm an average handyman who gave it a bit of thought and applied myself and the end results were pretty pleasing and often a talking point with others. While there may be an initial outlay to procure some tools and equipment, if not already held they'll serve to mount other trophies in future.

If contemplating a full body or shoulder mount it's a good idea to visit a taxidermist or taxidermy outlet beforehand to

decide on mount type - for example a deer shoulder mount with a head pose tilted left or right to better fit your wall or game room - and to ascertain the all-important cost.

Mounting boards

A self-designed template can be easily made by placing the skull, cap or form on a suitably sized piece of stiff cardboard and outlining round the base of the shape. Cutting an inch or two away from the outline all round will not only provide the required shield size but also allow for routing the edges. If attaching a plaque, make the board longer at the base.

The edges of the timber can be routed or left with a natural edge if using natural log-cut timber pieces. Similarly, the surface can be left rough, smooth-sanded for staining and lacquering or just lacquered or oiled to reveal the timber's fine grain such as in redgum or burl. If you don't have a router perhaps an obliging

friend can assist. And keep each template for future shield mounts.

Depending on condition of the timber surface, scratches and general marks can be easily removed by sanding with different grades of timber sandpaper that range in coarseness from 40 to 600 and higher, the higher the grade number the finer the sandpaper. A cut strip of sandpaper wrapped around a block of wood or similar-sized piece of cork that comfortably fits into your palm will suffice. Applying the sanding in an upward and downward motion along the length of the timber will give an even surface finish while spiral sanding once stained tends to reveal fine circling lines.

Keyhole hangers on the rear of the mounting boards or shields are easy to affix and hang flat with the wall surface.

Timbers and staining

The choice of timbers is extensive from Tasmanian walnut, blackheart, Huon Pine,

blackwood, myrtle, sassafras, Australian hardwoods, blackbutt, redgum and many others. Oak, pine and similar type timbers are easy to work with, less expensive and can also be stained with walnut or other colours for the desired effect.

The use of a folded rag lightly dipped in Cabots Interior Stain (Walnut) or other brand stain, and applied to the timber in a straight up and down motion along its length until satisfied with its appearance, should get the desired result. To darken further repeat the process once dried. If too much stain is applied wipe over with a clean rag to remove excess.

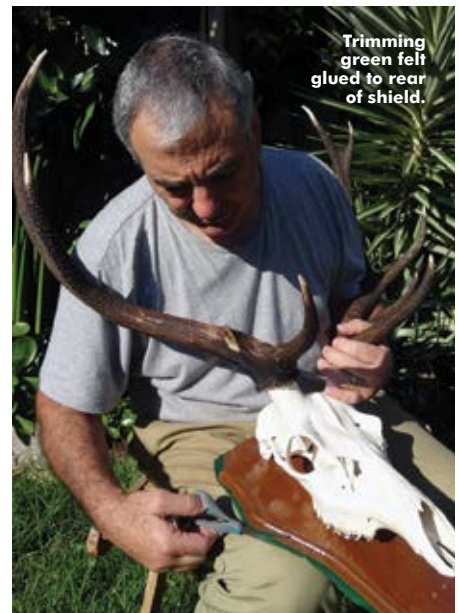
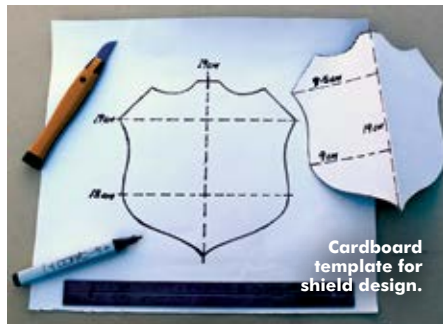
When properly dried the surface can be sprayed with an Estapol gloss or matt or brushed with clear lacquer or varnish. With redgum, burl and similar richly figured timbers, bees wax or boiled linseed oil applied with a rag or steel wool and polishing will provide a beautiful rich looking finish. Again, timber preference is up to the individual.

Sourcing timber

Timber pieces or off-cuts can be found at timber mills, suppliers, recyclers and even online and any rustic timber piece will present well with the use of a little imagination and application.

Board arrangement

Trophies can be individually mounted on shields or boards or presented as a group as in the case of several sets of boar tusks. Some arrangements can include a full head or skull cap mount, bottom boar jaw with



protruding tusks, top and bottom jaw, top deer skull or skull with the teeth sawn off. Additions can include retrieved bullet, insert photo and plaque with hunt details - the arrangement possibilities are endless.

A silver or brass plaque at the base of the shield or mount can further enhance it with hunt details including trophy animal, where taken, rifle calibre, distance shot, date and name of the hunter, all valid details to give the mount extra meaning. More words mean more cost and eventually I ended up buying an electric hand-held engraving tool which initially took

Make your own trophy mounts

a bit of getting use to but with practice I improved to a reasonable standard.

If not a plaque then brief written details on the reverse of the shield or board with a marker pen, sprayed with clear lacquer to protect the writing from fading, will record the event and serve as a reminder.

Mounting procedure

By positioning the skull or form over the shield and lightly pencil marking the sides or points where the bone is thickest, or where the solid inner core of the antlers is for careful screw insertion from behind through the mounting board, will result in a seamless attachment. For deer skull caps, similarly drilling from behind into the solid inner core of the antlers will allow long screws to secure the cap to the mounting board.

Where a different display is desired using the jaw or jaw and upper section, the bone needs to be carefully sawn straight just behind where the tusks end. The cut or cuts need to be made as straight as possible or at an angle that will display the mount in a closed jaw or slightly opened position as preferred. The length of the top and lower jaw should be similar so the bottom teeth and tusks align with the upper grinders.

Simplistically they can be glued on to a shield but if a more solid structure is required, the bone can be screwed on to a shield. When mounting the jaw or bone structure it's important to insert the screws by hand and not over tighten.

For boar tusks on their own, position them over the shield in an upright horse-shoe arrangement and lightly outline as this will help glue them in the correct



position. As the board may be already stained, lightly sand a small section where each tusk will sit to ensure proper adhesion, taking care not to over apply then wiping away any excess.

Summary

If a trophy animal or specimen you take, irrespective of its size or grandness, holds special meaning and reflects a memorable occasion, it's worth preserving and mounting and should be proudly displayed. It's a great pastime between hunts from which you can derive great satisfaction and reward. Give it a go! ●



The many faces of a German pioneer

Ivo Dimitrov



The German MP 43.

The StG 44 (Sturmgewehr 44 or 'assault rifle 44') is a German select-fire rifle developed during World War Two. Also known as the MP 43 and MP 44 (Maschinenpistole 43 and 44), the StG 44 was the first successful assault rifle which featured select fire between full and semi-auto, an intermediate cartridge, controllable automatic fire and was a more compact design than a standard rifle, intended for hitting targets within a few hundred metres where most fighting occurs.

The StG 44 was the first assault rifle-type firearm to be accepted into widespread service and put into mass production. Its principle - the reduction of recoil to achieve useful automatic fire within actual combat ranges - was one of the most important advances in small arms design. StG 44's effect on post-war arms design was wide-ranging as evidenced by Mikhail Kalashnikov's AK47 and later Eugene Stoner's M16 and its variants, both of which were influenced by the concept.

The different designations MP 43, MP 44 and StG 44 were essentially the same gun with minor updates in production. Developed from the Mkb 42(H) 'machine

carbine', the StG 44 combined the characteristics of a submachine-gun with that of a rifle and the English translation 'assault rifle' became the accepted designation for this type of infantry small arm.

