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Shooter

THE AUSTRALIAN

July 2019
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Our July cover features Swarovski's ATS 65 premium spotting scope

NEXT ISSUE



Conservationist and hunter Chris Rogers has taken to the high country of Scotland with the appropriately-named Rigby Highland Stalker rifle where his patience paid a handsome dividend.

Con Kapralos got his hands on the Franchi Horizon 150th Anniversary rifle which he says "with an RRP of \$1200 makes for a great buy and could prove a solid investment for not a lot of money".

Chris Redlich goes bush with the latest rangefinding binoculars from Kahles, the Helia RF 10x42s, concluding "feel and functionality of range-finding and quality of the lenses made glassing a breeze".



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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Keep yourself informed of all that we're doing

I'm sure we're all thankful the elections, not necessarily the politics, are behind us and we can get back to concentrating on our sport and moving forward in our efforts to develop and normalise it as a regular and legitimate community pastime.

Much of the SSAA's recent progressive activity hasn't had the exposure it deserves but with the support and assistance of our great membership we're positioned well to showcase shooters and firearms owners in the best possible light. My congratulations go to the SSAA state associations and branches who are increasingly coming on board and participating in and promoting a diverse range of high profile activities.

In WA the establishment of the Western Australia Accessible Sport Shooting Group specifically for shooters with a disability has to be applauded, as does our newest ambassador, clay target shooter Scott Brydon from ACT, who proudly represents Australia as a wheelchair shooter in the SG-S Class and is currently number two in the world rankings as well as topping the Commonwealth ladder.

There have been a number of special days at several state branches for new shooters, juniors and women, supported by SSAA National Coaching and Membership Development Manager Gemma Dunn, to broaden the scope for these groups to get a positive feel for the sport. The most recent of these was a successful SSAA Darwin branch-sponsored Ladies Open Day in June called Shoot for a Cure NT, a fundraiser with all proceeds going to Ovarian Cancer Australia.

And don't forget SSAA South Australia's efforts in bringing shooting to the 2019 Australian Scout Jamboree in January and ongoing conservation efforts in funding university research into deer in Queensland

and Victoria, quoll rehabilitation in SA and our renewed support for Aussie Ark, previously Devil's Ark in New South Wales.

I certainly haven't overlooked the myriad of other core activities that all levels of SSAA are involved in, details of which can be seen on our website, Facebook page or numerous print publications and I would advise there's so much happening that you really need to keep a regular eye on these sources to keep up.

That old criticism 'the SSAA should be doing more' no longer has any credibility and our detractors are finding increasing difficulty in offering any valid condemnation of what we stand for. We're making real progress but cannot become complacent and expect 'someone else' will do it for us.

As we approach then surpass our 200,000 member target, I appeal to all members to keep themselves informed of the SSAA's achievements and the many benefits membership brings, both individually and collectively. Wherever possible we need to take an active interest in our sport either by just keeping ourselves informed, attending branch meetings, participating in the local branch or range or by being an ethical and responsible hunter.

SSAA is a member-driven organisation and its strength is in those members. Make sure your local committees are representing your needs and values to the relevant SSAA administrations and, if not, become involved and help us support you. There's strength in numbers and we can only make a difference if we're seen to be strong and standing together.

G. E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



SSAA - Protecting shooters since 1948

A case for suppressors

AFTER READING DANIEL O'Dea's article on suppressors (February 2019) I thought I'd share a story with you. I have a friend who has 350 acres and keeps sheep. Myself and a friend cull kangaroos for him, legally with a permit, and before we go out he emails his neighbours to let them know there will be shooting on his property.

One neighbour constantly hassles us for shooting, calling the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Parks and Gardens; the police and whoever else, telling them bullets are ricocheting off his house. When police attended they laughed at him, telling him he hadn't a leg to stand on. He's even harassed us over the fence while we were working.

My point is, if we're registered shooters with a permit why can't we use suppressors? If we were allowed, all this harassment could be avoided.

Ashley Raven, via email

More lions on the run

I ALWAYS ENJOY the magazine and your April edition brought back memories when I read the article on the escaped circus lions in Adelaide. Believe it or not, that was not the first time an incident of lions escaping had occurred.

In 1954, such an event happened to

Wirth's Circus in Coffs Harbour and I wrote about my own experience in a book which was later published. I was a voluntary enlisted member of the local Citizen Military Forces (CMF) and all available members were called out to assist police in containing the animals.

Just thought you might be interested in a little bit of Australian history which seems to have slipped under the radar. Fortunately in this case no lions were destroyed as all five were eventually caged.

Barry Harrison, via email

Men's Shed good for the head

I COMPLETED THE national shooting and hunting survey and noticed it included the health benefits as well as financial benefits of shooting and hunting. I've been on a couple of Conservation and Wildlife Management shoots and in some respects they reminded me of the 'Men's Shed', which I've done some volunteer work for.

Some of the guys are older and retired and see it as a good way to make friends and have social interaction with a common cause. I reckon the mental health aspect of this camaraderie is something that has benefit to the wider community and should be reported in the mainstream media.

Take a look at the Men's Shed website (mensshed.org) as they have some excellent information on the isolation men

can feel as they get older and the mental benefits of working together for a common cause.

Brett Payne, via email

Lee-Enfield: A burning issue

GEOFF SMITH'S ANSWER to Ross Robinson (Top Shots, March 2019) about woodwork on military rifles isn't quite complete. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) the British used the .303 Lee-Enfield Mk1 which had wood extending underneath the barrel only. The Boers used Mauser rifles which had wood also covering the top of the barrel, forward of the rear sight, for half its length.

They adopted fast-moving guerrilla tactics, ambushing British columns then fleeing on horseback with rifles slung over the back of the horse. When the British attempted to copy these tactics the exposed hot barrels of the Lee-Enfields burnt the horses, causing them to bolt and throw their riders. This is why the SMLE, introduced in 1904, had woodwork fully encasing the barrel up to the muzzle. In Britain, this design feature lasted until 1957 when the 7.62mm FN self-loading rifle was adopted, although the reason for it had long been forgotten.

Michael Cook, Vic



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q I'm in the process of installing extra surveillance around my home which will include putting a security camera near my gun safe as well as a variety of other measures to generally bolster the security of my house and land. Will these upgrades enable me to secure a better deal on my insurance?

A Yes and no. Since our SSAA Members Firearms Insurance is already such a great deal, we can't make it

go any lower for individual cases no matter how secure their firearms. As for home and contents policies, some insurers will and others won't.

At SSAA General Insurance Brokers we deal with all the major underwriters for home and contents insurance, ensuring SSAA members have the best deals possible. It's in your best interest to install alarms, deadlocks or other security features in your house primarily for your own safety but also because it allows us to present

your risk to a wider range of underwriters.

If you'd like more on home and contents insurance or any other insurance product, visit us online at www.ssaaib.com.au or call 08 8332 0281.



Howa Mini problem solved

ON PAUL MILLER'S reply to Ron Manning (Top Shots, March) regarding the Howa 1500 Mini Action issue, a good friend owns the same rifle as Ron and had the very same problem. Even with heavier projectiles in factory loads, the rifle failed to produce acceptable groups.

He then decided to handload for his Mini Action in .223 and tailor the bullet seating depth to suit the rifle specifically. He also used cases he'd already fired in that rifle and neck-sized these cases only. His conclusion was that on this rifle the chamber was a fraction over-sized (his words, not mine) and using fire-formed cases from that rifle and only neck-sizing, as well as adjusting the bullet seating depth, resulted in five shots under MOA at 100m with projectiles in the 55-64gr weight.

I suggest Ron has the rifle checked by a competent gunsmith before opting for a re-barrel as on a rifle like the Howa Mini Action a re-barrel job would cost as much as the rifle itself. In my friend's case reloading fixed the inaccuracy issue but an oversize chamber would be easily picked up by a good gunsmith. On a new rifle it would surely be a warranty issue.

Con Kapralos, SA

Easy with that cleaning rod

I READ THE Top Shots question from David Proctor (February, 2019) regarding

his Model 2 Brno which all of a sudden lost accuracy and thought I'd add my two-bob's worth as I had a similar problem with mine some years ago.

After trying a number of things to fix the problem, most of them listed in Paul Miller's reply, I discovered that during an over-enthusiastic cleaning session I had pulled the cleaning rod and jag too violently back through the muzzle and damaged the rifling, not badly but enough to seriously effect accuracy. I had the muzzle re-crowned and problem solved. Subsequently, I'm more particular with my cleaning routine now.

Graham Pattie, via email

Duck column was spot on

COULDN'T AGREE MORE with Matthew Godson's Open Season column 'Ducks don't visit dried-up ponds' (*Shooter*, February 2019) as I have shot many ducks on dams and channels. Duck numbers around dairy farms can be in the hundreds and I've seen miles of channels hold thousands of ducks. Keep up the good work.

Gary Johnson, via email

Spotlight on Olight

JUST A LINE to recognise sound customer service and a quality shooting product.

I was given an Olight M3XS-UT Javelot in May, 2016 along with a magnetic barrel mount. As it was a present from my son and

was bought online, I had no receipt or proof of purchase. The purchase was based on an *Australian Shooter* review and I've been more than satisfied with this excellent piece of kit.

After countless nights of cycling the batteries through the torch and rounds through my .308 Winchester (torch attached) to account for numerous feral pigs and the odd wild dog, the unit suddenly gave up the ghost.

I had to resort to my old halogen handheld spotlight, which seems like spotlighting with a tilley lamp compared to the Olight rifle-mounted torch. A call to Adam at Olight put me on the path to check the batteries and switch etc. The offer for warranty (five years) was not an issue and I have since turned night into day again.

I recommend both Olight torches and the service from Olight to anyone in the market for this type of equipment.

Dave Thomas, Qld

Something to be proud of

THANK YOU SSAA for my 25-year membership pin. It will look great on the green blazer I wore when I represented Australia in fullbore shooting on three occasions, once winning the Queen's Prize. At 94 years of age the pin marks more than 70 years as a law-abiding sporting shooter and I'll wear it with pride.

Kevin Long, Qld



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James Bond's conservation pitch

A tweet I read leading up to election day reminded me of an article I'd read some time ago outlining concerns resulting from the adoption of a motion at the 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress. The adoption of Motion 007 (the 'James Bond' motion) called for the closing of all domestic ivory markets. It was adopted by a large majority of the Congress but there was strong opposition from member organisations that had a large stake in its potential impact.

The issue was not the topic but the way the process to adopt the motion was pushed through without gaining consensus or near-consensus which has always been standard practice. This particular situation has now raised suggestions the IUCN could move away from a consensus-building approach that provides a broad tent for the conservation movement towards a combative parliament in which the simple majority triumphs.

The fear within certain circles of the IUCN is if an adoption process as above becomes a common feature of IUCN debates, it could jeopardise the unique contributions the organisation brings to conservation. These contributions include the adoptions of policies, standards and analyses for the whole conservation community. The IUCN also brings together many parties such as governments, NGOs,

A strong and independent IUCN is vitally important for world-wide conservation.

indigenous peoples and scientifically independent commissions. It has mechanisms to facilitate discussion on complex issues across multiple stakeholders. The IUCN has what few organisations have and that's the credibility to bring together differing voices in both a neutral and constructive way.

The problem presented here is people within the IUCN are worried that for the IUCN to maintain its service to the broader conservation community it must not go down the path of making divisive decisions or policy adoptions. The 007 Motion was problematic as it failed to have reasoned debate. The fear is if the IUCN makes a habit of forcing divisive decisions it may then find it impossible to maintain scientific independence and its broad tent. All IUCN members must ensure consensus is sought to help stop a shift to a winner-takes-all approach. This is commonly seen in mainstream political debates where the uninformed bulldozing of opponents and a

refusal to negotiate is commonplace.

Those concerned with the situation have presented recommendations to safeguard the independence of the IUCN's technical role and strengthen its convening role. Reforms include amendments to rules of procedures to emphasize that Congress decisions should be by consensus and only voted on if consensus is not achieved - if voting is required then a higher percentage majority is required instead of just a simple majority; allowing more time for negotiations before Congress takes place; allow IUCN members to give early notice of potentially controversial motions they intend to submit; allow referral of potentially divisive but non-urgent motions to a two-step process where eventual consensus would be beneficial for conservation; requiring and guaranteeing the scientific independence of work carried out under IUCN's technical role to protect it from partisan interference from any source.

A strong and independent IUCN is vitally important for world-wide conservation. Conservation needs to be protected from partisan organisations such as animal rights groups whose idea of conservation is based on ideology and fund-raising potential.

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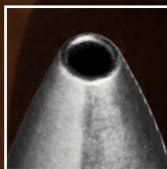
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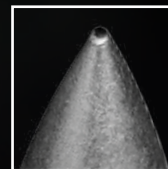
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Caseless ammunition

It has been quite some time since I last saw an advert, write-up or anything else on the subject of caseless ammunition. Some 30 or 40 years ago there were ads, articles and 'you-name-its' flying around everywhere - a huge change in emphasis if ever there was one.

The general subject, however, is far from dead since ammunition of such a nature appears to offer so many advantages that any military organisation must be drooling at its very mention. So let's go back a bit.

Until about 1850 the necessary powder and shot had, for each shot, to be fed down the muzzle of the gun while holding faith that it could later be induced to come back out again, on command. From about the 1860s, metallurgical progress had become such that the cartridge cases could then be drawn from brass, thus simplifying the whole process of shooting to the form now so familiar to us all.

As good as it gets, even this form of ammunition has its disadvantages, basically concerned with its weight, cost, complexities of manufacture and the intricacies it

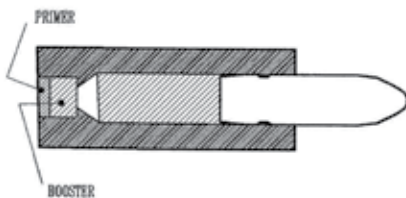


Fig. 2: Cross-section sketch of a combustible cartridge.

forces into the design etc of the accompanying firearm.

In later times attempts were periodically made to manufacture cases from combustible materials such as cellulose with an extremely low nitrogen content, but there didn't seem to be any such material that was both sufficiently strong and sufficiently flammable.

More recently Nobel's in Germany made a series of 'caseless' cases in which, despite their title, there is a cartridge case more or less of normal shape, but where that case is made from cast, hard, propellant material that holds the bullet, a powder charge and primer in normal manner (Fig. 2) and which forms part of the normal propellant charge. Nothing is left in the chamber after firing as even the primer cup is expelled.

Fig. 1 shows a couple of combustible cases from various stages of their overall development. On the left is one from an early stage of that development - a family of partly successful ones which fired but had an awkward tendency to soften and buckle if left in a hot chamber.

On the right is one known as the 'H&K 4.75x23' being the final pattern as used in the H&K G11 rifle which Heckler & Koch supplied to NATO for acceptance trials. The rifle and ammo survived these trials but the system has not yet been taken up by anyone.