The rifle was chambered for the 7.92x33 Kurz cartridge, a shortened version of the German standard (7.92x57mm) rifle round, in essence an intermediate round between a rifle and a pistol cartridge. In combination with the gun's selective-fire design it provided a compromise between the controllable firepower of a submachine-gun at close quarters with the accuracy and power of a Karabiner 98k bolt-action rifle at intermediate ranges.

While the StG 44 had less range and power than the more powerful infantry rifles of the day, studies had shown that few combat engagements occurred at more than 300m and the majority within 200m, thus the full rifle cartridges were not necessary for most uses by the average soldier. The gun also featured extensive use of stamped metal sheet parts which the Germans were very much pioneers of, but it also greatly simplified production.

During the German invasion of the USSR, increasing numbers of semi-automatic Tokarev SVT38s and SVT40s were

used by the Red Army, while some Soviet rifle companies were completely equipped with PPSH41 submachine-guns, and after experiencing high volumes of fire from these, the Germans re-thought their small arms requirements. The German Army had been attempting to introduce semi-automatic rifles such as the Gewehr 41, but these proved troublesome in service due to them being quite complicated in design and production was insufficient to meet requirements.

By 1941 it was becoming clear that action had to be taken. The Army decided to select a new cartridge design, the Polte 7.92x33mm Kurzpatrone ('short cartridge'), a shortened 7.92x57mm rifle cartridge intermediate between that and a pistol cartridge and perhaps the most revolutionary part of the whole concept.

Contracts for rifles firing the 7.92x33mm Kurz round were issued to both Walther and Haenel, the latter's design group headed by Hugo Schmeisser, and both were asked to submit prototype firearms under the name Maschinenkarabiner 1942 (machine carbine) or Mkb 42. Both designs were similar, using a gas operated action with select fire and since both rifles shared the title of Maschinenkarabiner 42

The many faces of a German pioneer

the letters H and W were added to differentiate, those being the first initial of each manufacturer - Haenel and Walther.

The MKb42 (H) along with the less successful MKb42 (W) were predecessors of the later MP 43, MP 44 and StG 44 and the majority of the MP 43 features came from the MKb 42 (H), the hammer-firing system and closed-bolt coming from the MKb 42 (W), whereas the MKb 42 (H) fired from an open bolt like a submachine-gun. MKb 42 (H) were manufactured in sufficient quantities to be issued to front-line troops for trials.

As work moved forward, development halted when Hitler suspended all new rifle programs. He ordered newer submachine-guns to be built instead and strongly disagreed with the use of the Kurz ammunition, mainly due to having to retool factories in the middle of a war and associated difficulties that brought. To keep the MKb 42(H) development



The field stripped MP 43.

program alive the Heereswaffenamt (Armament Office) re-designated the gun as the Maschinenpistole 43 (MP 43) and, making a few improvements, pushed it as an upgrade to existing submachine-guns, Hitler eventually discovering the designation deception and halting the program again.

In March 1943 he allowed it to recommence for evaluation purposes only. Running for six months until September 1943, the evaluation produced positive results and Hitler allowed the MP 43 program to continue in order to make mass production possible, the first MP 43s distributed in October 1943. In April 1944, Hitler took some interest in the tests and ordered the gun, with some minor updates, to be re-designated as the MP 44 in that month. In July 1944 at a meeting of the various army heads about the eastern front, when Hitler asked what they needed, a general exclaimed: "More of these new rifles!" The remark caused some confusion and Hitler's response is



MP 43 designation on the magazine.



fxo=Haenel maker mark on bottom of receiver.



Designation on top of the receiver.



Serial number and year of manufacture (1944).

reputed to have been “What new rifle?”, but once he saw the MP 44 in action he was impressed and gave it the title Sturmgewehr.

Seeing the possibility of a propaganda gain, the rifle was again renamed as the Sturmgewehr 44 (StG 44) to highlight the new class of firearm it represented. The designation translates to ‘assault rifle, model 1944’, thereby introducing the term ‘assault rifle’ and by the end of the war more than 400,000 StG 44s of all variants had been produced.

The StG 44 was manufactured by four factories: Haenel - code fxo; Steyr - codes bnz and swj (in 1945); Erma - codes ayf and qlv (in 1945) and Sauer - code ce. Mauser produced receivers for Haenel, Erma and Sauer but did not assemble the guns and Mauser-made receivers are marked with the code byf or svw.

Haenel developed the whole concept and produced all four versions right from the start - Mkb42 (H), MP43, MP44 and StG44 and about 185,000 were made by Haenel. The whole Steyr production is designated MP44 and approximately 80,000 were made by them. Erma produced under the codes MP43, MP44 and StG44 (about 104,000) and Sauer produced under the designations MP43, MP44 and StG44 (about 55,000).



Dust cover and ejector port.

Post war use

The Sturmgewehr remained in use with the East German Nationale Volksarmee with the designation MPi.44 until eventually replaced by variants of the AK47 assault rifle. The Volkspolizei used it until approximately 1962 when it was replaced by the PPSH41. Other countries to use the StG 44 after World War Two included Czechoslovakia (although it was not officially adopted) and Yugoslavia. France adopted captured StG 44s for colonial Foreign Legion units.

The example pictured is an MP43 made by Haenel (code fxo) in early 1944 and since the designation changed in April 1944 to MP44 it would have been made within the first four months of that year. It has been refurbished post-war by the East German Army and used by them as indicated by the large X mark on the receiver. The selector switch is marked D (Dauerfeuer=full-auto) and E (Einzelfeuer=semi-auto). Since the gun used a lot of stamped sheet metal parts a lot of those were subcontracted out to different firms and on the receiver below the MP43 designation can be seen



The fxo maker mark on the magazine.

be seen the code awt which belongs to Wuertembergische Metallwarenfabrik AG Geislingen, meaning this component was stamped by them. ●



Rear sight.



Selector switch - the 'D' is for full auto.

The voice of reason

Geoff Smith

Australia's population of just over 25 million includes about one million people licensed to possess and use firearms for a variety of 'genuine reasons' laid down in our National Firearms Agreement (NFA). Firearms remain controversial and generate interesting discussion just about anywhere in the country and beyond, even when the discussion is between people who have no clue about the legislation and how it came to be. Opinions on firearms are varied, widespread and inevitably throw up the name of former Prime Minister John Howard.

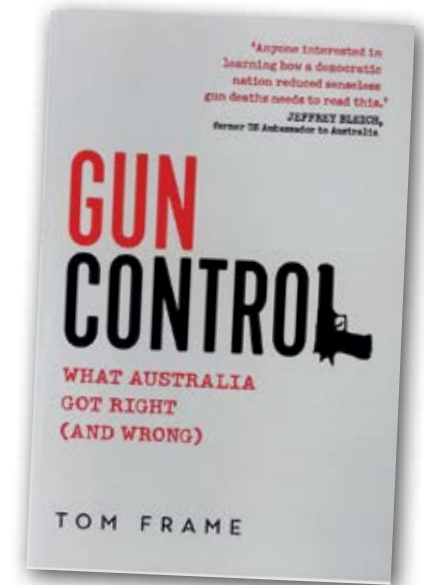
The new book which forms the subject of this review has been written by Professor Tom Frame from the University of New South Wales. His work addresses the tensions between the separate states and the Commonwealth in their various attempts to meet challenges arising from the need to balance public safety against the freedom of individuals. Although at the outset Professor Frame reveals he would own an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle if the law permitted, the book is neither pro- nor anti-gun and takes no position other than the pursuit of honest commonsense.

The opening chapter describes how, in April 1996, newly-elected PM Howard suddenly found himself dealing with the

unprecedented tragedy of Port Arthur. A maniac armed with a self-loading military rifle killed dozens of unarmed men, women and children and wounded many more, simply because he could. Enabled by his weapons this single, disaffected loner with hatred for the world at large demonstrated in the most appalling fashion imaginable that he wanted to leave his mark on our history. In a sense he succeeded - and his mark has impacted on shooters across the country ever since.

The author does not mention the perpetrator of this outrage by name nor attempt to discuss his motives, what he is concerned with is how Mr Howard reacted and how the rest of the country responded to his reforms. In order to do this the book investigates the historical setting, initially looking at what many shooters still refer to as the 'knee-jerk' reaction. Removing the means by altering legislation to ban the types of guns deemed to pose the highest risk seemed obvious, yet to shooters, somehow flawed. Are all shooters somehow collectively responsible for the actions of a lone lunatic?

Inevitably comparisons are drawn between Australia and the US whose people are constitutionally guaranteed the right to bear arms in their own defence. The immediate outcry from Australian shooters seeking



compromises was flatly shut down by Mr Howard, earning him the title 'Man of Steel' in some quarters. Unlike the US, rightly or wrongly it appears most Australians are happier for governments in each state to provide protection and for individuals to be banned from owning firearms for self-defence. Most Australians, remember, are not firearm owners.

E-NEWSLETTER

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In the immediate aftermath of World War Two there was a shift in the way Australia perceived itself - we moved from the bush to the beaches as urbanisation became the norm. From the early days of settlement to the 1990s, especially in the eastern states, guns weren't especially restricted yet attitudes were slowly changing. There had been several mass shootings previously and gun injuries had begun to raise concerns.

The NFA changed all that dramatically. NSW Liberal Party President Bill Heffernan, described as a 'rough and ready farmer', suggested to Mr Howard he should go ahead as "most farmers would cool off and just hide their guns anyway". The anger among many shooters provoked by Mr Howard's reaction, and in particular by the infamous 'flak jacket' incident, remains to this day.

The book explores whether, and how, the subsequent outcomes from the NFA might be measured. The emergence of political parties supporting shooters and Gun Control Australia (GCA) each have attempted to 'show', using statistics, what has transpired by way of reduced gun crime or deaths. For example, different incidents since have revealed firearms that should have been surrendered but weren't, individuals who shouldn't have been licensed but managed to obtain firearms, mistakes made by shooting

organisations resulting from 'tribalism and factionalism', 'virtue posturing' by GCA people and the inception of the Shooting Industry Foundation (SIFA) acting in its own interests.

The book reverts to the 1960s and '70s by discussing former Attorney General Lionel Murphy and fears of private armed militias arising, Bob Hawke's National Gun Summit, controversies around former state Premiers Unsworth and Cain who wanted a total ban on firearms imports and the establishment of the National Committee on Violence. In the very first issue of the *Australian Shooters' Journal* in 1963, SSAA President John Bradbury called for a code of ethics for shooters. Gun Control Australia emerged as a 'shadowy lobby group' with few members but powerful contacts.

Chapter Nine entitled 'The best thing he ever did' discusses contemporary analysis of the NFA. There have been many arguments but it seems Mr Howard's assessment of the data is flawed as research suggests little tangible benefits have resulted from the NFA. Detailed statistical analysis of the data concluded the cost of the buyback didn't translate to reductions in the gun death rate and even prominent anti-firearms personality Simon Chapman could only say removing fast-firing guns may be effective

in reducing mass shootings. The book is thoroughly researched and documented with numerous references for further study by those interested.

While conflict between the interest groups remains, a positive way forward appears to require better cooperation between the states. Professor Frame suggests we should approach gun laws in the same way as road laws as a set of national firearms regulations similar to the manner in which the National Road Safety Code has been developed would address many of the conflicting points. The NFA should be re-drafted in two parts, the first as a statement of immutable principles, the second addressing changes in situations and technology with tight rules to prevent alteration without proper consensus.

Anyone interested in the way in which personal freedom intersects with authority in relation to firearms ownership and use will find this book essential reading. It's an eminently sensible and engaging read which, if only commonsense prevailed, could become an important road-map for future legislators.

Gun Control: What Australia got right (and wrong) - Professor Tom Frame, (University of New South Wales Press, 2019) paperback, 200 pages, RRP \$34.99. ●

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The ethical dilemma of hunting

Leon Wright



Anna Wright with just a few of the foxes taken on a single property.

No doubt many hunters in my age bracket are like me - 'old school' - taught to hunt at an early age and learn such things as firearm safety, consideration of other hunters and respect for the animals themselves. It's all lumped under the heading of 'hunting ethics' and one of the highest priorities is to be able to justify the taking of any animal.

All my life I've hunted mainly for food and every year I hunt and fish to stock the freezer and see my family and pets through the leaner months. I prefer fresh game meat and fish above shop-bought, it's that simple. For a number of years I've struggled with the concept of taking enough for my own needs and leaving it at that. I'm fortunate to have access to numerous private properties for hunting and fishing and am increasingly being asked to shoot far more than I normally would as my farmer friends are being overrun with ferals as well as native animals.

The battle against the rabbit has been waged for decades and I couldn't guess the number I've taken. Some years back

when rabbits on the properties we hunt were out of control, farmers asked us to shoot as many as we could. To begin with we were taking some for friends and pet food but the numbers quickly rose into the hundreds each night and over a period of time we shot an estimated 15,000 rabbits and it was playing on my mind a bit. The farmers were rapt, being more pragmatic and calling them fertilizer. A recent phone call informed me the old wreck of a house we used there had been refurbished, partly for our benefit, and had been freshly painted with a stove, microwave and TV installed for our comfort.

I have distant relatives in outback New South Wales and we go there each year to shoot foxes which always seem to be in abundance. We stay for a week or so just after Christmas and, on average, apart from taking a few pigs we cull about 60 foxes which helps relieve pressure on the sheep. Ammunition and diesel is supplied courtesy of our farmer relatives.

We're keen deer hunters and have access to several properties where the sambar population has built up and, along with the numbers, the fact an

adult sambar needs at least 40kg of food to see it through a cold winter's night, you can understand farmers' concerns when sambar head for their clover-filled paddocks as soon as the sun goes down.

Speaking recently to one of the property owners, the conversation naturally turned to the sambar which are forever in her paddocks. The first deer she saw there years ago was a hind and calf and at the time she thought it a lovely sight, but now has a different slant on it: "The bloody things are everywhere, eating us out of house and home," she told me.

Some years back the in-laws asked us to take care of several sambar that were regularly gorging on the rolls of feed they'd harvested in their back paddock. A successful hunt a short time later had us catching the culprits heading back into the bush after a night's grazing, the resulting action accounting for two deer which could have been three but I couldn't bring myself to shoot another one.

Upon relating our relative success to the in-laws we were thanked but told we should have shot the lot while we had the chance. When I said two was all I could

handle at a time we were told to shoot them and leave them where they fell, and on declaring I couldn't justify the wastage to my conscience was told: "Nothing's wasted in the bush - something will clean it up". Harsh words you may think but, on reflection, perfectly true as something will eventually feed on them.

As the old saying goes, to understand someone's else problem you have to walk a mile in their shoes. We often see up to 20 sambar feeding in the in-law's paddocks and given they eat as much as a steer or thereabouts, that's 20 head of cattle that can't be run in the paddocks which, at today's going rate, is a fairly hefty burden to bear.