The 'case' appears to be made from



Fig 1: Two combustible cartridges at different stages of development. Left: an early, partly successful pattern. Right: the final H&K 4.75x23.

pieces of minced-up propellant cast in hardened plastic (note the case has no extractor groove or rim). There is a 'normal' primer which ignites the internal booster charge which in turn shatters the case before its ultimate combustion. A very neat and apparently workable process and one which gives the G11 a very high rate of fire when so desired.



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223REM, 243WIN, 270WIN, 270WSM, 30-06SP, 300 BLK, 300WM, 300WSM, 30-30WIN, 308WIN, 7MM-08, 7MMRM, 6.5CREEDMOOR



Q My youngest son is really keen to start shooting clays after having a go at a school shoot and loving it. I recently watched a video you made on eye dominance and we found to our surprise he's left-eye dominant even though he does pretty much everything else as a right-hander. My question is: Should I teach him to shoot clays right-handed?

Keith Garrison, Vic

A Keith, it really shouldn't be such a surprise your son is left-eye dominant as 28 per cent of the population is right-handed but left-eye dominant. It's a subject we've covered several times in this forum so I won't go into too much detail on it, but your question about whether to teach your son to shoot on the opposite side of his eye dominance is an interesting one that's not easy to answer.

There are many people - I'm one - who are hopeless at doing anything on their left side. I'm right-handed and right-eye dominant so it was never something I had to worry about. My wife Lauryn is totally left-handed and also left-eye dominant so she never had to worry about what side to mount her gun either.

My two youngest children occasionally have a shot at clays and I was more than curious as to what side of the gun they'd stand. I tested their eye dominance at an early age and they were both right so I

One of the worst habits a new shooter can form is closing one eye which often leads them to squint out of their other eye and that's the last thing you want to do.

taught them to shoot off the right shoulder. I have to be honest and say if either of them was left-eye dominant I'd have taught them the basics of clay target shooting from their left side even though, like me, they can hardly scratch themselves with their left hand.

My children have no ambitions in the sport as they pursue other sporting and artistic interests, but if it was at all possible at such an early age to have them mount and point the shotgun correctly with two eyes open I'd have made them try for a period of time.

Using only one eye when shooting clays is not the end of the world. Many great champions have achieved fantastic results with one eye, so you could argue it's no great disadvantage - but it's certainly no

advantage either. There are many disciplines in clay shooting, or even hunting situations, where having two eyes open is clearly advantageous so my advice is to give your son the chance to see if he can shoot off the left shoulder with two eyes open.

The practical issue you have is you'll need to buy him a left-handed shotgun or at the very least a left-handed stock to try this with. A right-handed stock probably won't let him look down the centre of the barrel too easily and will increase perceived recoil of the firearm which may cause bad habits to form, so don't let him use a right-handed shotgun.

If you decide it's impossible for him to shoot consistently off his left shoulder then I suggest buying him a set of shooting glasses, which he'll need anyway, and simply block out the optical centre of the left lense so he can't use his dominant eye to shoot with but can still leave both eyes open. One of the worst habits a new shooter can form is closing one eye which often leads them to squint out of their other eye and that's the last thing you want to do.

Good luck with your son - teaching him to shoot will be one of the most enjoyable activities you could ask for.



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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS ?

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

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Q Can you assist with the identification, age and valuation of a side-by-side hammer shotgun I bought about 20 years ago with the intention of restoring? It's complete but the stock is broken and I'm unsure whether to make a new stock and restore it, try to sell it as is or scrap it. It has 'Goodwin & Co Birmingham The Raj' inscribed on the rib and under the barrel where the fore-end mounts is stamped 'Nitro Proof'.

Wayne Gibson, via email

A Your gun is a 12-gauge choke bored model with 2½" chambers made and tested in Birmingham. It looks to have 'Damascus' barrels and was proofed for both black powder and smokeless, using 1¼oz load of shot. Now the picture becomes clouded. Goodwin isn't listed as one of the 'famous' gun-makers of Birmingham, although a George Goodwin of Ann St, Birmingham was listed in 1818 as a gunmaker. Seems he wasn't still going as late as the earliest time your gun was made, since smokeless cartridges only came into use in the mid-1890s.

The letter 'M' stamped under the barrels suggests the gun was made in 1932, although David Williams in his book *The Birmingham Gun Trade* (History Press, UK 2009 edition) claimed no Damascus barrels were made in Birmingham after 1903. It could be the pattern on your gun is 'faux' Damascus or perhaps the barrels were made in Belgium but proofed in Birmingham, though I can't verify this.

As I've been unable to find any other reference to Goodwin & Co in Birmingham, I suspect yours is a 'trade gun', one of thousands made and branded for export from the late 19th century, most likely destined for India if 'The Raj' is anything to go by.

It may be coincidental, but there was a famous Josiah J. Goodwin (1870-1898) from Birmingham, described as a stenographer who transcribed the works of Swami Vivekananda and was well known in India where he died of typhoid fever at just 27. It's



possible he was honoured posthumously (perhaps by family still in the gun trade) by having his name attached to this range of guns.

If it's a trade gun with the barrels in good shape and the action still tight - and you can source some 2½" cartridges - it could probably be fired carefully with light loads after having it checked by a competent armorer. In terms of its likely value it's very difficult to give even an estimate without seeing it.

I suggest you repair the existing stock if possible, rather than make a new one, as this would retain originality and add to its 'history'. To have a new stock made from English walnut would probably cost much more than the gun is worth.

Big name hammer guns (Boswell, Hollis, Cogswell & Harrison, Bonehill) bring good prices even in average condition, but trade-type guns even in excellent shape usually command only a few hundred dollars unless they have a special history making them attractive to collectors.

Geoff Smith

Q I'd like your opinion on .35 Whelen Ballistics. I read an article a while back regarding stabilising 300gr bullets in a .35 Whelen which suggested you'd need a 1:12 or 1:14 twist to stabilise heavy bullets out to 150m or so.

I'm considering a .35-06 Whelen as my next project gun but won't be using it much past 100m and wondered if you could address the pros and cons of heavy projectiles - 300gr-plus - in a .35 Whelen regarding barrel twist rates.

Gary Cox, via email

A The .35 Whelen is a grand old cartridge that's been around since the 1920s and is essentially a .30-06 case necked up to take a .358 diameter projectile. Originally a wildcat, it was legitimised by Remington in 1987. The standard manufacturer's twist rate is 1:14 which will effectively shoot 250gr bullets out to 200m, beyond which the bullet's trajectory plunges. The same would undoubtedly apply to 300gr projectiles or heavier and 150m sounds like the practical limit for bullets of that weight.

In theory a 1:12 twist should stabilise heavier projectiles more effectively but if you're only shooting out to around 100m I'd have to question the need for it. At that range accurate shot placement on larger animals shouldn't be an issue. If the bullets are driven hard enough to achieve recommended impact velocities, an extra 50 grains of bullet weight is unlikely to make any significant difference.

The faster twist would be an advantage if using modern mono-metal projectiles, not because of their weight but due to their design and increased length when compared to the shorter, lead-cored jacketed bullets the Whelen was originally designed to shoot.

I've owned and used a couple of rifles chambered for the .35 Whelen over the years, both with a 1:14 twist. I always preferred 250gr projectiles in both factory and handloads and never had any grounds

for complaint, taking game from as small as foxes through to goats, pigs, fallow and sambar deer, scrub bulls and buffaloes.

I'd encourage you to build a Whelen as a project gun but don't get lost in the theoretical fog along the way. At the working end of the equation, whatever game you take won't care.

John Dunn

Q There's a group of guys at our gun club who reckon reloading their shotgun shells saves money and gives them superior killing power on clay targets. Could that be true?

Mike, Vic

A I reloaded all my shotgun shells when I was younger and it was a little cheaper but the real advantage was the ability to make up lighter, faster loads than those available at the time when 32-gram and 36g loads were the standard. I read UK and US magazines and brewed up 28g and even 24g loads well before they were available in Australia.

I did some of my best sporting clay shooting with 28g loads and #8 shot which were fast (1350fps) and very light on recoil. The extra pellets in 28g of the slightly smaller 8s more than equalled the number of 7.5s in the 32g load - that was the secret. High speed loads with less recoil meant I was less tired at the end of the day if a shoot-off was required.

Nowadays we're spoilt for choice with loads like this from local and overseas manufacturers. I gave up reloading shotshells when these became available and could be bought in bulk for less than the cost of reloading. The only other reason to reload apart from the interest, education and pleasure gained from it would be to make expensive hunting loads. Even then it would probably be about line ball.

Perhaps your friends are buying components in large quantities at a favourable price and splitting them but their reloads wouldn't be better than commercially

available ones. I know you can derive lots of satisfaction from loading your own shells and seeing them smoke clay targets - just like tying your own flies and hooking a wily trout - and this is where confidence in your shells comes into the equation.

If it's all about economics the answer to your question is 'no'. Time taken and the cost of components coupled with the expense of buying all the gear to safely reload doesn't add up, unless you're shooting a vast number of shells or want to extend your knowledge of shotgun or rifle shooting for that matter by reloading centrefire cartridges.

Paul Miller

Q I'm in the process of buying a 6.5x284 Savage F-Class target rifle to start competing in long-range target shooting (1200m). What would you suggest from your experience would be the ultimate load to start with, ie, powder type and grains, projectile type and grain weight? Thanks for your help from an almost 80-year-old.

Ron James, via email

A You've made an excellent choice in the 6.5x284 cartridge, however I feel the ultimate load you refer to is something you'll have to work out for yourself considering the wide range of components available and your reloading techniques in terms of case preparation, bullet seating depths and so on.

Having said that, your choice of rifle and ammunition combination is the same as mine, so happy to share what I have learned. I started out with Vihtavuori N-160 powder however, because of the unreliable supply, I'll be transitioning to ADI AR-2213SC when my N-160 supply runs out.

If you can get hold of some N-160 my current load is: Nosler or Lapua brass trimmed to 2.165", CCI BR-2 primer, 142gr Sierra MatchKing moly-coated bullet, 49.5

grains of Vihtavuori N-160 powder and cartridge overall length is 3.030". You should work up to this load starting from around 45 grains.

Preliminary testing with AR-2213SC has produced some encouraging results with 50 grains of powder and moly-coated bullets. Again, I suggest you start with 45 grains and work up from that as recommended in the ADI Handloaders' Guide. I'm also using the transition to a new powder to experiment with Hornady ELD 140 and 147gr projectiles as well as the Nosler 140gr Custom Competition bullets which are working well in my 6.5 Creedmoor. You should always refer to the powder manufacturer's loading data for safe starting loads.

Rod Pascoe

Q I am planning a hunt on feral pests in a heavily wooded area and expect I'll have to shoot through brush at the animals. Is a heavy, low velocity cartridge or one with high velocity best in this situation.

Ian Stanley, via email

A Deflection of the projectile from brush and twigs is always a big problem when hunting in heavy bush country. It was once thought that slower, large calibre bullets were best in this situation but tests have shown even these projectiles can be deflected from their original path after hitting just a small twig. The latest tests tell us heavier projectiles having high velocity tend to do better when shooting at targets through bush, but if you're patient and able to wait until the animal provides a clear shot, the result of a clean, one-shot kill is much better regardless of the cartridge being used.

Barry Wilmot



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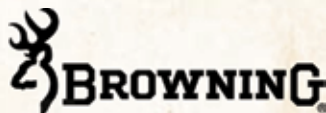
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Kimber Subalpine mountain rifle in .300 WSM

Con Kapralos



Hardcore hunters who pursue trophy animals all over the world are fussy when it comes to their gear. Hunting mountainous regions for premier game species demands kit 100 per cent reliable while being as light as possible. When you walk countless kilometres with a backpack and rifle, with all the load on your shoulders and back, any weight saved is a huge advantage.

Kimber of America create superb stalking rifles with the Mountain Ascent model having been in production for quite a few years and being an ultra-light stalking rifle it has many fans. In 2018 Kimber released a new variant of the Mountain Ascent - the Subalpine - offered in three action lengths in five popular hunting calibres: .308 Win, .280 Ackley Improved, .30-06 Springfield, .300 WSM and .300 Win Mag.

Nioa, Australian distributor for Kimber, forwarded a Subalpine rifle in the hard-hitting .300 WSM calibre to review, together with a Leupold VX-3i 3.5-10x40 riflescope, rings and bases. Additionally,

Nioa supplied ammunition in four of Federal Premium's .300 WSM hunting loads. I expected the Kimber Subalpine to be a quality rifle in fit, finish and aesthetics but shooting the potent .300 WSM calibre in such an ultra-light rifle would be a challenge. A benchrest rifle and calibre it certainly is not.

At a glance

The review rifle is of a turn-bolt repeating action designed on the Kimber 8400 platform with a full-length Mauser claw extractor with Controlled Round Feed (CRF) and extraction. The metalwork is stainless steel with a 610mm fluted barrel, threaded at the muzzle for use with accessories. The reinforced carbon-fibre stock in the soft-touch Gore Optifade Subalpine pattern gives the rifle its identity and it measures 1110mm and weighs 2.69kg bare.

The action

Three different actions lengths are used in the 84M (short), 84L (long) and in the

review rifle the 8400 (Magnum), the cylindrical action made of high-quality stainless steel with a separate recoil lug between barrel and receiver.

The recoil lug sits flush with the sides of the barrel and in a recess in the receiver, so when the rifle is assembled the recoil lug can't be seen. The bolt is a Controlled Round Feed design with a classic full-length rotating claw extractor which guarantees the cartridge case is held against the bolt face from the minute it leaves the magazine until it's ejected from the action. Two solid lugs at the front of the bolt ensure a positive lock-up with the breech, and the overall action is very smooth with the bolt scaled accordingly to the Kimber 8400 Magnum action. The top of the action is drilled and tapped for scope mounting accessories and in the review rifle these were the excellent Leupold two-piece bases and corresponding scope rings.

The barrel

The light-profile stainless barrel measures 610mm (24"), no doubt to assist the ballistics of the belted-Magnum chamberings. The diameter tapers from 28.9mm at the knox form to 14.4mm at the muzzle, which is also furnished with a 7/16x28 thread to accept a matching Kimber muzzle brake. It would have been useful for the brake to be supplied as shooting such a light rifle without some recoil management is not a wise choice.

The barrel also has a series of three flutes concentrically around its diameter, 200mm x 5mm. They start 290mm from the muzzle and terminate 60mm from the knox form and are there to lighten the barrel and assist with cooling. Internally



The review rifle in component form.

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NMD329

Kimber Subalpine mountain rifle in .300 WSM

the four-groove, one in 10" right-hand twist is well suited to the .30-calibre projectiles users of a .300 WSM will hunt with.

Safety and trigger mechanism

The trigger safety is a three-position wing-type affair, easily operated with the thumb of the right hand as follows: forward to fire (red dot evident); fully rearward for safe, blocking the firing pin and locking the bolt; and middle position permitting the rifle to be loaded and unloaded while having the firing pin blocked.