After one sambar hunt I was in camp working on the carcass when I heard a vehicle approaching. Thinking it was the in-laws checking on their stock I didn't turn until I heard an unfamiliar voice: "Tell me that's the sixth one you've shot today." It was a neighbouring farmer who was genuinely disappointed when I told him to the contrary. His parting words were: "Make sure you deck a few more before you leave." That's the sort of pressure farmers are feeling.

Another outing had us dealing with two deer taken as quickly as it took to fire and reload. There's a fair bit of work involved in breaking down one deer, let alone two, so we called the farmer who



Blake Rosmulder with a few feral pigs which won't be ravaging any more crops.



Rabbit numbers will soar when breeding conditions are right, as Leon Wright can vouch for.

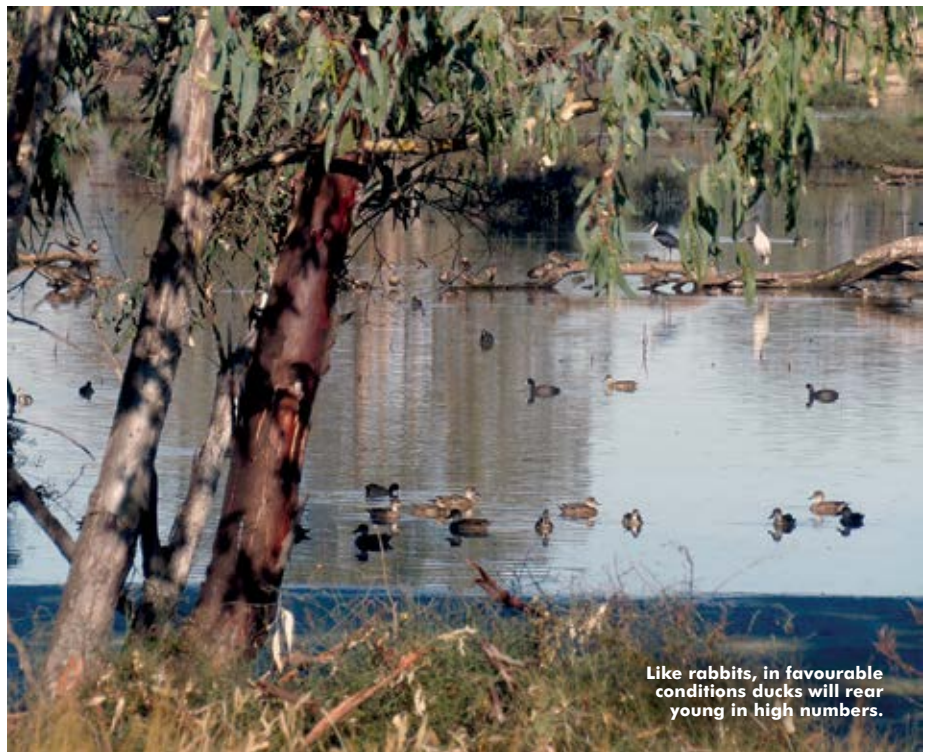
The ethical dilemma of hunting

brought the tractor with bucket attached and we loaded them into that and took them back to camp to work on them. It wasn't a problem for him, he was just glad to have two less deer feeding in his paddock.

My daughter has a small farm which backs on to a state forest and she's plagued with kangaroos. At first we did nothing about it because, to be honest, it was nice to sit in her lounge and watch a few hopping about, but after a while their numbers were increasing rapidly. At first I'd take my truck out to the farm and, with the dog in the back barking, herd the roos back into the forest, but eventually something had to be done and after watching the bigger roos belting her horses when they came in to drink, my daughter applied for a permit.

The ranger came out and asked where the problem was so she pointed him in the direction of the back paddock. He returned after a while having counted about 300 roos in that paddock and issued a permit to destroy 80 of them. Now there's no way we were going to shoot 80 kangaroos at once but given my daughter has several dogs we took a few at a time for dog food. This year when she reapplied for the permit they increased the number to 150 as roos in the area were dying of starvation.

Being keen duck hunters we anticipate



Like rabbits, in favourable conditions ducks will rear young in high numbers.

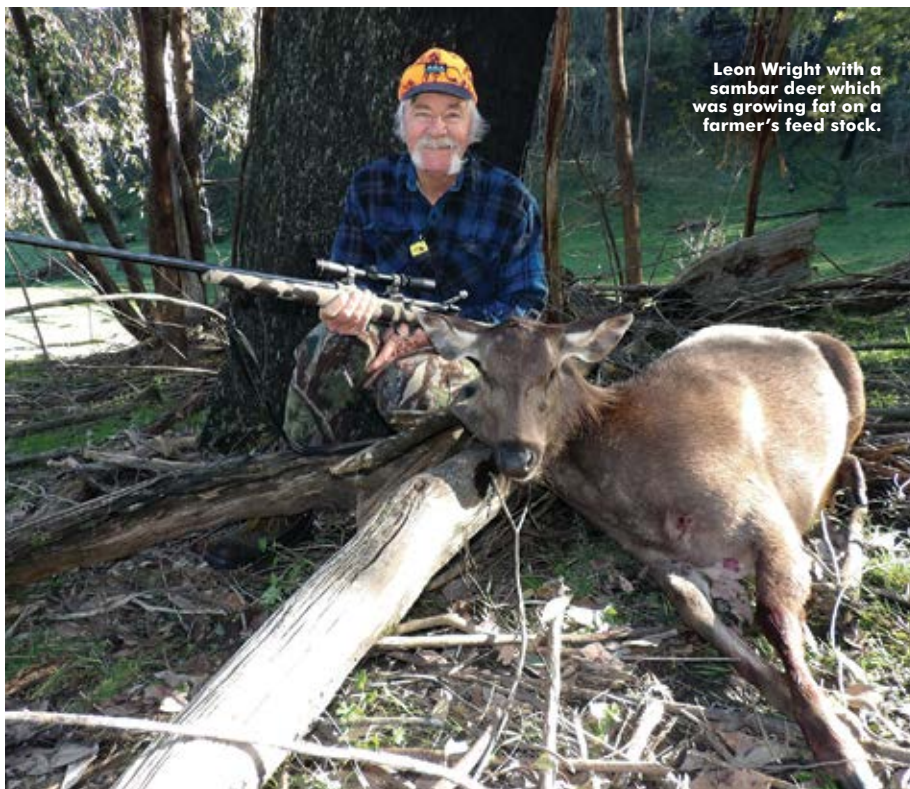
the Victorian duck hunting season with enthusiasm. We head out about three times a week in season and, when it's over, look forward to the NSW rice season to continue our expeditions. The Game Mitigation system is run by the NSW

Game Council and is strictly regulated, which a lot of rice growers have a problem with when they face enormous crop losses thanks to marauding flocks of ducks.

One property we were shooting on had lots of whistling ducks dining on their rice and our farmer friends were frustrated when we told them whistlers were not on the list of ducks we were allowed to hunt - we couldn't shoot them. Thankfully commonsense prevailed and after a phone call to the local Game Council office a number of whistlers were added to their quota and we were able to move them on.

The number of ducks worrying another block we were hunting on was incredible. When they went up the sky was black with them and, looking at the numbers allocated to that property, we soon realised we'd fill their quota in quick time and in one evening's shoot took their quota with full freezers the end result. The farmers were frustrated when we told them they'd need their quotas reassessed before we could shoot any more.

I've no doubt other hunters are faced with the same predicament and while all the hunting is good to have, it can be a bit of a dilemma trying to juggle such shooting with the numbers involved and the ethics presented by the situation. ●



Leon Wright with a sambar deer which was growing fat on a farmer's feed stock.

For the record...

archiving Australia's military history

Stephan Schutze



Stephan Schutze recording an Australian Korean Sabre jet at Temora Aviation Museum in NSW.

Have you ever wondered what an Owen Machine Carbine sounds like when it fires? Designed in Australia and used throughout World War Two, it's a significant part of Australian military history and, like many other historical firearms, the sound it made is likely to be lost . . . unless.

That's where I come in. I have a job most people don't really understand and most of the time don't even know is a real job. I record sounds - the sounds of objects, creatures, people and much more - then use them for a huge range of purposes and projects including film, television and game production, corporate branding, education and training, military simulations and to create commercial sound effects libraries.

Some years ago I was approached by the Australian National Film and Sound Archives because of the significance of much of the content I've captured. I have

sounds no one else has recorded and in general the work I do greatly complements the archiving of our country's history. Many people take photos and video but seldom do we carefully capture the sounds of our world. This is what I do.

I realised the importance of sound archiving when I visited a museum in Melbourne. Downstairs is kept the second computer ever made (yes, Australia made the second-ever modern computing machine), a beast of a thing with knobs and dials and lights but it no longer works so sits idle and, more importantly, sits in silence. There are no recordings of what this thing sounded like so we'll never know nor will future generations and eventually this will be the case with many items we take for granted.

What am I doing?

In 2011 I spent a week in Lithgow at the

museum attached to the Lithgow Small Arms Factory and over a few days carefully went through much of their collection to capture their sounds. I took each firearm, examined it to get an understanding of its workings, photographed it for reference then methodically went through each mechanical action and recorded each one. Loading, unloading, cocking, dry firing, all the sounds each firearm would produce in its normal operation.

I've been aiming to complete that project for years by finding a way to capture the sounds of those firearms being discharged. This is no small feat but I consider it a significant part of accurately archiving an important part of Australia's military history. I want to record every firearm used by Australian forces throughout our history but this is not something I can do alone.

Finding working models of all relevant

For the record...archiving Australia's military history

firearms will be tricky to start with, even harder will be finding people who can legally fire some of the more serious military hardware. Then I need to coordinate the logistics of how I get to where the firearms are and how I arrange to record them. As you can imagine this not going to be a short-term project but a healthy dose of stubbornness and patience have become occupational necessities.

So part of this article is simply an explanation of an unusual project involving firearms but part is also a request for help, as I'd love the shooting community around Australia to help me find the firearms I need to record and suggest ways I can achieve this goal.

Why this is a challenge

There are a huge number of factors which can contaminate a sound recording - rain, strong wind, traffic and other people can all interfere with the process. It only takes a few minutes to capture a firearm being fired once the initial setup is ready, so I need a quiet range for at least a few minutes. I also need open space with no structures because, whether you've noticed or not, we're all familiar with the echo you hear when firing a gun near a building - you get that 'bang-tack' effect as the sound bounces off a nearby shed or clubhouse.

The process I've used in the past involves 30-45 minutes to set up the gear correctly, calibrate it then literally a handful of minutes of quiet while someone sends a dozen rounds downrange. It does sometimes feel as silly as it sounds, the best part of an hour to set up my gear for a minute or two of recording, but that's the reality.



Recording an Owen Machine Carbine at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum.

Where you come in

As mentioned, I need help from Australia's shooting community. While it's super-easy to access a 303 of some description, it will be challenging to source all the firearms I have on my list. I own a BSA 303 but not one used by Australian troops and the whole point of this project is accuracy and authenticity. I don't need to fire the guns, much as I'd love to, my job is to make sure the sounds are recorded cleanly and accurately. What I need therefore are people who own the correct firearms and are prepared to fire a few shots downrange at a time and place which allows me to capture the sound.

This will require me travelling but also for the community to understand why the new guy with the microphones is around and why we might ask for a couple

of minutes to fire some rounds before everyone resumes shooting (assuming we're at a range).

I won't provide a full list of Australian military arms here as I feel those who own firearms in this category will be well aware of what they have. This is something that will require time and patience but I know the shooting community in Australia is passionate and history is something many of us value.

I can be contacted directly if anyone has questions or needs further information and am really looking forward to hearing the sounds of some of our amazing historical firearms. Thank you to anyone who may be able to assist with this project. ●

• Stephan Schutze is co-founder and artistic director of Sound Librarian. You can email him direct at stephan@soundlibrarian.com

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Styrka riflescopes

new in Australia for the
shooting sportsman

Con Kapralos

Traditional shooting optics manufacturers don't seem to have the marketplace to themselves any more. Twenty-five years ago the high-end European outlets were dominant with a few Japanese and US offerings making up the options, but advances in materials science and optical industrialisation, especially in China, has seen superb shooting optics made on an original equipment manufacturer basis for companies new to the genre as well as established players.

With almost 100 years of combined optics experience, Styрка has recently diversified and offers the hunting sportsman a premium array of riflescopes, binoculars and spotting scopes at a competitive price, backed with a hard-to-beat warranty and free annual optics 'health check'.

The name Styрка has Scandinavian origins meaning 'strength' and is pronounced stir-kah or stree-kah depending what side of the Pacific you live on. Australian distributor Ground Force International offered *Australian Shooter* three riflescopes from the Series S3, S5 and S7, specifically the S3 in 4-12x50, S5 in 3-9x40 and S7 in 2.5-15x50 specifications. The S3 is the entry level encompassing eight models, the higher quality S5 and S7 having seven and eight versions respectively.

Styrka riflescope features

All scopes have fully multicoated optics for maximum lowlight performance and are 100 per cent waterproof and nitrogen purged with quality seals employed. The one-piece CNC-machined 6061-T6 aircraft-grade aluminium main tubes provide admirable strength and eliminate the risk of leaks. They also have side focus parallax adjustment for quick tweaks, blackened lens edges for eliminating stray light from within the scope and precision machined reticle systems to ensure accuracy and point-of-impact.

A custom neoprene cover protects the scope against scratches, dirt and dust, there's a lens cleaning cloth and user manual, safe magnet and Styрка decal supplied in an attractive red and black carton with magnetic closing side-flap.

S3 4-12x50 with SH-BDC reticle

The S3 series is built on a one-piece 6061-T6 aluminium tube with 25.4mm main tube, the review unit measuring 355mm and weighing 605g. It's a side-focus style where parallax can be compensated for using the left dial adjacent the elevation and windage turrets (parallax can be adjusted from 23m to infinity).

Elevation and windage turrets are of a hunter-type, low profile and covered

with aluminium caps and unscrewing these exposes the dials which are clearly labelled with positive and audible clicks of $\frac{1}{4}$ MOA. Adjustment range of 60 MOA for both elevation and windage is ample for a general-purpose hunting riflescope.

The ocular housing contains the ocular lens assemblies, power magnification dial and diopter adjustment. The magnification dial moves from 4- to 12-power and the diopter adjustment dial on the edge of the ocular housing is easy to adjust to bring the reticle - in the second focal plane - into focus. This SH-BDC reticle is like most Ballistic Drop Compensating (BDC) reticles which have hold-over subtensions for elevation and windage and not surprisingly is made to be used with the Styрка Ballistic Calculator software available as an app for android devices. I found the SH-BDC reticle a tad thin with vertical and horizontal stadia being the same thickness, which could pose a problem in lowlight conditions, but some shooters prefer thinner reticles.