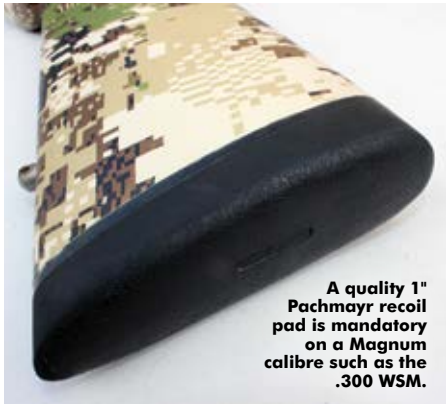
This wing-type safety has merit and has been used on other popular rifle models but I prefer a linear-style safety lever rather one that rotates clockwise/anti-clockwise. The adjustable match-grade single stage trigger was excellent, set from the factory with a 900-gram let-off with absolutely no creep or over-travel. Added to that the lovely curved trigger shoe sat well in the index finger and allowed positive pressure to be applied to the trigger when firing.

The magazine

The absence of a magazine floorplate or detachable box magazine reflects the purpose of this rifle. Being a serious ultra-light mountain rifle, at best the user will deploy one or two shots maximum on their quarry, so why engineer a magazine with higher capacity when it's not needed? Saving a few grams here and there is what makes the Subalpine appeal.



The internal 3-shot box magazine and leaf-spring with polymer follower.



A quality 1" Pachmayr recoil pad is mandatory on a Magnum calibre such as the .300 WSM.



The left side of the Kimber 8400 action with cylindrical-shaped receiver.

Kimber Subalpine rifle .300 WSM at 100m			
Ammunition	Best group (mm)	Worst group (mm)	Average group ** (mm)
Federal Premium Trophy Bonded Tip 180gr	16	75	38
Federal Premium Power Shok 180gr	28	67	42
Federal Premium Trophy Copper 180gr	27	75	40
Federal Premium Edge TLR 200gr	30	55	46

** Average calculated from three 3-shot groups at 100m

The steel magazine box sits in the floor of the riflestock and a multi-fold leaf spring and polymer follower manages the 3-shot magazine capacity found in the Magnum chamberings. Rounds are loaded through the top of the action and for removal must be cycled through the action and ejected. The short and long action chamberings in the Subalpine come with 4-shot magazine capacity.

The stock

This is one major component which makes the Subalpine tick, being made of a reinforced carbon-fibre composite its strength and light weight is its greatest ally. The stock is covered with the Gore Optifade Subalpine camouflage pattern which enhances the aesthetics and is of a pleasing American profile with straight comb and clean lines without chequering panels.

Grip is provided by a well-engineered surface coating which feels a tad 'tacky' but offers excellent hold with wet or dry hands. The trigger length of pull comes in at 345mm and is finished with an excellent one-inch Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad and stainless QD sling swivel studs. A separate aluminum triggerguard is fixed to the stock with two small screws, one external and the other internal. Bedding-wise, aluminium pillars provide a super stable platform which the barrelled action mates up to, and a recess in the floor of the stock just forward of the front aluminium pillar mates with the recoil lug. The entire barrel length is free-floating.

Range testing

From the outset I knew I wouldn't be



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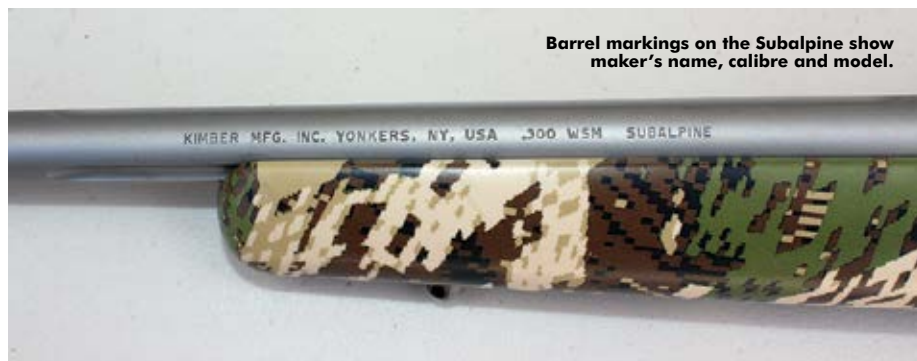
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Kimber Subalpine mountain rifle in .300 WSM

able to defy physics with the Subalpine and .300 WSM chambering - without the matching Kimber muzzle brake, testing would be slow and methodical. The pencil-thin 610mm barrel would heat up quickly and this would have to be factored in. Normally for standard short or long action calibres I'd fire five 3-shot groups at 100m with a barrel clean between changes in ammunition, but for the Subalpine in .300 WSM, three 3-shot groups would be the maximum with each ammunition brand.

It can be seen that the ultra-light weight of the Subalpine and .300 WSM cartridge was a real trial to shoot accurately and no doubt having the Kimber muzzle brake would have helped tame recoil, muzzle jump and resulted in improved group sizes. Shooting in warm weather meant the barrel heated up quickly and my Barrel-Cool fan was kept busy. The smallest groups were always the first three shots fired and as the barrel warmed up shots



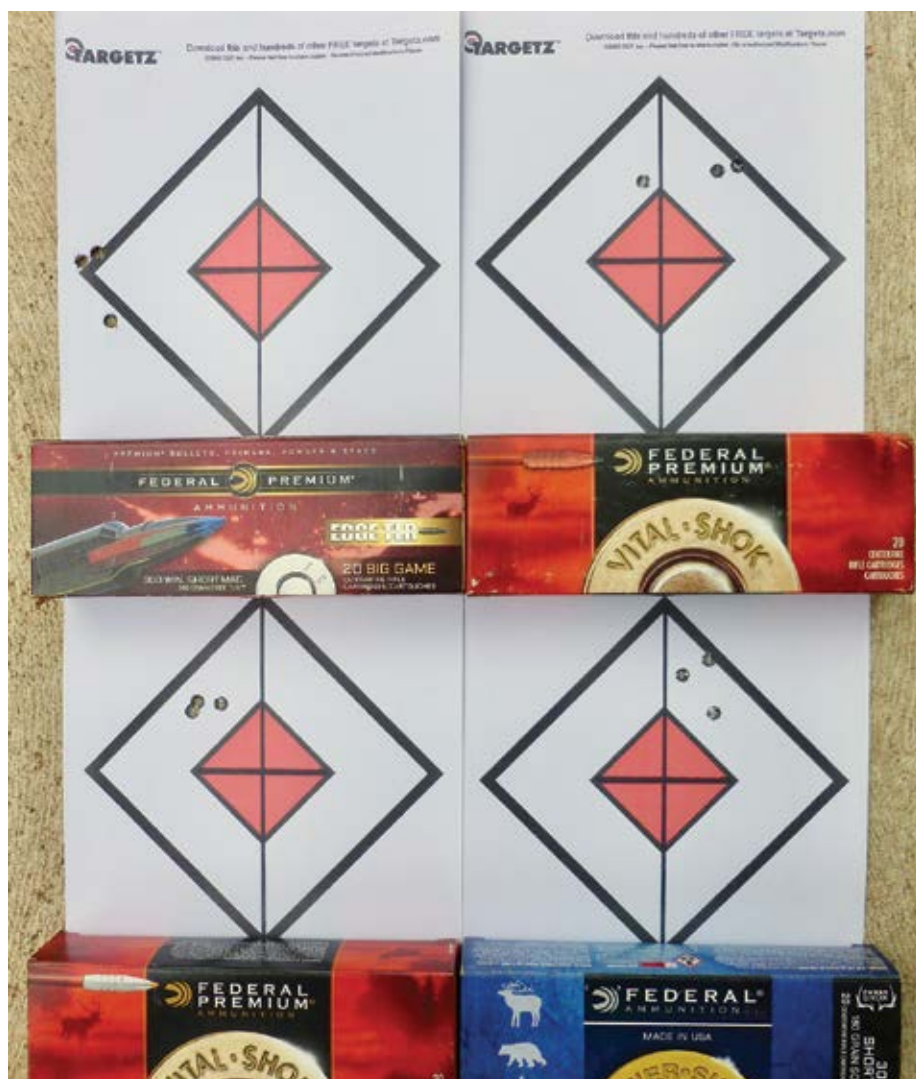
Barrel markings on the Subalpine show maker's name, calibre and model.

would string out as you'd expect from an ultra-light mountain rifle.

Overview

The Kimber Subalpine is a specialist rifle for the hunter who treks on foot. Backpacking hunts where everything you need is carried on your shoulders demand a rifle that contributes minimally to the

weight. When crossing steep country, being able to use both hands and not have a 4kg-plus rifle hanging off your back is preferable. The Subalpine is offered in five calibres and is bound to appeal to the hunter who walks long and hard in daunting terrain for their trophy quarry. It's a premium grade rifle and retails for around \$3000. More at nioa.com.au ●



One of several targets shot with the heavy-hitting .300 WSM calibre.

Specifications

Manufacturer: Kimber of America, Yonkers, NY

Model: Subalpine

Action: Controlled Round Feed (CRF) bolt-action, stainless steel, front locking repeater

Trigger: Adjustable match-grade, single stage (set at 0.9kg on review rifle)

Safety: Three-position, Model 70 wing safety with bolt-release button

Barrel: Ultra-light weight, fluted, 610mm (24") in length, one in 10" right-hand twist (on test rifle in .300 WSM), recessed target style crown. 7/16x28 thread on muzzle for applicable recoil devices. Barrel length ranges from 560-610mm (22-24")

Sights: None fitted. Action top drilled and tapped for scope mounting hardware

Calibres: .300 WSM (tested), also available in .308 Win, .280 Ackley Imp, .30-06 Sprg, .300 Win Mag

Magazine: Internal box magazine, 3-shot capacity (Magnum calibres) 4-shot capacity (short and long action calibres)

Stock: Reinforced carbon-fibre material with soft-touch Gore Optifade Subalpine pattern, aluminium pillar bedded, 1" Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad

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Clarity needed on confusing 'appearance' laws

John Maxwell



Of the many frustrations which confront shooters, none is more exasperating and totally pointless than appearance laws which allow police to essentially ban certain firearms because they don't like the look of them.

This had its origin in the 1996 National Firearms Agreement which, with some limited exceptions, banned semi-automatic rifles "or a firearm which substantially duplicates those rifles in design, function or appearance".

In other words, a firearm which looks like a military rifle could be banned, even though it's neither military nor self-loading. In practice that means a firearm with a pistol grip and/or detachable box magazine, even though it may be a bolt, slide or single-shot action which would be otherwise completely legal.

Pre-1996, restrictions based on appearance would have applied only to self-loading military pattern rifles. But not nowadays and this is increasingly problematic, considering the prevalence of bolt-action rifles mounted on chassis systems which commonly feature pistol grips, detachable box magazines, accessory rails and muzzle

devices. These are legitimately used for both target shooting and hunting and, other than appearance, are no different to the exact same action in a conventional timber or synthetic stock.

Firearms legislation in each state and territory, with the exception of South Australia, contain provisions to ban certain firearms based on appearance. The problem is the varying interpretations, with the discretion in the hands of firearms licensing police - and this is highly subjective.

SSAA chief executive Tim Bannister said firearms should be treated according to their actual engineered capability, not emotions based on their appearance. He said appearance laws seemed to be based on a misunderstanding on what helped to achieve public safety, with bolt-action firearms placed in more restrictive categories based just on what they looked like. A firearm is either self-loading or it's not, he said.

"It doesn't matter whether the firearm is black or pink with wood or metal stock, it should be just a plain and simple scientific engineering analysis of what the firearm can and can't do," he said, "remembering it's always the cartridge which is the key driver of firearm capability. There are a variety of

firearms which have multiple uses in legal sporting and hunting activities."

And it's not just appearance. Some jurisdictions have problems with particular calibres such as the .338 Lapua Magnum and .50 BMG. This has been challenged. In 2016, a Canberra gun owner took the ACT Firearms Registry to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal over its refusal to issue a permit for him to acquire a Barrett M98B bolt-action rifle in .338 Lapua Magnum.

Ultimately the Tribunal upheld the police decision but the registry didn't have it all its own way. Initially police cited five reasons for refusal - the "military nature of the rifle", that it was fitted with a pistol grip which was prohibited, none of the shooting ranges in the ACT had a template large enough for .338 Lapua, there was no property or game in the ACT suited to this calibre and that he already had too many guns. The Tribunal ultimately relied only on the issue of appearance.

"The Tribunal is satisfied the .338 Lapua Magnum rifle is a firearm that substantially duplicates in appearance (regardless of calibre or manner of operation) a self-loading > centrefire rifle of a kind that's designed

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Clarity needed on confusing 'appearance' laws

or adapted for military purposes, and is therefore a prohibited firearm that cannot be acquired under a category B licence," it ruled.

In an earlier case, the West Australia State Administrative Tribunal considered an appeal against a police decision to refuse to allow a shooter to acquire a US BAT Machine RSS rifle also in .338 Lapua Magnum. In that case the central issue was the calibre, not rifle appearance. Police told the Tribunal this cartridge was developed to address military need for a sniper rifle with a capability beyond 1000m.

"... it was the (Police) Commissioner's policy that private persons should under no circumstances be licensed to hold a .338 Lapua Magnum due to its excessive ballistic capabilities," police told the Tribunal. In its decision, the Tribunal said the shooter just couldn't justify owning a rifle in this calibre for the type of hunting and target shooting he wanted to do. "The .338 Lapua Magnum and its ballistic capacity is, for lack of a better word, complete 'overkill' for the shooting of wild dogs and kangaroos," it said.

Highlighting the inconsistency of approach across different jurisdictions, the ACT case noted there were a number of other rifles in .338 Lapua Magnum registered in the ACT. Presumably they are of acceptable appearance. However, based on the WA decision, nothing in .338 Lapua Magnum would be acceptable in that state, although there are other cartridges of comparable or superior ballistics.

Interpretation of appearance laws doesn't seem immutable. Where once the ACT objected to rifles with pistol grips, it now issues permits to acquire rifles such as the bolt-action Ruger Precision Rimfire with AR-pattern pistol grip.

NSW has sought to bring some clarity by convening a panel to adjudicate on firearms based on their appearance. Tasmania publishes guidelines and a list of firearms

and their categorisation based on appearance. The guidelines say to be banned a firearm must substantially duplicate a known fully-automatic firearm and not just share characteristics with numerous other fully-automatic firearms.

The Tasmanian list seems to be based on a practical approach - bolt-action centrefires with pistol grip chassis remains in Category B, self-loaders are Category D while AR-pattern rifles remain banned. Tasmania has no problem with bolt action rifles in .338 Lapua Magnum.

In the first instance, any firearm entering Australia must first pass through the Customs barrier. Australian Border Force (ABF) imposes its own appearance test, banning import of any guns "that are substantially the same in appearance as a fully automatic firearm." The consequence is while ABF allows entry, different states and territories then impose their own rules on what's acceptable.