The internal lenses are fully multicoated with Styрка's SXL proprietary coatings, anti-reflective in their nature and allowing for maximum brightness and optimal colour, sharpness and contrast. Blackened lens edges block out stray light, enhancing image quality and a rugged erector tube system on the S3 collection maintains

Styrka riflescopes

critical accuracy and point of impact. S3 models may be Styrka's 'entry-level' but all eight offer superb optics and have RRP's from \$300-\$430.

S5 in 3-9x40 with Plex reticle

Many attributes are shared by the S3 and S5 but the latter has a slightly higher specification and is optically a tad superior. The review scope in 3-9x40 with Plex reticle would make a brilliant optic for any rifle, rimfire or centrefire. Its dimensions at 320mm long and 500g weight make it a first-rate choice where compactness and weight are a factor and this model shares low-profile hunter-style turrets with aluminium caps to protect the dials.

Elevation and windage adjustment is 60 MOA with clicks positive and audible, parallax fixed at 91m though another model is available with adjustable parallax dial. The ocular design has a well-proportioned power magnification dial allowing smooth adjustment from 3x to 9x and a diopter focus dial on the edge of the ocular makes reticle focusing easy.

Internally, fully multicoated optics with Styrka's SXL lens treatments give sharp images with wonderful colour and contrast. The housing in the S5 (and S3) is nitrogen purged to removed air and filled with dry nitrogen gas to prevent internal fogging. Both the S5 and S3 are waterproof, submer-sion tested for 30 minutes at 1m.

Reticle in the S5 is the Plex, the standard 'cross-hair' design familiar to most hunters, the bulk of reticles these days being



Model, product number and magnification are on the underside of the turret housing.

glass-etched with Styrka no exception. The Plex reticle is in the second focal plane and one of the most popular designs, its simplicity being its best attribute. Overall the S5 offers everything available in the S3 with slightly higher quality lenses, giving an improved image. S5 options retail from \$360 to \$520.

S7 2.5-15x50 with SH-BDC reticle

The S7 is the flagship of the Styrka collection and features eight variations. Construction-wise they share the same

attributes as the S3 and S5 apart from being built on a 30mm main tube, their optics treated with Styrka's SXL-MAX lens coatings.

The 2.5-15x50 with SH-BDC reticle is a premium hunting riflescope measuring 350mm and weighing 653g, an adjustable parallax with the dial adjacent to the elevation and windage turrets able to compensate for parallax from 9.1m to infinity.

The turrets are identical to those on the other two classes, being low profile and capped with dials underneath, adjustment being 60 MOA for elevation and windage. What's pleasing in the entire Styrka series is turret caps are aluminium, unlike some manufacturers who still use plastic caps but charge a small fortune. Towards the business end of the scope the ocular is slim, the power magnification dial and diopter adjustment working smoothly.



Power magnification dial on Styrka scopes is rubber-lined to allow positive grip and ease of movement between magnification ranges.

Specifications

	S3 4-12x50	S5 3-9x40	S7 2.5-15x50
Model number	ST-91041	ST-93030	ST-95045
Magnification	4-12x	3-9x	2.5-15x
Objective lens diameter	50mm	40mm	50mm
Angular field of view	5.1-1.7 degrees	6.9-2.3 degrees	7.9-1.3 degrees
Linear field of view at 100m	8.2-2.7m	11-3.7m	12.6-2.1m
Tube diameter	25.4mm	25.4mm	30mm
Reticle	SH-BDC	Plex	SH-BDC
Parallax adjustment	Yes	No	Yes
Exit pupil	12.5-4.2mm	13.3-4.4mm	11-3.3mm
Eye relief	104-99mm	89mm	100mm
Adjustment gradation (clicks)	¼ MOA	¼ MOA	¼ MOA
Elevation range	60 MOA	60 MOA	60 MOA
Windage range	60 MOA	60 MOA	60 MOA
Parallax setting	23m to infinity	91m	9.1m to infinity
Weight	605g	500g	653g
Length	355mm	320mm	350mm
Price (RRP)	\$300-\$430	\$360-\$520	\$590-\$770
Distributor	Ground Force International		

The internals of the S7 review scope is where the difference lies. Highly precise and polished glass lenses are treated with Styrka's SXL-MAX fully multicoated Optics Group coatings. This system, which uses anti-reflective flat, broadband coatings, results in maximum brightness and optimal colour, sharpness and image contrast while maximising transmission across the entire visible light spectrum for true-to-nature colour representation.

Though the S3 and S5 models are good optically, the S7 is several steps ahead, lens edges blackened to block stray light and enhance image contrast further. The reticle in the SH-BDC is in the second focal plane and identical to the one on the S3 - one of three reticles offered by Styrka along with the Plex (standard duplex) and Mil-dot. Offered on selected S7 models is an illuminated Plex or Mil-dot reticle.

The SH-BDC reticle with subtensions for hold-over and wind is made to be used with their ballistic software, something all shooting optics manufacturers have embraced. Overall the S7 offers great value and retails from \$590 to \$770.

Range testing

All three performed without problems and were optically excellent out to 300m. Naturally the S7 in 2.5-15x50 with the parallax adjustment gave the best colour, clarity and contrast but the S3 and S5 were also very good. It must be remembered these are hunting riflescopes, not specialist long-range models to be dialed and shot out to 1000m. All review scopes were subjected to a tracking test 'around a target' at 100m and changes in windage and elevation were true and concise, with the initial and final shots overlapping and I was so impressed by the S3 4-12x50 I sent back a cheque instead of the scope!

Summary

What is there to say about Styrka's hunting riflescopes in S3, S5 and S7? Ranging in price from around \$300 for the S3 2-7x32 up to \$770 for the S7 2.5-15x50, they represent tremendous value. The 'deal-clincher' is Styrka's warranty and free-of-charge annual tune-up and cleaning service for all scopes sold through their dealer network. Styrka, with the backing of their parent company and their 100-plus years of expertise, have some top-notch riflescopes, binoculars and spotting scopes. More at styrkastrong.com ●

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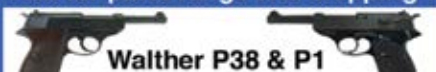


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Gun & Knife Show List

2020

Feb 29-March 1	Eastbank Centre, Welford St, Shepparton	200 tables antique & modern firearms, militaria and collectables Expo	Ricky Seiter 0400 567 353
March 7-8	Bathurst Showgrounds, Bathurst	Bathurst Arms Fair	bathurstarmsfair.com.au
March 14-15	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
April 4-5	The Betting Hall, Elwick Showgrounds, Hobart	Antique & modern firearms, edged weapons and militaria	Phil Gourlay 0477 411 457
May 23-24	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
July 18-19	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
September 12-13	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 12-13	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	Geoff Smith 0419 955 284
October 17-18	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252

Persons wishing to purchase any firearm that requires a licence from any arms fair in NSW should apply for a Permit to Acquire at least six weeks before the fair. For reasons beyond the control of show organisers, some of the above dates may be changed. It is advisable to check the show dates before travelling.



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Portia Eden

Communications Officer Sam Talbot

Portia Eden is a world champion. She's also a SSAA member and shoots with the Cairns Target Shooting Club and Cairns City Cowboys and while her world title isn't for shooting, at just 12 years old her rise through the ranks of the shooting world is just beginning.

Portia has been riding BMX since she was two years old and since then has clinched three world titles in Australian colours. That's 10 years of riding and three titles so if the trend continues she should have at least one shooting world title by the time she's 22 - no pressure Portia!