Some jurisdictions have a particular problem with rifles with adjustable and folding stocks, either banning them outright or requiring they be pinned. Presumably the logic is that such firearms are more concealable and thus more likely to be used by criminals.

However, the Commonwealth has barred rifles based on appearance. In 2008 it banned import of the Heckler & Koch R8, a straight-pull variant of the self-loading SL8 on the basis of its "military style" appearance. Presumably, that would apply to any move to import straight-pull rifles derived from the AR-15, of the type used in competition in the UK. In the ACT case,

the shooter noted ABF had no problem allowing entry of the Barrett rifle he sought to acquire.

In 2016 the WA Law Reform Commission reported on the state's firearms legislation, including a good look at the issue of prohibiting firearms based on appearance. It concluded there was lack of uniformity in decision-making and that prohibiting a firearm based on appearance did not achieve what some claimed.

The key claims of those favouring bans based on appearance is that a firearm which looks military is likely to

engender greater fear in the public and a more emphatic response by police. The WA Law Reform Commission said a firearm of military appearance used "within the scope of lawful activity" was unlikely to cause greater fear to a person than any other firearm.

And police response to any illegal firearm use was unlikely to be any different whether the gun was of military appearance or a self-loading rimfire.

The Commission recommended the subjective appearance provision be replaced with a technical, evidence-based approach which limited subjective and ad hoc decision-making. Further, WA should negotiate at national level for removal of the appearance provision.

In a peer-reviewed academic paper published in 2018, Tasmanian student Samuel Adams said it was clear from the experience of other jurisdictions that provisions allowing for the prohibition of firearms based solely on appearance were difficult to enforce. "These provisions result in inconsistent interpretations that appear to fail in fulfilling the public functions as claimed by proponents," he said. ●

...firearms should be treated according to their actual engineered capability, not emotions based on their appearance.



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Up close and personal

Swarovski ATS 65 spotting scope

Chris Redlich

As I looked through my guide's spotting scope at a chamois buck 900m across the steep mountain valley, the decision was made to stalk him. Until I hunted the Southern Alps of New Zealand I never really grasped the importance of a good-quality spotting scope. With a beautiful trophy chamois to take home after a successful stalk, it became clear that if I hadn't have been able to assess the buck through the eyes of a premium spotting scope and with bad weather bearing down on us, we may have had to call things off. A good set of binoculars is a must for target finding but for a

closer look at your potential trophy, a spotting scope is essential.

More than 10 years ago I owned a cheap one and became frustrated 'battling' to gain a clear picture on full zoom. Due to the low quality of lens coatings, the effects of mirage and poor lowlight transmission became apparent. Before too long I didn't take the spotting scope with me as it seemed more of a burden than a help.

As soon as I came home from my New Zealand trip I began homework on various spotting scope brands and their pros and cons. After some serious thought I settled on the Swarovski ATS 65. The ATS range

of spotting scopes has been setting the standard for years and are available in 65, 80 and 90mm lenses. The ATS is reference to the 'Angle' configuration of the eyepiece and the STS model for 'straight'. The angle eyepiece of 40 degrees and objective lens of 65mm was the combination I felt would best suit me as a versatile spotting scope to take on future New Zealand and Victorian alpine pack hunts and for all types of range target shooting.

Not to be confused with the Swarovski Optic ATX and STX line-up of spotting scopes, the ATS is a one-piece design with only the eyepieces being interchangeable.



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Swarovski ATS 65 spotting scope

The Swarovski ATX and STX are a modular spotting scope.

Comfortable with my configuration of scope, I ordered the ATS 65 with 25-50W (wide angle) eyepiece through my local supplier and with a backlog of ammunition test loading to be carried out, I was keen to put it to use. I opened the box to find the spotting scope body, lens cleaning cloth, objective lens cover and instruction manual. Eyepieces are boxed separately. Those available for the ATS 65 are the 20-60 for a field of view of 36-20m and the 25-50W (wide angle) for 42-27m field of view.

Component parts

The scope body is covered in the distinct Swarovski Optik green durable rubber protective coating and the housing manufactured from a high-grade alloy. Just forward of the eyepiece housing is a radial focus adjustment ring integral to the scope body. This has a generous grip area and although easy to turn, is designed that way so focus can be achieved quickly while wearing gloves and without impacting the critical target acquisition, zoomed in at long range.

Moving forward of the focus adjustment ring is the tripod ring, also with a full revolution turn so the scope can be positioned on the tripod and moved around until a comfortable viewing platform is achieved. The tripod ring has turn segments and once you're happy with the position you just tighten the locking screw on the tripod ring. The tripod mount on the tripod ring has a female $\frac{1}{4}$ " UNC thread to attach the screw of most quality tripod heads - in my case I use a Manfrotto tripod. The 65mm objective lens is recessed back from the end of the housing which is threaded for additional accessories. The objective housing doubles as an extendable sunshade by way of pulling and screwing out anticlockwise and vice versa to return.

My chosen eyepiece of 25-50W (wide angle) is attached to the scope body by first removing the protective cover, pushing the



eyepiece locking button downwards while turning the protective cover anticlockwise. This process also applies to removal of the eyepiece from the body. To attach the eyepiece to the scope body, remove its cover and place on the body and turn clockwise until it clicks into place. All up with eyepiece attached the spotting scope is 370mm long and weighs about 1.36kg.

With the eyepiece attached I won't be in the habit of taking it on and off, especially out in the field where there's a risk of foreign bodies entering the sensitive lens area. The scope comes supplied with a small tubular aiming aid to the right of the eyepiece housing and can be removed if not required, a small plastic insert available to install when the aid is removed. Swarovski Optik claims the ATS 65 is submersion proof to 4m and able to operate in sub-zero temperatures to -25C and extreme heat in excess of 55C.

At the range

For those who love a round of paper punching, the Swarovski ATS 65 is right at home beside the benchrest or mat. I'm a keen handloader and now I own a

spotting scope can't imagine how I went so long without one. From targets set up at anywhere from 100m to 300m, gone are the days of walking to and from the target to check a group size or straining at 12-power on the riflescope to pick up that cursed 'flier'.

With the ATS 65 mounted on a sturdy tripod, just rotate the tripod ring until you have the correct angle and trajectory and lock in place. You can locate the target area with the aiming aid but I prefer to find it with the eyepiece on the lowest magnification. Tighten the tripod locking mount and proceed to zoom into the target on maximum magnification, a quick turn of the focus ring and you're dialled in. If glare is an issue, extend the sunshade to help reduce it. Shot after shot and group after group, a quick glance sideways through the spotting scope eyepiece and you can track your shots with ease.

In the field

I was invited to hunt on a property with a deer problem. Along with my Tikka T3x in 300 WSM, the Swarovski spotter was an important part of my kit, the compact



The $\frac{1}{4}$ " UNC female thread on the spotting scope (left), plus tripod mount attachment with male thread.



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Swarovski ATS 65 spotting scope

design perfect for stowing along with the tripod in a day pack.

The large property consisted of lightly timbered native grass valleys bordered by dense forestry and cropping country, perfect deer habitat for feeding and hiding. It didn't take long to find deer to stalk though the red stags had cast their antlers so it wasn't a good time of year for assessing trophy potential.

The ATS 65 was set up quickly and I enjoyed being able to watch them in close view without the hassles experienced with cheap lenses. In late afternoon we picked up a pair of figures in the middle of an oats

paddock, the bins confirming two fallow bucks still with headgear though too far away for my mate's Swarovski RF binos to range them. The ATS 65 was set up to assess their trophy potential and in fading light with the zoom wound out to 50x we discovered they were decent bucks but not trophy animals, though it was a pleasure to watch them so far away with them unaware of our presence.

Early next morning we arrived at the same place. The bucks were nowhere to be seen but we spotted deer on the other side of a hill feeding their way along a ridge and heading towards us. With the aid of the



The young spiker caught on camera with attachment at full zoom.



Swarovski ATS 65 we identified a young fallow spiker worth taking for the freezer.

I tracked him as he walked closer until my mate and his son were able to take the youngster in a classic ambush hunt. I was just thrilled to be able to watch him in crystal-clear view as he went about his business.

Conclusion

As with all high-end European optics the decision to buy the Swarovski ATS 65 wasn't taken lightly and I made the purchase knowing this would be part of my hunting kit for years to come. For \$2760 including spotter and eyepiece I feel it's superb value for money considering the quality of Austrian-made optical equipment. Whether target shooter or keen mountain hunter, you'll benefit from a Swarovski ATS 65 as part of your kit and wonder how you ever got by without it. ●

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Rem - \$1985**



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The perfect fit

Miroku's MK70 28-gauge game gun



John McDougall

The Miroku gun factory in Japan has been a leading maker of fine grade firearms and well on par with Italian and English-made mass production shotguns. Miroku shotguns came to Australia more than 50 years ago under the Stirling banner, imported by Fuller Firearms of Sydney, and are now distributed by Outdoor Sporting Agencies in Melbourne. As the years have passed so the quality has improved and, based on the John Moses Browning schematics of almost 100 years ago, these modern-day masterpieces of engineering refinement have well and truly stood the test of time.

The Miroku MK70 Grade 1 game gun in

28-gauge is a very well made and finished sporting shotgun with great features and excellent value at just under \$2000. The bonus of buying a Miroku MK70 is the gun will last a generation and beyond as the firearms are so well engineered and parts readily available. So let's take a closer look at the MK70 28-gauge game gun as interest in sub-gauge shotgunning, especially in sporting clays and simulated field, is growing.

The barrels

The 760mm (30") barrels are immaculately blued without a blemish in solid dark blue. The top rib is parallel at 6mm

for its entirety and ventilated to provide quicker cooling and both side ribs are firm and extended most of the way along the barrels, being short just under the fore-end woodwork.

At the muzzle end the barrels are fitted with Miroku Invector choke tubes, three supplied along with a flat spanner for fitting and removing. Measuring 50mm in length these sit just behind the muzzle and offer a variety of hunting or shooting options (see specifications).

The breech of the gun is strong and well designed, utilising the two-piece ejector format that's been in vogue since the days of Browning's patents for the B25 in the mid-1920s, along with the next generation under-pinned jointing system for the barrel's connection to the receiver.

Unlike many other shotguns, especially those from Italy, Miroku barrels are joined to the receiver via a hook under the barrels giving the gun a slightly higher profile in most instances, which can marginally affect swing and handling. This by no means detracts from the fine design of the gun, it just means if you prefer a higher receiver profile the Miroku MK70 in its many gauge offerings would be a great choice.

The gun is chambered for 70mm (2¾") cartridges and capable of firing 26 grams of lead shot in the hunting loads available from Baschieri & Pellagri and Gamebore and 19 grams of lead shot in size seven for clay target shooting. For a considerable size down from a 12-gauge this was not too



Close-up of the receiver and two-piece ejectors.



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CALIBRES: 6.5MM CREEDMOOR / .308WIN

WEIGHT: 4.9 kg

OVERALL LENGTH: 1150mm

BARREL: Heavy Woomera Profile, 11 deg target crowned. Coated in Cerakote™

BARREL LENGTH: 610 mm (24 in)

MUZZLE THREAD: 5/8" x 24 UNEF

RECEIVER: High tensile steel with plate recoil lug. 20 MOA Picatinny rail. Coated in Cerakote™

LENGTH OF PULL: Adjustable via inserts

TRIGGER: Single stage, three way adjustable for weight, sear engagement and draw length. Factory set at 1.5 kg release.

ADJUSTMENT RANGE: Approximately 0.75 kg – 1.9 kg

SAFETY: Three position, bolt shroud mounted, rotating safety catch with indicator. Safety catch over-cocks and blocks the firing pin and disconnects the trigger. Settings; FIRE, SAFE with bolt locked and SAFE with bolt unlocked.

MAGAZINE: 10 round Removable, double stack box magazine, steel construction, AICS pattern

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Miroku's MK70 28-gauge game gun



Engraving on all sides is tastefully completed.

critical as most clay target shooting these days is done with 28-gram (1oz) loads. The field loads really commanded close shooting.

Being a game gun the little Miroku MK70 in 28-gauge is well suited to upland game such as rabbits, quail, partridges and stretching the limit to pheasants under 30m with well-placed head shots. Hares and foxes are a little out of its league except for shots under 20m as the limited range of shot sizes, restricted to six, seven and nine shot meant that applications, as described, were somewhat restricted.

Waterfowl hunting over decoys would be a challenge with the selection of loads available as steel shot is mandatory on all wetlands throughout states having seasonal shoots. I'd also prefer a blued or black receiver for such to avoid glints from the reflection from a low rising sun.

Scroll engraving is attractive on both sides of the receiver and underside of the gun. As an MK70 model I'd liked to have seen game scenes on the sides but the overall engraving is tastefully completed.

The top lever of the MK70 28-gauge was a little stiff to operate as you'd expect

from a new gun but over time will doubtless wear-in and become easier to operate. The safety catch-cum-barrel selector is conveniently located on the top tang and functioned faultlessly with a firm and positive movement. This is what has come to be expected of Miroku shotguns since their import into Australia and I've never reviewed or used a dud. They're extremely well made and finished to perfection.

The triggerguard isn't scaled down to fit in with the smaller-framed gun but its shape and design are well suited to shooters with both large and small fingers, with room to move if thin leather gloves are worn in cold weather. The triggerfoot is comfortably raked although not adjustable and trigger pulls are around 3½-4lb each.

I was surprised to find the trigger selection operating system inertia driven and not mechanically selected, which is often the case with small gauge guns. The system works well with a variety of loads and never failed. Miroku has obviously overcome adjustments with its inertia trigger system to deal with reduced recoil from the lighter loads required.



Three Invector choke tubes are supplied along with a flat spanner.



The front-sight on the Miroku MK70 28-gauge.

The stock and fore-end

Made from walnut with grain travelling parallel to the barrels, the MK70 28-gauge is well featured with a game stock for field shooting/hunting (see specifications). The Schnabel or tulip-style fore-end wood design is comfortable to hold and, with significantly reduced recoil compared with a 12-gauge shotgun, this one is smooth to shoot.



The fore-end has a generous covering of chequering.



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Miroku's MK70 28-gauge game gun

While recoil isn't an issue, for junior shooters I'd favour a rubber recoil pad fitted for correct gun mounting and to absorb the little recoil that results. A junior shooter who tried the gun during my evaluation said he too would have preferred a rubber recoil pad (the plastic Miroku buttplate was a touch uncomfortable for his light frame).

Chequering about the fore-end and pistol grip of the stock is around 20 lines per inch and looked like it had been done with a hand-held electric tool as there were a few slight overruns on the inside border line (there were twin border lines) which normally doesn't happen with computer-guided laser chequering equipment. The end result was clean and great to the feel for a good, positive grip.

In the field

As much as I'd have loved to take the MK70 28-gauge out on quail, it wasn't that time of the season but I imagine the gun being perfect for that purpose, shooting a selection of seven and nine-shot loads. A hunt on rabbits would also have been fun for the lightness of the gun, and its 'speed' of pointing and swinging would be appreciated as the bunnies bolted from underfoot, but dry conditions have resulted in rabbit populations in surrounding areas to Phillip Island being well down, except within town limits where they seem bountiful but shooting is prohibited.