Until then she's happy to continue shooting Single Action under her alias, Lil' Weapon. Since BMX is such a big part of her life, I wasn't surprised to discover her alias has a BMX connection. "The name comes from my dad who was called 'The Weapon' when he raced BMX. I was only little when that was happening so I became the Lil' Weapon."

But whether it's on a bike or with a firearm, Portia likes to be fast and accurate. "I love being challenged by scenarios the club sets up for us. Doing this is really helping my memory skills and hand-eye coordination. The accuracy and speed are huge challenges but I'm getting a lot better. There's a lot more to just holding your firearm and shooting, so much skill is

required and it's great to see my progression. The people I shoot with have been so supportive and welcoming. I'm the youngest at the club and really respect the years of knowledge other club members are sharing with me."

Surprisingly, Portia hasn't shot in competition yet, instead she's focused on making sure all her fundamentals are as good as they can be. "I love learning and progressing in just about everything I do, but I love this group because the people I shoot with are so helpful."

Portia's favourite firearm is a rifle as it was the first one she learned to use - and it's what she's best with - the shotgun a close second followed by handgun. "The short-term goals are to get my holster proficiency licence, officially register my alias name and then take it a step at a time. But yes, I can see me entering state or national competitions for sure."

Portia's main coach is her pop who taught her just about everything she knows and while she loves spending time with him, she has asked us to thank the other dozen or so coaches and supporters at her club, all of whom encourage her.

As a world champ, Portia mentors and gives presentations to other youngsters interested in BMX and sport in general, and with shooting now a part of her arsenal she hopes to be a role model for that too. ●



Portia with her LOCAS (Ladies of Cowboy Action Shooting) badge.



V for Victory - world champion Portia.



Portia wins for Australia at the 2019 BMX World Championships in Belgium.



Sponsor a JUNIOR

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and **we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.**

Sean Tiver holding a .410 shotgun

☐ \$25 - includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter

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Hunter Class nationals mark golden milestone

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the SSAA Springsure branch hosted this year's Hunter Class rimfire and centrefire national championships at the Springsure range in outback Queensland. The club had struck some eye-catching belt buckles to mark the milestone and these were presented to the overall winners in each of the four rifle classes contested by shooters from several states.

Light rimfire was first away at 50m with only five shooters scoring the possible 250 points. Michael and Gaye Truscott led the field, the former just ahead on central 'X' rings (or dots). Tricky wind conditions meant the 100yds distance proved frustrating for many but Kerry Moore held it together with a 248.5 to take the win. In the grand score the event was won convincingly by Michael Truscott on 497.14 ahead of Glenn Seaman (493.10) and Phil Jones (492.13).

Heavy (Custom) rimfire was up next in similar conditions to the previous day and at the shorter yardage Paul Sullivan was one of only five shooters to post a 250, his 14 dots not too shabby either. The longer yardage again proved a struggle with nobody shooting a maximum, Seaman top scoring on 248.6. Consistency paid off for Chris Parry in the grand score as he took the title on 498.13, pipping Seaman (497.22) and Sullivan (497.19). The rimfire two-gun went to Seaman on 990.32 from Michael Truscott (990.25) and Gaye Truscott (985.31).

Sunday was set down for Heavy Centrefire Hunter, essentially heavy benchrest rifles, many chambered in 6mm

PPC and a few for the 30BR, the latter making bigger holes in the target which can be an advantage. The 100yds competition saw nine shooters register a 250 as it all came down to dots, Sullivan recording a remarkable 23 to hold off Gavin Marshall (18) and Annie Elliott (17).

The mirage at 200yds was something to behold, confusing many competitors, Elliott shooting a 30BR and emerging victorious with 248.9 ahead of Kevin Birse (248.4) and Brendan Atkinson (248.2). The overall score had a trio of shooters tied on 498 points, honours going to Elliott with 26 dots from Kerry Moore (16) and Atkinson (12) with plenty of "if onlys" being bandied about.

The final day brought Centrefire Light Hunter or light benchrest rifle, shooters a bit more comfortable with the range by that stage although the mirage again proved testing at the longer yardage. Eight shooters managed a 250-pointer but again it was Sullivan who turned on the style with 21 dots to hold off Ean Parsons (18) and Greg Schneider (14).

Again the longer distance proved challenging, no-one posting a 250 with Elliott's 249.4 good enough to win from Atkinson (247.4) and Michael Truscott (247.3), the latter taking gold overall with 497.17 from Sullivan (247.26) and Atkinson (496.18).

The centrefire two-gun title went to Elliott on 994.38 ahead of Atkinson (994.30) with bronze going to Sullivan on 993.57. Winner of the four-gun award for all events was Michael Truscott with a combined score of 1983.63 ahead of Sullivan (1979.82) and Gaye Truscott (1972.65). ●



Light Rimfire Hunter winner Michael Truscott.



The 50th anniversary belt buckles.



Heavy Rimfire Hunter: Glen Seaman, Chris Parry and Paul Sullivan.



Heavy Centrefire Hunter: Kerry Moore, Annie Elliott and Brendan Atkinson.



Light Centrefire Hunter: Paul Sullivan, Michael Truscott and Brendan Atkinson.

National

SSAA National Muzzleloading Postal Shoot

August 1-December 4, 2019

Various locations

Program: See website for event details.
Contact: 27honeysuckle@msn.com.au

New South Wales

SSAA NSW Newcastle 50th Anniversary Benchrest Score Shoot

December 7-8, 2019

SSAA Newcastle Range,
East Seaham, NSW

Program: Friday, December 6:
Centrefire practice 8am-noon,
Rimfire practice noon-close. Saturday:
Benchrest Score Heavy Centrefire.
Sunday: Benchrest Score Heavy

Rimfire. Dinner Friday for small fee, Saturday barbecue \$15 children half-price. Nominations: \$50 a day. Rules: SSAA rule book. Prizes: As per rule book. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, camping on range (please advise beforehand). Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billinghurst 0418 478 160.

SSAA NSW Combined Services Pistol State Championships

February 29-March 1, 2020

Emmaville Range, 3884 Emmaville Road, Emmaville, NSW

Program: See website for full event details. Nominations: Online at www.nswcsd.com.au. Adults \$60, juniors half price, individual events \$25 to be received by February 17. Rules: SSAA Combined Services Rulebook 2017. Prizes: Medals for all events. Facilities:

Barbecue lunch provided both days, camping and caravans permitted Friday to Sunday, toilets and showers. Contact: Evan Brown 0428 100 336.

ACT

SSAA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette ACT state championships

January 20, 2020

SSAA Majura, Hector McIntosh Grove, Majura, ACT

Program: January 20, 8.30am BPCR match; 2pm 40-shot BPCR match (see website for details). Nominations: \$10 per event, juniors and pensioners half price. Rules: When in the ACT carry your home state's firearms registration or shooter's licence. Facilities: Camping on range with water, power, showers, \$10 per person per night, juniors no

charge. Fires allowed if no fire ban. Contact: Mark Lovell 0401 867 839 or email mnl1@live.com.au

SSAA ACT 40th anniversary Australia Day Benchrest competition

January 24-26, 2020

Jim McKinley Range, Majura, ACT

Program: Friday, January 24: Practice.

Saturday: 9am Light Benchrest 100yds and 200yds. Sunday: 9am Heavy Benchrest 100yds and 200yds.

Nominations: \$60 per class. Email nomination and contact details to sixppc@iinet.net.au. Bring current shooter's licence and SSAA membership card. Numbers limited so apply early.