The top lever and barrel selector-cum-safety catch.

A couple of trips to local gun clubs for clay target shooting proved enjoyable, with the speed of the smaller gauge gun taking a bit of getting used to after the heavier 12-gauge guns I've been familiar with. My scores were reasonable but it'll take time to become accustomed to the liveliness of the lightweight 28-gauge which weighed in at 3.20kg (7lb 1oz) compared to the 8lb-plus 12-gauge guns. A kilogram of difference certainly affects your shooting as I over-led many targets with the faster gun.

In summary, the Miroku MK70 28-gauge game gun was a treat to use despite the challenges of overcoming my bad habits from using a heavier 12-gauge. There's little doubt in my mind that targets out to 40m could be broken as convincingly with the 28-gauge as with a 12-gauge, beyond

that I couldn't say as such targets avoided my pattern, much to my disappointment.

The firearm is ideal for the beginner with a light frame or slender lady shooting clay targets and will be a dream gun for hunting quail where you might have to walk for kilometres to find birds in a paddock. The nimble feel of the MK70 28-gauge in such circumstances would put it in its element. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Miroku Firearms, Kochi, Japan

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies

Overall weight: 3.20kg (7lb 1oz)

Barrel weight: 1.38kg (3lb)

Overall length: 1210mm (47.64")

Barrel length: 760mm (30")

Chamber and bore: 70mm/2¾" with a 28-gauge/0.555" nominal bore size

Proof: Steel shot compatible (size 3 shot and smaller; 4, 5, 6 shot), modified choke and more open chokes, improved cylinder and cylinder (see instruction manual)

Chokes: Invector choke tubes, 50mm long, three supplied. Full choke, half choke and improved cylinder. Flat multi-gauge T-piece spanner supplied for changing and installing

Trigger pulls: Under barrel 1.6kg (3lb 8oz), over barrel 1.8kg (4lb)

Stock dimensions: Length of pull 380mm (15"), drop at comb 37mm (1.46"), drop at heel 58mm (2.28")

Case: Cardboard box with styrene insert

Warranty: Five years mechanical, two years discretionary on woodwork

Price: \$1970

The Miroku MK70 28-gauge paired well with Baschieri & Pellagri loads for some interesting shooting.





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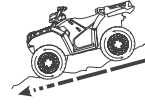
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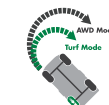
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A chance meeting with a warrior

Robyn Cooper

When I think back to our initial meeting that morning on the banks of a mirrored dam reflecting blue skies, green trees and cattle having begrudgingly risen on our arrival to amble off in search of more shade, a lot of preparation goes into the chance sighting of a trophy stag.

It had been almost a year since my husband Colin and I had been to a favourite campsite on a Central Queensland cattle station where we've assisted the landowner for the past 10 years with the eradication of feral goats, pigs, dogs and deer. It's also a real adventure to explore the many tracks, birdlife, wildlife and peacefulness of our great country.

Some years ago when we moved from Tasmania to Queensland we joined the SSAA Mareeba branch Q31. We've always had sporting rifles but thought the practice would be a good thing to 'keep our eye in' and we enjoy the social aspect too.

I originally owned a Howa .308 for hunting fallow deer in Tasmania's highlands and used it at the range where I became aware of the vast array of rifles available for benchrest and sport target shooting. My mentors at Mareeba encouraged me to participate and guided me through the importance of firearm safety, built my confidence with benchrest target practice, shared their knowledge of achieving

accuracy through discipline and breathing and their general enjoyment of our sport.

After much discussion and consideration I decided on a Tikka T3 Hunter 6.5x55 Swede, the little brother to Sako, and dutifully set about mounting and sighting-in a Zeiss 4-12x42 scope at Q31 range. Wrapping my arms around the wooden stock came easily as the sights aligned on the target and the set trigger eased off the first shots. This was obviously a good partnership so I continued to fine tune at the range until the chance of a field trip arose.

We left early for the long haul and it was evening before we set up camp. There had been decent rainfall some months earlier as was evident by the condition of the cattle, level of the dams and the lush green grass. We awoke to the dawn chorus and prepared for the morning hunt, planning a walk which took in the countryside circling the dam then meeting up at the cattle lick station. Treading carefully on gravelly ground noisy with leaves and grasses, I saw some old footprints from a doe and fawn along with pigs and evidence of dogs.

Back at camp we decided to explore a couple of dams further out and set yabbie traps for overnight. The following morning brought us to the banks of the mirrored dam. The still morning air with blue sky and reflections caught my interest and after pulling in the yabbie traps it was time to capture the moment on camera.

As the stag was turning to flee into the bush I took the shot.

I was comparing the photos against the view of the dam and surrounds when I noticed movement on the far side of the dam wall. It took a moment to focus but I was looking at the head and antlers of a chital stag as he cautiously surveyed the dam before going any further.

I reached for my rifle not taking my eyes off the stag and set up a rest position on the bull-bar of the truck at around 180m, all the time totally focused on the target. Now came the waiting, breathing and focus were good, there was a voice in my head "just another step" as that would give me a good chest shot.

The stag was moving his head from side to side and seemed nervous, looking back over his shoulder when I realised he was picking up on my husband who was over the bank. As the stag was turning to flee

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A chance meeting with a warrior

into the bush I took the shot and he instantly reared up on his hind legs and disappeared behind the gravel piles dragged from the dam.

Adrenalin kicked in as I ran around the dam, my husband still oblivious as to what I'd been shooting at. I was almost speechless, my heart pumping and filling my chest when I managed to blurt out "huge great stag". We rounded the corner of the dam to find the stag lying not five metres from where he'd been shot. It seemed to take forever to calm down and settle the breathing and even longer to take the smile off my face.

We measured the antlers, examined the entry and exit points of the bullet and took a few photos. On examination the Remington Core-Lokt 6.5mm had entered the right front shoulder and exited the left shoulder, smashing the leg on the way through. The antlers measured 29" on the left and 27" on the right and he'd been around for a while as the coronets were low and wide.

Further examination revealed he'd had many duels - a warrior chital stag - as the battle scars still evident on his body and head hadn't fully healed. The antlers were chipped and broken but his body was in good condition otherwise. Back at camp we hoisted him in the shade of the trees and field dressed the meat, taking all but the left shoulder.

Perhaps his recovery from a recent duel with another stag was the reason for the chance encounter with the warrior at the dam that morning. We'll probably never know. ●



Ready for dressing.

Robyn Cooper with the chital stag



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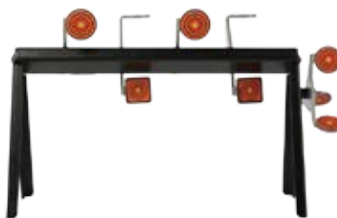
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SportEAR TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs

Mark van den Boogaart

My long-held assumption about hearing protection has been yes, definitely for the range, but when I went hunting my earmuffs stayed at home. So it was from that starting point I reviewed the SportEAR TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs by AXIL, a US-based company with more than 50

years' experience in manufacturing high-quality hearing protection.

The earmuffs arrived in a clear blister pack and, after the invariable wrestle with the packaging, I got to grips with what *Australian Shooter* had sent me. Being a bit instruction phobic I ignored the text, located the battery compartment, fitted the three supplied AA batteries and turned them on.

The first thing I noticed was that with the aid of the volume control I was able to 'turn them up' and really bring sounds I otherwise wouldn't hear when wearing regular earmuffs into audible range. This included voices, birds, even the keystrokes of my computer which to be honest really surprised me as a first-time user.

TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs sport a simple matte black finish with sharp, white branding. The headband is of a wide, flat design measuring 55mm across, while the cushioning and liner of each ear cap was of excellent quality and enhanced the overall comfort.

Dual mounting points on each ear cap work in tandem with the wire frame of the headband to create a sliding adjustment so you can easily fine-tune the earmuffs to ensure a perfect fit. Finally, each ear cap is protected by a rubber armour-style finish,


giving the TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs an overall feel of quality and durability and a sense they're really for outdoor use.

Out of the box there's little doubt this is a good set of earmuffs but it's the technology I really wanted to test. Each ear cap provides 25 decibels (dB) of discreet noise reduction and is fitted with a directional microphone which provides the input for what's referred to as Autblocker technology. In simple terms Autblocker shuts out sounds greater than 85dB, so no more loud noises. It's also fast so at no time did I experience a lag of sound, that is, a loud sound cut short by the Autblocker technology.

Interestingly, that very technology is combined with an up to 40dB gain or amplification easily managed via the volume control, so what you have is both high dB noise reduction and low-level sound amplification in the one unit, something you don't get from standard hearing protection.

At the range

I went to my local club to watch an afternoon shotgun shoot. Sitting behind the firing line I immediately noticed the TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs were easily handling the repeated 12-gauge shotgun blasts. While difficult to describe, it was



The ability to both block loud noises and amplify "quieter" sounds like conversation was the standout feature of the TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs.

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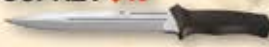
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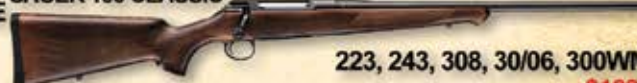
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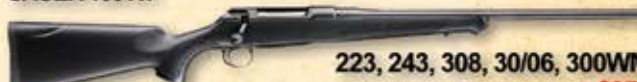
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SportEAR TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs

all just a series of audible pops, none of which were noticeably louder than the surrounding sounds.

What that meant was at the same time conversation, background noise like the clay pigeon traps and even the afternoon breeze were clearly audible. One thing I did notice is these earmuffs work best if you continue to adjust the gain to suit a change in environment - if you don't and you move to a quieter location you could pick up too many surrounding sounds. As range earmuffs they were spot on.

In the field

Jay, a good mate of mine, asked if I'd take him hunting and being a complete novice I had a good think about where I might take him. When the time came we headed to a professional hunting outfitter a few hours west of Brisbane for an 'Introduction to hunting' weekend. A big part of Jay's hunting experience would be firing a rifle for the first time, and over the weekend he was introduced to a number of rifles as well as shooting from a bench and on to sticks when on the hunt.

All through the process the TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs proved invaluable and demonstrated the advantage of being able to clearly hear instructions while dampening excessive noise. On each step of the learning process we were able to talk to Jay who didn't have to worry about removing and refitting his hearing protection. It may not sound like much but did make things a lot easier and feedback from the bloke who wore them most of the weekend was positive on fit, comfort in 30C heat, sound quality and protection.

In summary, being a first-time user of



The functionality, design and wearability of The TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs certainly made range time a little more enjoyable.

electronic hearing protection I was most impressed by what the TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs offer, blocking out loud noise while being able to hear clearly both at the range and in the field. More importantly, though, these earmuffs address the issue of why too many of us don't use ear protection in the field.

If you're in the market for quality hearing protection or, like me, you feel it's time you took better care of what hearing you have left, you'd be well advised to check out SportEAR TRACKR Electronic Earmuffs, imported by Beretta Australia. ●



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Big Game Rifle

SSAA Big Game Rifle aims to foster the collection, preservation and use of vintage and modern large-calibre big-game rifles, particularly those of British origin, including black powder and early Nitro cartridge firearms. The discipline began in Melbourne in 1983.

Target Pistol

SSAA Target Pistol is an international rimfire and centrefire revolver and self-loading pistol shooting discipline. It includes four main matches, with competitors shooting single-handedly from the standing position at paper targets placed at 25 and 50m. Its history is in different eras of police and service shooting.

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Any .45 Pistol or Revolver permits any .45-calibre centrefire handgun, allowed by state or territory law. M9 Distinguished Service Pistol Match permits a Beretta 92 9mm pistol or commercial pistol of the same type and calibre. Open Revolver Match uses an Any Sight .32- to .38-calibre revolver with a maximum barrel length including cylinder of 10".

Courses of fire

The National Match Course includes 10 shots slow-fire in 10 minutes and strings of five shots rapid-fire in 10 seconds, totalling 30 shots.

The 900 Match Course is the basis for National Championships and includes slow-fire and rapid-fire strings, totalling 90 shots.

The International Mayleigh Match is a side match. The class permits the same handguns used in the Any .22-calibre Pistol or Revolver event and comprises three strings of 10 shots slow-fire at 50m.

The Short Course Match comprises the slow-fire stage shot at 25m/yards on a reduced size B16 target.

Targets and scoring

The National Match Course and 900 Match Course are shot on NRA B6 50-yard and B8 25-yard targets. The International Mayleigh Match is shot on the International Slow-Fire Target. Targets are scored after each 10-shot stage.





There are three general groups: One, Two and Three, with each defined by projectile diameter, projectile weight and muzzle energy. The number of shots fired in competition decreases from Group One to Group Three to take into account increasing recoil. Each group has a number of slowly aimed shots and rapid-fire shots to mitigate the differences between rifles.

At state and branch levels, events have been expanded to include a diverse range of rifle categories and other shooting events, including a showcase event with pre-1939 rifles and cartridges (Classic Cartridge), early smallbore black powder rifles for small game (Rook and Rabbit Rifle), and rifles such as the 7mm and .300 Magnums, which shoot out to 200 yards (African Plains Rifle).

Categories

Big Game Rifle comprises eight core categories and most are shot standing unsupported, while a select few include a sitting or kneeling stage. Matches aim to simulate field-shooting conditions to improve the shooter's firearm skills.

Group One starts at .330 with no upper limits, while Group Two starts at .400-calibres. Group Three encompasses the largest of the big-game-stopping rifles, beginning at the .500-calibres.

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Bore Guns and Rifles were the real big-game and dangerous-game-stopping rifles of their day, typically 12-, 10- or 8-bore firearms.

Stalking and Stopping Double Rifles encompass all centrefire double rifles, both the traditional side-by-side configuration and European over-and-under style.

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Keep an eye on your scope's exit pupil

John Hill

It was ceasefire at the SSAA Marong rifle range in Bendigo and while waiting I noticed something odd about the scope on my rifle: when viewed from directly behind there was a small bright spot in the centre of the rear lens. I was looking at the exit pupil.

The size of a scope's exit pupil is important when shooting in poor light. If the diameter of the exit pupil and the pupil of a shooter's eye are the same size, the target

image will be at its brightest for that scope on that setting. The pupils of most mature adults are roughly 5mm in diameter when fully dilated, in young people fully dilated pupils can be slightly larger, perhaps 6mm.

So if the exit pupil of a scope sight measures around 5mm the scope will have a fairly non-critical eye relief and all the light transmitted through the scope will be transferred to the eye receiving the image, a good thing when shooting in poor

light. On the other hand, if the exit pupil is smaller or larger than 5mm, the eye will receive less light than if the pupils are the same size.