Rules: SSAA Benchrest rule book. Facilities: Canteen, utility service fee of \$10 per day per person. Contact: Alex Chryst at sixppc@iinet.net.au

SSAA Official Calendar

NATIONAL

August 1-Dec 4, 2019

SSAA National Muzzleloading Postal Shoot

Various locations

27honeysuckle@msn.com.au

STATE

December 7-8, 2019

January 20, 2020

January 24-26, 2020

Feb 29-March 1, 2020

SSAA NSW Newcastle 50th Anniversary Benchrest Score Shoot

SSAA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette ACT State Championships

SSAA ACT 40th anniversary Australia Day Benchrest competition

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sixppc@iinet.net.au

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Make your own shooting targets

Con Kapralos

These days it seems everything you buy for the home comes wrapped in cardboard. Buying larger items such as TVs, refrigerators and the like results in huge slabs of the stuff destined for the recycling bin - until an idea came to mind. Scrap cardboard makes ideal targets for sighting-in rifles or accuracy testing.

While there are excellent commercially available targets, the sheer volume of shooting I do - rifles, optics and ammunition reviews - sees me go through lots of them. The SSAA has official centrefire and rimfire targets for its many disciplines which I have access to, but the idea of using cardboard that would only go to waste converted me.

Raw materials

Cardboard of any thickness will do provided one side has no printing, normal brown or thinner white cardboard perfectly suitable. Ideally it should be cut into 50 x 50cm pieces although any size, square or rectangular, can be used. For safety when cutting use scissors rather than a Stanley knife.

Your target

A good old Texta marker will make any target pattern you need but ideally an aiming mark that's quick to create is what you're after, the cheapest and fastest way to create aiming marks being an ink pad and rubber stamp. I bought a red ink pad from a stationery store and had a 10cm circular rubber bung in the shed. Load the bung via the ink pad and a firm press on the cardboard is all it takes. For \$10 you can create countless targets - as long as you have ink.

If ink is a tad messy or you prefer something a bit sharper, fluorescent yellow self-adhesive rectangular labels, 16 per A4 sheet, are highly visible targets. For 100m work I create a small '+' pattern using two labels and this, with its highly visible colour, draws the reticle very well to the point-of-aim.

For distances greater than 100m a larger cross can be made with four to six labels and that's what I use for dialing in hunting rifles to shoot a 200m zero. The fluorescent colour is a must and I prefer yellow though hot pink or orange also work.



For 100m testing, two labels forming a cross make a very visible aiming point.

10cm dot made with a rubber bung and ink pad.



Used targets - then what?

You've perforated the targets with a few bullets but why discard them? They can be reused by buying self-adhesive circular 'dots' to patch the holes. I use a colour as close to cardboard brown (orange actually) which works well. Dots 10-20mm in diameter are ideal and available from stationery suppliers in boxes of 100.

Target-makers don't fret!

I use commercially-made targets regularly, be it SSAA approved ones in competition or the neat 'splatter' style ones which show bullet strikes very well. But if you have cardboard lying around, create your own targets for a few cents each. Once you're done just pop them in the recycling bin. ●



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CLOTHING

SSAA shotgun vest

The new SSAA Shotgun Vest is made to our usual high standards and now comes with upgraded features such as the ability to insert additional padding in the shoulders to absorb recoil.

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SVG004 - XL
SVG005 - 2XL
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Back in stock!

SSAA renegade jacket

\$94.95

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Green

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CJG004 - XL
CJG005 - 2XL
CJG006 - 3XL

Black

CJB001 - Small
CJB002 - Medium
CJB003 - Large
CJB004 - XL
CJB005 - 2XL
CJB006 - 3XL



[See complete size details online](#)

SSAA softshell vest

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Front

Back

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[See complete size details online](#)

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The SSAA ladies' Polo has a feminine styled 'V' neck with contrasting piping panels. The easy care fabric is 160gm 100 per cent DriWear polyester with moisture removal and mini-waffle knit.

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LP012 - Size 12
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LP024 - Size 24
LP026 - Size 26

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LPB10 - Size 10
LPB12 - Size 12
LPB14 - Size 14
LPB16 - Size 16
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LPB26 - Size 26

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SSAA bush kettle

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For your chance to win one of these competitions, write your name, address, phone number and membership number on a piece of paper and place it inside an envelope, along with the name of the competition on the front of the envelope, as shown in the example. Alternatively, you can enter online. Competitions close December 30, 2019.

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Juniors

SSAA Outdoors Bag

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Competition winners

Australian Shooter October 2019

Black double rifle bag
Peter Robson, Qld

MOA or MIL Sight-in Targets
Paul Robinson, Qld

October Junior - The Outdoor Connection Raptor Sling with Tikka logo
Callum Graham, WA

October Best Shots Mug
David Clark, Qld

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The platypus and the hare

Spring is pushing three weeks old as I write. The flush of grass and yellow-flowering cape weed that emerged after the last shower a few weeks back is looking deceptively good, even if the ground is still rock-hard beneath. The worst of the frosts are over and though there are still a few cold hollows here and there, it's a wonderful time of year for a morning walk with the dog.

Today as we ambled down towards the bridge, a hare came darting out of a neighbouring paddock. There are always a few of these wonderful speedsters about but we rarely encounter them except as road kill. For that reason alone it was nice to see one up and about and bobbing towards us through wet grass.

Though I've no real way of knowing, the animal looked to be a youngster, not yet filled right out but getting there. Like a lot of youngsters it seemed in need of some direction in life if the way it came towards us was any sort of indicator. It jinked in one direction, twisted in another, stopped to nibble then hopped in a circle - perhaps to find its bearings - and came towards us again.

For all I know it may have been doing nothing more than enjoying the morning sun on its back and freedom to roam, or perhaps was high on the prospect of all the grass there was to eat and unsure where to start. Whatever those thoughts were it wasn't paying enough attention to

what was going on around and was less than 20m away when it finally saw me and stopped.

As it did, Dixie launched her chase. As far as I know she'd never seen a hare before but that wasn't going to stop her from giving it a run. She never stood a chance. The hare didn't even need top gear to make good its escape and was loping along at least 30m in front of the dog, cruising well short of a flat-out run and still making ground when I whistled her back.

She responded immediately, obedient to

a moving ripple hard against the nearside bank in a smooth run of water caught my eye. At first I thought it was probably a feeding carp but could see no fish. A drift of fine mud still hung in the current to say something had been there so I took a careful step closer and as I did a platypus bobbed to the surface midstream.

Back in 2010 a one-in-100-year flood came down that creek but since then platypus sightings have been few and far between. For me, the animal lying in the current was a rare and fleeting privilege,

gone too soon when it dived and disappeared among the shadows under the opposite bank. Chuffed with good fortune we walked on.

A couple of hundred metres further upstream, around and beyond a largish bend, another platypus was floating in the backwater above the hole we pump our yard water from. It may have been the earlier animal, heading upstream like me, but I like to think it wasn't. Two platypuses today may well mean more tomorrow and in this day and age that can only be a good thing.

Spring morning walks are never wasted, though the level of inspiration they generate

varies considerably. Some are nothing more than sweaty exercises that wear me out for the rest of the day, others come with assorted trimmings and the odd one here and there is special, replete with hares and platypus. They're the ones that make a morning walk worthwhile.



my call and smart enough to know the hare had her beaten from the jump. She returned to me panting, sat when bidden, accepted my commiserative pats and agreed when I told her she was a good girl. Then we continued our walk, excitement over and done in considerably less time than it has taken me to write it down.

Perhaps five minutes later as I picked my way across a stony flat beside the creek,



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