Few scope manufacturers include exit pupil sizes in their specifications but it can be easily established. The first method is to direct the scope at a strong light source then bring a piece of white cardboard close to the eyepiece. By moving either the scope or cardboard back and forth, a clear



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Keep an eye on your scope's exit pupil

circle of light will appear on the cardboard and when properly focused at its smallest diameter, this circle of light will indicate the actual size of the exit pupil and length of the required eye relief. All you need do is measure the diameter of the exit pupil and the distance between eyepiece and cardboard to obtain these measurements.

The other method involves elementary mathematics. If the diameter of the objective lens (the front one) in millimetres is divided by the magnification power, the resulting figure will be the diameter of the exit pupil in millimetres. Take an 8x40 scope: 40mm divided by 8 gives 5mm, the right size of exit pupil in lowlight conditions, so any 8x40 scope works well with all these bad light-come-exit pupil theories. Using the same method, a 12x40 scope would have a 3.3mm diameter exit pupil which would not perform as well in failing light, but these examples are for fixed power scopes.

One of my riflescopes is a Tasco 4-16x40 AO (Adjustable Objective) which gives a fairly wide variety of exit pupil sizes over its full magnification range. When set on 4x the exit pupil measures a massive 10mm, which would have a very non-critical eye relief and good light transmitting ability. If set on 16x the exit pupil shrinks to 2.5mm with a far more critical eye relief and less light transmitting ability.

The importance of the exit pupil's diameter is one of the reasons modern riflescopes are made with larger objective lenses than in the past and often with an increased range of magnification. If a scope has a power range to say 24x it needs to have an extremely large objective lens (120mm) to be able to use that amount of magnification in a lowlight situation.

Scopes should be low mounted for best results.



Any scope with a large objective must be mounted so it comfortably clears the barrel of the rifle unless the rifle has an adjustable comb, then a high-mounted scope creates a significant problem. Having firm facial contact with the comb of the stock is an important aspect of accurate rifle shooting and this highly desirable situation disappears the moment a scope with a large objective is mounted, and there's also a parallax problem with any high-mounted scope. This parallax error is between the line of sight and trajectory of the bullet - the higher the scope the greater this parallax problem becomes, particularly with a small-game rifle where it can create misses due to either under or over-shooting the target. When mounting a scope, lower is always better than higher.

My preferences go to either 3-9x or 4-12x scopes with an objective diameter no larger than 40 or 42mm. Scopes of these sizes can still be mounted moderately low, still have a good range of magnification yet produce the right-sized exit pupil at the mid to high ends of their magnification range in lowlight conditions. Perhaps the secret to a good variable is to keep both magnification range and size of the objective lens to moderate levels.

High magnification scopes are not all that user friendly on hunting rifles, my Tasco 4-16x40 a good example. Set on 4x it has a wide field of view, good light transmission and a non-critical eye relief but on 16x all those aspects are reversed - diminished field of view, less light and more finicky eye relief. All these negative aspects are usually associated with high magnification which can be easily done without on most hunting rifles. Incidentally, I never use the Tasco any higher than 10x, even though it's mounted on a small-game rifle.

Just because a scope has a large magnification range doesn't mean it must be used on its highest setting, particularly when hunting in low-light conditions where it's advisable to know the best magnification setting so the scope produces that ideal 5mm exit pupil. This is easily found by dividing five (six for the young) into the diameter of the objective lens in millimetres and the resulting figure is the magnification that corresponds to a 5mm exit pupil.

Many riflescopes are made with a particular magnification range to suit the size of their objective lens and I've often looked at a 1.5-4x20 and thought: "What a miserable size objective lens." Yet these are ideal for

The Tasco on a 10x setting - just because there's a large magnification range, a scope doesn't have to be set at maximum.





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Keep an eye on your scope's exit pupil

a medium to large game hunting rifle in that they're lightweight, can be mounted low and, when set on their highest magnification, still have a 5mm diameter exit pupil in lowlight situations. Compared to open sights, a 4x scope can be a handy size for many forms of hunting and takes in a large field of view. It's much the same with a 6x32 or an 8x40 fixed power, both designed to deliver good results in poor light.

My shooting mate Arthur wanted a 10x scope for his heavy barrelled Winchester Model 70 chambered for .222 Rem but a 10x was unavailable so he settled for a 12x40. This scope had twice the magnification power of my little 6x32 but didn't have twice the size objective lens to go with it - Arthur's would need a 60mm objective lens to handle low level light conditions well.

We were chasing rabbits and stopped to rest and while scanning the nearby countryside with my riflescope I saw a rabbit about 100m away, lying flat on the shadowy side of a log. Arthur's 12x40 couldn't find it in the shade yet my 6x32 did, so I took the shot even though it was his turn. But that was a long time ago and I now own only one 6x scope. Most of my others are variables with thick cross-hairs and a magnification range of either 3-9x or 4-12x, with most set permanently on 8x which I consider about

right for general rabbit and fox shooting, regardless of light.

So if buying a scope for a hunting rifle you need to think in terms of the magnification range, non-critical eye relief as well as mount height and comb compatibility, but don't overlook the size of the exit pupil and the scope's best setting so it can be used to maximum effect in poor light. The 'ideal' 5mm diameter exit pupil mentioned

throughout doesn't apply to scopes when used in good light, as shooting in the open on a sunny day just about any scope will give good results on any setting. The size of the exit pupil only becomes important when light levels are low, such as at the outer limit of a spotlight beam when a wise old fox decides to turn his back on you and disappear into the gloom. That's when having the right size exit pupil will help. ●

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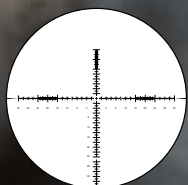
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Talbot on target! Practical Shooting

Communications Officer Sam Talbot continues his mission to shoot the SSAA disciplines, turning his attention this month to Practical Shooting



It's a touch ironic that Practical Shooting for me involved more theory and calculation than any discipline I've tackled so far but, when the time comes for action, it more than lives up to its name and is one of the most physically demanding disciplines the SSAA has to offer.

What is Practical Shooting?

This is one of the fastest-growing shooting sports in Australia. A high-speed, high-energy and quick-thinking discipline, it's intended to offer challenging and active shooting matches that test the capacity of both competitor and equipment.

With its roots in WA as a state handgun sport, it has since expanded and is now

recognised nationally. Each country which conducts International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) shooting usually runs a national equivalent and Practical Shooting is the SSAA's. It's suitable for a variety of firearms and offers categories, events and matches for everyone.

The most commonly used firearms are handguns but the competition I attended was for rifles. Just like other Practical competitions though, mine consisted of various stages with competitors scored on time and accuracy. What makes Practical unique is all targets and distances are different for each competition and stage and depending on the stage, competitors will be given more or less information on what's required of them, meaning sometimes

you really have to think on your feet, all of which makes for fun and exhilarating shooting.

Similar to other disciplines there are two basic divisions in Practical Shooting: Standard and Open - Standard for rifles and scopes up to a value of \$5000 while Open can be as expensive as you like (which means *very* expensive for some). Rimfire Rifle is shot at a maximum of 100m and Centrefire at 500m maximum.

Having a shot

SSAA Practical Shooting SA, a relatively new club, invited me to one of their shoots to show me the ropes. I arrived the day before a competition called Monarto Meltdown, a big event they were hosting



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Winchester Clearance



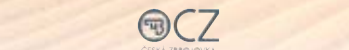
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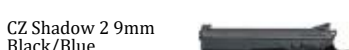
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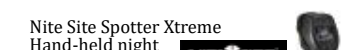


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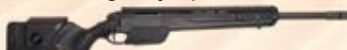
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Talbot on target! Practical Shooting

which attracted lots of sponsors and was the second major event in the Precision Rifle Series. The competition used SSAA rules and followed the Northern Territory rule book since the Rifle part of Practical is still finding its way.

Large events often have warm-up days before competition and I've found these to be excellent learning days with lots of people ready to offer help or keen to show you their equipment. The atmosphere is much more relaxed so if you ever feel intimidated about heading to a competition, find out if there's a warm-up day to relieve some of the pressure.

First thing I noticed was most shooters were a bit younger than you might find at other ranges.

"A lot of our people grew up shooting then gave it away for a while and now they're back in their 30s with time and money to take it up again," said Steve Spelman, secretary of Practical Shooting SA.

At the range, Steve showed me some of the stages and the many different shooting surfaces competitors have to navigate during stages. One was a platform hanging from chains - I usually find balance on terra firma challenging enough, let alone adding in the wobbles of being on a levitating plank. A farm gate, giant log and a pile of tyres were just some of the other items placed in stages which required shooters to interact or use them in different ways, all the while shooting targets at different distances under strict time limits.

"Practical is based on hunting and military shooting so the stages reflect that," said Steve. "The only limiting factor



If only 3P allowed the use of a tyre stack.

is safety, which always takes priority."

Interestingly, no shots were taken offhand or unsupported which makes sense as while in hunting or military situations there's usually something to rest on, if there isn't most hunters wouldn't take a shot for ethical reasons if offhand is the only option.

Synthetic rifles

Another thing that struck me was the absence of wood on the firearms - all the rifles being synthetic - and Steve explained there are a number of advantages with the newer synthetic rifles. "The butt for example is better than a wooden stock as it's easy to customise and adjust and they're stronger, less water absorbent and

can weigh whatever you want," he said.

"But a better rifle won't automatically make you a better shot."

Steve lent me his Ruger Precision which is more or less straight off the shelf and complete with a Vortex Viper PST scope, making it a solid rifle for the production category (the Tikka Atax would be another good scope for Production). All ammunition is handloaded and we used 6.5mm Creedmoor, popular thanks to its relative price, reliability and accessibility.

Shooting from the bench I had no trouble hitting targets from 200m to 400m, mostly thanks to Steve's knowledge of his equipment. By knowing bullet speeds, wind speed, target distance and a number of



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Up to 500 foot pounds*

Talbot on target! Practical Shooting

other variables (including the Coriolis effect - rotation and curvature of the earth), Steve used a phone app called *Applied Ballistics* to calculate exactly how many scope clicks were needed to hit the targets.

And while any ballistics calculator can work (there are plenty free ones on the internet) there is still a great degree of skill needed to make the shot - the app will not do all the work by any stretch of the imagination.

I was surprised how technical this type of shooting is though. Usually I just grab any old factory load and hope for the best, even with shotguns it didn't faze me whether I used 24, 28 or 32-gram loads or any shot size from 6-9. Unlike me though, competitors warming up for the competition were using range finders, kestrels and apparatus like MagneSpeed to properly measure bullet speed.

"We do our own reloading because factory loads don't always give consistent enough bullet speeds," said Steve. "The more accurate we can be with our bullet speed measurements, the more accurate our calculations and consequently our shooting will be."

Kestrels, bags and dope!

Many of you will know a Kestrel weather meter is used to measure wind speed, this being crucial information in determining

where to shoot and what adjustments to make. When all of this is done for all possible targets on a stage, the Practical Shooter records all the required scope clicks on a dope card, a small business card-sized piece of paper stuck to the side of the rifle. Given the tight time limits the dope card is invaluable and makes all the calculating beforehand worthwhile.

Another key tool for Practical Shooters is bags as all these calculations are useless if you're not stable. Since many stages require competitors to shoot off different surfaces and objects, bags can be used in a number of different ways to ensure a steady shot. The bags come in all shapes and sizes from small ones to rest under your rifle to bigger ones you can lay on or tuck under your arm when shooting from a squatting position. I think of bags as a blanket - they keep you comfortable and make you feel steady.

Shooting dry runs - competition

As mentioned previously in this column, arguably my greatest weakness is finding targets through the scope. Practical may be the most challenging for this as it involves lots of moving, repositioning and different targets. Luckily, I dealt with this by using a handy lever on top of my scope that dramatically changed the power, enabling me to quickly pull back, spot



4 HUD		
Range (yd)	Wind (mph)	Dir (clock)
+	+	+
1000	10	3
-	-	-
Rifle: Pierce 6.5	Ammos: Berger Target H. ybrid	
Sight CF: E1.0/W1.0	Target: N/A	MV: 2842.0 (fps)
Look Ang: 0.0°	Spin Drift: Off	Coriolis: Off
ELEV	U27.3 moa	U218 clicks
WIND	R6.5 moa	R52 clicks
LEAD	0 moa	0 clicks
Velocity: 1521.7 (fps) Energy: 719.8 (ft-lbs) Time: 1.444 (s)		

Steve used a phone app called *Applied Ballistics* to calculate exactly how many scope clicks were needed to hit the targets.



Knowing bullet speed is vital.

Steve crunches the numbers as Sam pulls the trigger.

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Talbot on target! Practical Shooting

the target and zoom in again while maintaining the settings for that target.

As it was a warm-up day and since I wasn't feeling particularly confident, instead of shooting I had some dry runs through a stage, the one I focused on consisting of shooting from a stack of three tyres. This called for two shots resting on the stack, removing a tyre and taking another two shots, removing another tyre and firing my final two shots from the single tyre.

And let me tell you there are lots of positions you can shoot from off a stack of tyres. It took me a while to steady and best put myself on the tyres and it was also my first time shooting with a bipod which is quite intuitive and didn't take long to get used to.

Of course pulling the trigger is the easy part - getting everything right up to that point is the real test. First you must understand the stage and work out how you'll shoot it, then calculate how you'll hit the targets then fill out your dope cards. With that done it's time to shoot which means finding stable positions, identifying the different targets and moving through the stage safely and quickly.

Despite not actually firing a shot I still managed to use up all the available time. I used to think getting into the 3P positions was a pain but Practical Shooting is

a different beast altogether. Ingenuity is required to identify the best positions and planning your movements is a key part of this discipline.

For example, another stage required competitors to shoot from a chair and I initially sat down as I normally would. Wrong! The best way is to lay the chair back, sit on the back rest and use its legs to steady the rifle on. Practical Shooting is full of that sort of thing and it makes for a fun, dynamic and challenging sport that requires wits and using your body and brain to the max.

Conclusion

Practical Shooting reminds me of sporting clays but with rifles. The stages challenge shooters in slightly different ways and always throw up something new. I certainly got more than I bargained for and have barely scratched the surface of this increasingly popular discipline. I highly recommend it and had a great time with the guys from SSAA Practical Shooting SA and look forward to trying out the handgun side in due course. ●



A dope card being stuck to the rifle, left column distance, right for clicks.





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The Sako 85 Finnlight II

Con Kapralos



The Sako Finnlight has a rich history which goes back to the Model 75, released in 1997. From then through to the Model 85 the Finnlight has been regarded as one of the premier stalking rifles world-wide. I have an 85 Finnlight in .270 Winchester topped with a Zeiss Duralyt 2-8x42 scope as my 'go to' rifle for serious hunting.

When I heard Sako were releasing a new Finnlight on the 85 platform I wondered how they could improve on what's already a superb rifle, but from first glimpses in the international shooting press the 85 Finnlight II looked a worthy successor. So when *Australian Shooter* received the rifle in .308 Winchester from Beretta Australia it came with high expectations.

The Finnlight II is developed on the Sako 85 format and is available in four action

lengths (S, SM, M and L) and 10 classic hunting calibres - .243 Win, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5x55 Swedish, .270 Win, 7mm-08, 7mm Rem Mag, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg, .300 Win Mag and .300 WSM.

Refreshingly, the rifle is available in both right and left-handed models and the review version came with a set of Sako Optilock rings/bases as well as a superb Steiner Ranger 2.5-10x50 scope. This combination would be perfect as a light-weight stalking set-up and weighs in at 3.74kg, the rifle in its bare form a mere 2.8kg and 1030mm in length.

Receiver

The barrelled action is made from stainless steel enhanced with a weather-resistant tungsten grey Cerakote finish. The receiver is the Short action, measuring

215mm x 35mm with the ejection port (on the right-hand side) coming in at 70mm, large enough to allow for unhindered ejection of fired and unfired rounds.

The top of the receiver encompasses Sako's trademark dual tapered dovetails which can accommodate an array of scope mounting options but is tailor-made for Sako Optilock rings and bases. The left-hand side of the receiver has an angled flat which follows the perimeter of the ejection port and carries the maker's name, action size, serial number and proof mark. To the rear is the bolt release button which by pressing when the bolt is drawn back allows for removal for cleaning and safe storage.

Bolt

The Sako 85 bolt on the Finnlight II is of the standard triple locking lug arrangement found on this grouping and for the Short action measures 70mm x 16mm. The bolt body is the only part of the visible surface not Cerakoted, going with a polished steel finish.

The bolt head encompasses the triple locking lugs, a claw extractor on the right and a slot milled into the base of the bolt head which allows the blade ejector to come into play when the bolt is drawn fully back. The bolt handle is a one-piece unit attached to the body and is also Cerakoted but in matte black.

Rearward is the steel shroud on the bolt body, also Cerakoted to match the receiver and barrel in tungsten grey. The bolt handle



Sako 85 Finnlight II
in component form.

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The Sako 85 Finnlight II

is well profiled, comfortable in the hand and the 60-degree bolt lift ensures quick cycling of the action.

Triggerguard and magazine

The triggerguard and magazine plate is made from a single piece of lightweight, hard anodised aluminium and is neatly inletted into the floor of the stock and Cerakoted to match the barrelled action. The detachable five-shot magazine with Sako's patented Total Control Latch (pending) sits securely in place, flush with the bottom surfaces. It will never fall out accidentally and can be top-loaded through the ejection port. The trigger on the Finnlight II is identical to all the Sako 85 stable, a single stage unit (with an optional set trigger available), fully adjustable between 1-2kg. It broke crisply at 1.5kg. The trigger blade is aluminium with a gentle curved profile and ribbed surface allowing positive finger control.

Safety mechanism

This mechanism comprises a two-way safety that locks trigger and bolt handle simultaneously and a small bolt release button which, when depressed, allows the user to load or remove a cartridge from the chamber while the safety is engaged.

Barrel

This measures 510mm, is of a standard sporter profile and in .308 Winchester calibre has a 1:11" rate of twist with four grooves. It is cold hammer forged, stainless steel and tungsten grey Cerakote finished to match the rest of the rifle and, more importantly, is fluted. This gives some savings in weight and provides a slightly larger barrel surface area, allowing faster cooling when the barrel has heated up. Internally the barrel is superbly finished with no machining or tooling marks.

Stock

This has been completely redesigned with adjustable cheekpiece and improved

Group accuracy testing in mm of Sako Finnlight II in .308 Winchester - 100m

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Average*
Sellier & Bellot Match 165gr HPBT	16	23	20
Sako Powerhead 165gr Barnes TSX	24	34	29
Sako Super Hammerhead 150gr Soft Point	20	32	26
Sako Hammerhead 180gr Soft Point	17	30	24

* Average group size calculated from five 3-shot groups at 100m



Tungsten grey Cerakoted action showing tapered Sako 85 dovetails on top, steel bolt shroud and two-position safety.

bedding arrangement. The stock itself is fibreglass with aerospace-grade RTM (Resin Transfer Moulding) technology, a cutting-edge method of component manufacture from precise moulds using a vacuum.

The result is a high degree of manufacturing tolerances giving a superior bedding platform for the barrelled action and inherent accuracy, while resulting in a very lightweight stock as required by a premium stalking rifle.

Externally the stock is of a classic American profile with clean lines, the exception being a lightly scalloped section on the underside of the buttstock directly beneath the adjustable cheekpiece. Users can tailor the position of their master eye in relation to the ocular of the riflescope. A single square-shaped button on the right of



The pistol grip has a rubber elastomer insert.



One of the main features is the lightweight fibreglass stock with fully-adjustable cheekpiece.

the buttstock is pressed to allow the sliding comb to be positioned securely to any height required. I found the comb height spot-on with it fully in the 'down' position when looking through the fitted Steiner Ranger scope.

Moving to the pistol grip and fore-end grip areas, inlaid clear rubber panels offer an excellent grip and are super comfortable. At the rear of the buttstock a black gel-matrix recoil pad helps reduce flinch and is softer than traditional sorbothane pads.

The stock also has stainless sling swivel studs complemented by a set of Sako one-inch sling swivels supplied with the rifle. Removing the barrelled action from the stock the bedding arrangement is clear, the bedding platform by way of a carbon fibre



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The Sako 85 Finnlight II

unit providing a surface which will give superior stability for the barrelled action while saving weight.

A shallow square recoil lug on the underside of the front receiver ring mates up with a steel insert which in turn sits securely in a mortise in the carbon fibre bedding platform. This arrangement permits the barrel to fully float along its length while the rear of the receiver sits directly on the carbon fibre bedding block. The stock is finished in dark grey.

At the range, in the field

The barrel was cleaned before range testing and five 3-shot groups taken using each ammunition brand with a barrel clean in between. The fluted, lightweight barrel did heat up markedly after each 3-shot string but allowing it to cool was a prerequisite. One target load in the Sellier & Bellot Match was assessed but the majority of ammunition tested were premium hunting loads from Sako - the 165gr Powerhead, 150gr Super Hammerhead and 180gr Hammerhead.

The three premium hunting loads by Sako shot well, all groups consistently averaging around the 1 MOA mark (28mm) at 100m. For a stalking rifle where most quarry would be hunted out to 300m, any of these three hunting loads will be up to the task. It's pleasing that Sako hunting ammunition is more available Australia-wide than it was a few years ago as it's excellent for the hunter who wants reliable and high-quality ammo without having to handload.



The flush-fitting detachable magazine and trigger guard.

Overview

Can I compare my trusty 85 Finnlight in .270 Winchester with the new Finnlight II in .308 Winchester? Calibres aside, the Finnlight II has a definite edge over its predecessor. The much-improved stock is a winner and the tungsten grey Cerakote over the stainless barrelled action will help protect the metalwork against the elements as well as giving extra stealth.

I'm old-school but Cerakoting is here to stay, looks the part and protects metalwork unlike any metal finish. The review rifle felt superb in the hands and would make an astute investment for the stalking hunter. Quality doesn't come cheap with an RRP of \$4239 but I subscribe to the 'buy once, buy best' theory. More at berettaaustralia.com.au. ●



The stainless steel barrel has a series of flutes for reduced weight and faster cooling.



The Sako 85 'S' action without stock.

Specifications

Manufacturer: Sako, Finland

Model: 85 Finnlight II

Distributor: Beretta Australia

Calibres: Short action: .243 Win, 6.5 CM, 7mm-08 Rem, .308 Winchester (tested)

Short Magnum action: .300 WSM

Medium action: 6.5x55 SE, .270 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield

Long action: 7mm Rem Mag, .300 Win Mag.

Sights: Clean barrel. Tapered dovetails on receiver for scope-mounting hardware

Action: Sako 85 manually operated bolt-action, three locking lugs, control round feed with mechanical ejection. Stainless steel with tungsten grey Cerakote finish

Barrel: Stainless steel cold hammer forged, 510mm, fluted. Tungsten grey Cerakote finish

Stock: Fibreglass with RTM (Resin Transfer Moulding) technology, carbon fibre bedding block, adjustable cheekpiece

Magazine: Short and Medium action, five rounds in magazine, one in chamber. Short Magnum and Long action, four rounds in magazine, one in chamber. Detachable steel box magazine with Sako Total Control Latch (TCL) system

Total length: 1030mm

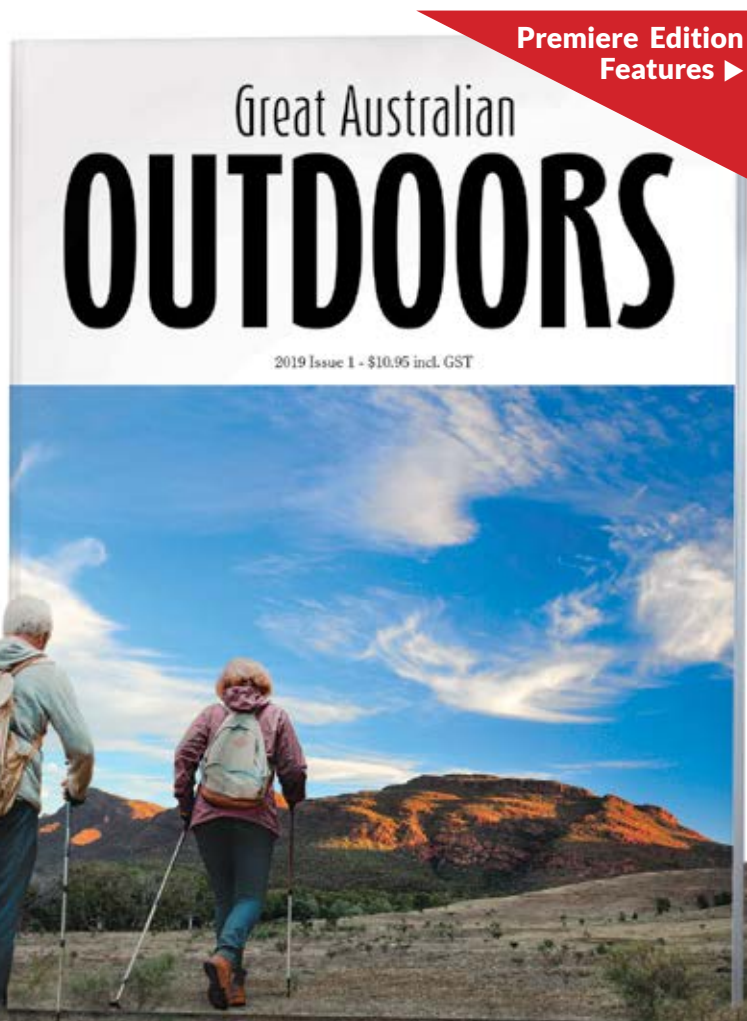
Weight: 2.8kg (Short action), 2.9kg (Medium), 3.1kg (Short Magnum & Long)

RRP: \$4239 (right-handed), \$4509 (left-handed)

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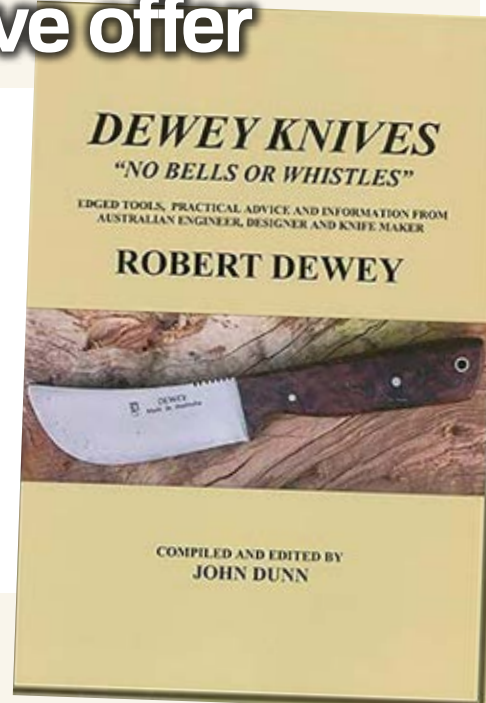
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Retiring Senator puts feral pigs on notice

John Maxwell

When politicians finally chuck it, many cite a desire to spend more time with their family away from the endless demands of public life. Some go on to second careers in business, academia or working for worthy organisations.

Not so Northern Territory Senator and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, who announced he was quitting well before the federal election and has his retirement all figured out. "I'm out of here shortly and am really looking forward to shooting field and game wherever I am around the world. I'll continue my focused assistance with feral animals across Australia," he said. "If I was a wild pig, a duck or a mud crab I'd be starting to get nervous."

"That's the only plan I have - to eat more mud crabs, catch more barramundi and shoot more wild pigs. I have no plan beyond that. I'm retiring."

Senator Scullion said one of the great regrets about whatever you did in life was what you were not doing. "I'm a very keen shooter and keen fisherman but just haven't found any time. People who think there's free time in this place haven't done it," he said from Parliament House on the day the election was called.

"I'm very much looking forward to spending a lot more time in the country instead of having to race out somewhere, shoot half a dozen pigs and a few dogs and suddenly have to race back again. Now I don't have to."

During his time in Canberra, Senator Scullion managed the occasional rabbit

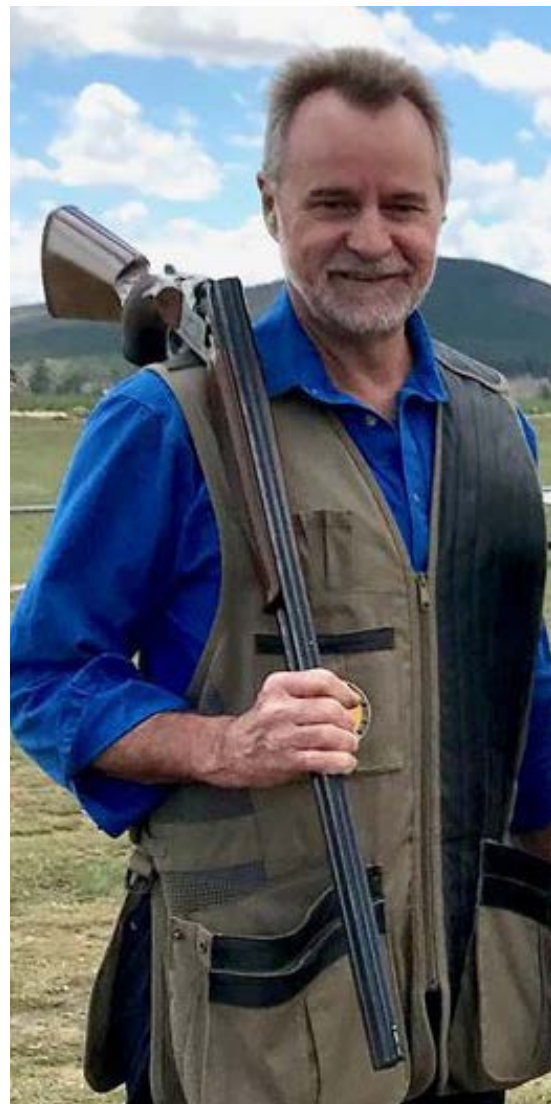
shooting foray to a property near Cooma, south of the capital. The bunnies were head-shot using .22 and 17HMR rifles, dressed and Cryovac sealed on the bonnet of a car in the field, then stored in a freezer out the back of Parliament House for anyone who wanted a feed of rabbit. "I just gave away the last of the rabbits from the freezer to some of the parliamentary cleaners," he said.

Nigel, who turned 63 in May, was born in London and in his younger days lived variously in the UK, Malaysia and Malawi. He grew up around guns. "There was lots of stuff to shoot, there were guns everywhere and it was all part of life" he said.

"In 1985 when I arrived with Jenny in the Northern Territory, I knew our search for a home and a place to start a family was over. You've never seen such a place," he said in his first speech to the Senate in February, 2002.

Subsequently he worked across a number of industries including mining, fishing, maritime salvage, security and engineering. Among the qualifications listed on his parliamentary bio is professional fisherman, owner and operator of various marine businesses and head of industry bodies such as the Australian Seafood Industry Council (1996-2001). Much of the time he lived aboard a fishing boat, raising three children - Sarah, Daniel and Luke. In 2001 he filled the Senate spot vacated by long-time NT Country Liberal Senator Grant Tambling.

The north has always produced colourful characters and among his more newsworthy achievements,



Shooting Senator has retirement in his sights

pre-politics, was having his trousers pulled down while handcuffed to a stripper pole in a nightclub in St Petersburg, Russia in 1997. That came about when he attended an international fishers conference as a member of the Australian delegation.

"Don't let anyone handcuff you to a post and make sure you always wear clean underwear," he said when the story emerged a decade later. The revelation was never going to lose him votes in the NT, just as Kevin Rudd's admission he attended a strip club in New York probably won votes.

The buffalo-shooting fisherman managed to maintain his Cabinet position through three prime ministers during two tumultuous terms of Coalition government but lately Senator Scullion has been actively preparing for retirement. "I've been reloading pretty steadily for the past four months. I think I have about 1800 rounds ready to go so look out wild pigs," he said.

"I'm not absolutely sure but I think I

have around 30 firearms." Those include hunting rifles, shotguns and antiques. The Senator is a big fan of .308 Winchester. "I have a whole suite of rifles I use and have probably have half a dozen 308s.

People ask why a bloke needs so many rifles but two of them are owned by my sons.

"Probably my favourite which I take everywhere as I can deal with most things - if you can see it you can kill it - is a 308 H-S precision rifle. It's an absolute tack driver."

It's fitted with a Nightforce 5.5-22x56 scope. "I haven't

shot what they shoot in their indoor range of a .16" group but I shoot well under half an inch often."

Other rifles include one in .375 Holland and Holland from when he was shooting buffaloes and backing up clients on hunting trips, as well as an Anschütz in .222 Remington. "That was one of 1700 imported in 1972. I know that because I've been trying to find a magazine for the past five years and have just had one made in

Melbourne. I shouldn't have lost it in the first place," he said.

Then there's the shotguns which include self-loading Remington models 11-87 and 1100 and a Browning BT for down the line. "I don't shoot as much with it any more. Since I got into field and game I'm at the top of B Grade. I pick the gun up every couple of years and can still shoot pretty reasonable scores," he said.

His antiques include a muzzleloading Purdey double rifle and a black powder rail gun with 1.5" bore designed for ship-to-ship combat in the age of sail. In the past he carried a Smith and Wesson in .44 Magnum while out in the bush but at the moment there are no handguns. In retirement, that may change.

Senator Scullion has loaded his own ammunition for around 20 years and says that came about through his work as a professional shooter and a desire for instantaneous kills through head shots. "Once I had established that, I didn't shoot things just anywhere. It's a personal thing - suddenly the actual accuracy of the rifle became more important," he said. ●

Senator Scullion has loaded his own ammunition for around 20 years and says that came about through his work as a professional shooter.



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Turning back the clock with Stoeager air rifles

Daniel O'Dea

As a boy, my closest thing to 'screen time' was watching the Saturday matinee movie on TV - there definitely weren't any personal devices to waste away the hours. But what I did have was air rifles, first a Daisy BB gun and later a break-action BSA Meteor.

For years these kept me entertained for hours on end, targets stapled to last year's phone book with an old quarter-inch barbecue plate serving as an effective backstop. This was all set up in the backyard and, at a time when firearms ownership and use wasn't approached with such hyperbolic attitudes as today, was considered both safe and acceptable for an inner Sydney suburb.

In fact an air rifle didn't even require a licence and a BB gun was more or less considered and sold as a toy. You could buy either at K-Mart with .177 pellets picked up at the corner store, newsagent's or sports and hobby shop. In the scheme of things this wasn't all that long ago, being the mid-1980s.

Apart from the backyard, air rifle galleries were standard fare at your local carnival, even at church or school fetes and ever-present at the Sydney Easter Show. As they were cheap, readily available and less restrictive to use, air rifles served as an introduction to shooting and were the basis for developing marksmanship and safe firearms handling.

So having grown up in a time when owning an air rifle was almost a standard rite of passage for a young boy, I've often wonder if they still carry the same relevance in an age where they're treated as no less a firearm than those more powerful, requiring the same licensing, storage and conditions of use as a rimfire or shotgun.

Beretta Australia is distributor for Stoeager air rifles and offered Australian Shooter two types for appraisal - the RX5, a compact, light and easy-to-use model targeted as an entry level air gun, and the RX20 Sport, a more full-sized adult unit offering not only modern features but

significantly more power. Interestingly both models were a combo package, meaning they come boxed including a 4x32 air gun scope and mounts. Many are unaware that spring-powered air guns can be tough on optics and while air rifle felt recoil may be insignificant to the shooter, air gun recoil and vibration can be quite punishing with respect to the scope. Anyway, having the rifle packaged with a scope is a hassle-free and cost-effective way to buy.

Looking at the RX5 and RX20 Sport, both have unique ergonomic styling with black polymer stocks featuring adaptive chequering, providing good gripping surfaces and said to be specifically designed to follow the contours of the shooter's hand. Stoeager refers to these ergonomic advances as 'Human Tech Design'. The RX20 Sport also features removable grip panels that can be swapped with coloured versions for individual customisation.

Both rifles are traditional break-action breech-loading style where the barrel

Turning back the clock with Stoeger air rifles

is hinged and breaks to act as a cocking lever for a spring piston that powers the unit. Barrels are rifled and chambered in a choice of either .177 or .22 with both test guns supplied in .177. Uniquely, the barrels feature an oversized solid polymer shroud, again shaped as a grip to give extra purchase on the barrel to aid the cocking process. Barrels and other metal surfaces carry a blued finish.

The RX5 measures a compact 1030mm overall with a barrel length of 420mm and weighs 2.4kg without optic. Sighting is provided by a raised front-sight with fibre optic insert and a fully adjustable rear-sight block also with fibre optic insert and there's an integral dovetail rail for mounting an optic should you desire. The RX5 has a two-stage factory-set trigger which was long, heavy and somewhat spongy but not unusual for an entry level air rifle and it keeps you focused on trigger control, providing a learning curve for the new shooter.

Both rifles have an automatic, ambidextrous, large push-button safety mounted at the receiver butt which automatically activates on cocking and can be easily deactivated with a push of the thumb once on target and ready to fire. Likewise, both come standard with a thick soft rubber recoil pad that features anti-slip chequering.

The RX20 Sport is a full-sized air rifle at 1122mm in length with 462mm barrel, weighing in at a neat 3kg again without the optic. The trigger is a much-improved adjustable unit when compared to the RX5, being lighter and with a lot more feel. Iron sights are similar to the RX5 with the front-sight upgraded to having interchangeable fibre optic inserts. Likewise, the polymer barrel-mounted cocking grip is more

This group shot with the RX20 Sport with .177-calibre 8.64gr Stoeger X-Hunt pellets was typical of the accuracy.



substantial on the RX20 Sport and the stock features the interchangeable coloured grip insets referred to by the maker as MGS or Multi Grip System.

Performance-wise Stoeger quotes two sets of figures dependent on the type of pellet used. For the RX5, velocity for .177 lead pellets is 660fps (feet per second) and 810fps for those slippery aerodynamic alloy

pellets, while the RX20 Sport will punch out lead pellets at a solid 1000fps and the alloy at 1200fps. From experience with .177 air rifles 600fps is fine for general plinking, target shooting and will even do the job on smaller pest birds and rodents.

For hunting, 800fps-plus with the right pellets will produce enough energy to handle prey such as rabbits as long as you



The Stoeger RX20 Sport (top) and RX5 as supplied.



stick to moderate distances. If you plan to hunt small vermin with an air rifle, the .22 calibre would be a better way to go as, although a little slower, the pellet mass in general terms produces more energy. The quoted figures in .22 are 550fps for the RX5 and 800fps for the RX20 Sport.

The scope supplied was a fixed power 4x32 which is plenty of magnification. Heading to the farm I mounted both rifles with the supplied optics and set myself up a range incorporating two saw horses and an old timber plank to place some small

wooden blocks and my 'Zero In' portable target system to staple some targets on. It didn't take long to sight in both Stoegers and the scopes seemed to track well when making adjustments.

The RX5 was pleasurable to shoot and had me reminiscing about those old days in the backyard. It was simple to operate with only a moderate amount of force required to cock the spring piston for charging. In contrast the more powerful RX20 Sport did require some extra muscle action to make it cocked and ready to go.

You could literally shoot the RX5 all day with little effort though with the RX20 Sport after a good range session you might feel like Popeye looking for a can of spinach to replenish the sagging biceps. If you're looking for a basic air rifle to start off your son or daughter the RX5 would do the trick nicely, if it's an adult-sized air gun to take out the odd pest around the barn, the RX20 would be the better option.

Both rifles showed good accuracy with the RX20 cutting the centre out of targets at 10m, my wooden block targets hit with



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Turning back the clock with Stoeger air rifles

such monotony I ended up turning them on their edge to present more of a challenge.

The automatic safety that activates as soon as the rifle is cocked took a little getting used to as I've never used an air rifle with this feature. My standard drill growing up was always that the rifle was never cocked until facing downrange and I was ready to engage a target. I noted there was also a locking lever safety on both rifles meaning they could not discharge once cocked unless the breech was locked up and the safety off. This is another good feature on a spring-powered break-barrel air gun, as an accidental discharge when broken open could have the barrel swinging with significant force to slap shut, potentially causing damage or injury.

I had a couple of sessions with the RX5 and RX20 and really enjoyed shooting them. So are air rifles still relevant? I'd say most definitely yes. Representing the most economical form of trigger time, about



The RX20 Sport features Stoeger's MGS (Multi Grip System) allowing swapping of coloured grip panels (supplied) for personalisation.

\$15 will buy you 500 pellets which is about one-quarter the cost of .22 rimfire ammo on average. They're easy on the ears and you don't need a large range envelope to stay safe, making them ideal in semi-rural areas with urban encroachment. It's a wonderfully affordable way to start off a youngster or to build and maintain your shooting and handling skills.

Stoeger is imported and distributed by Beretta Australia, visit berettaaustralia.com.au ●



The two Stoegers and a selection of targets used.



The RX20 Sport (top) and RX5 both featured a fixed polymer barrel shroud.



The RX20 Sport with larger interchangeable fibre optic front-sight bead compared to its little brother the RX5, still fibre optic but fixed.

Specifications

Air rifle:	Stoeger RX5 combo	Stoeger RX20 Sport combo
Action:	Break action	Break action
Actuation:	Spring piston air	Spring piston air
Max velocity:	245 m/s (810fps)*	360 m/s (1200fps)*
Trigger:	Double stage	Double stage
Calibre:	.177 tested .22 optional	.177 tested .22 optional
Capacity:	Single shot	Single shot
Barrel:	420mm	462mm
Rear-sights:	Fibre optic adjustable	Fibre optic adjustable
Front-sights:	Fibre optic	Fibre optic interchangeable
Combo optic:	Stoeger 4x32 scope	Stoeger 4x32 scope
Finish:	Blued	Blued
Stock:	Black polymer	Black polymer with MGS
Weight:	2.4kg	3kg
Length (overall):	1030mm	1122mm
Price as tested:	\$340 approx. (combo)	\$520 approx. (combo)
(*Pellet dependent, see text)		

Quality optics in the palm of your hand

Thomas Tabor



The Predator AF comes with front lens covers that hinge downwards.

It was a time of demolished infrastructure for the German people. World War Two had reached its conclusion leaving in its wake devastation, destruction and a collapsed economy that promised to take decades to recover.

Nevertheless, an individual by the name of Karl Steiner had a vision that would not be deterred by such impediments. Driven by a passion and desire to create high-quality optical products that would outshine the mass-produced post-war era of inferior designs, in 1947 Steiner embarked on his dream of becoming a premier optics manufacturer.

At the outset he worked from a one-man workshop but within six years he was employing 50 skilled staff. Now, more than seven decades on, Steiner Optik has become a major player in the manufacturing of top-rate products available in 65 countries.

I had the chance to see for myself how a couple of the latest Steiner binoculars would perform - the Predator AF 8x30 and a mini-sized model called BluHorizons 10x26. I chose these particular binoculars to test and evaluate because, as a hunter, I sometimes find myself weighed down with gear and I was keen to lighten my load. But while my initial attraction was based on size, I soon discovered both models had a lot more going for them than simply being small in stature.

Predator AF

There are two models of the Predator AF available: Model 8x30 which weighs a mere 19 ounces (.54kg) and the 10x42 weighing 30.3 ounces (0.86kg). For this review I chose the 8x30s.

The 'AF' in the name stands for Automatic Focus, a convenient feature when time is short and an accurate and quick evaluation is called for. Simply bring the binoculars up and everything through the lenses from about 27m to infinity is in perfect focus. For closer distances I could still obtain great clarity on a target image by adjusting the focus using the diopter adjustment rings.



Quality optics in the palm of your hand

I have a few hunting companions who insist all their binoculars have dual diopter adjustments like those on the Predator AF. The advantages of binoculars designed in this way lies in the fact that most people's eyesight is different from one eye to the other, and being able to adjust the clarity individually makes for better overall viewing. But while a boycott on single diopter adjustable binoculars might be a worthy objective, in my opinion that would limit your options as dual diopter adjustable units are far rarer than their single adjustable counterparts.

In order to blend into their natural environment most game species match the colour of their environment. That benefits the animals greatly when it comes to avoiding predation but also makes them harder for hunters to spot. Steiner took that issue into consideration when designing the Predator AFs by applying their special Color Adjusted Transmission coating to the lenses.

What this does is make deer, roos and other game species stand out more from their similar coloured background, resulting in the view through the lens having a slight pink or reddish tinge. While some may prefer natural colouration through their optics, for hunting purposes this clearly makes spotting and evaluating game easier. I tested this claim on a herd of deer that had taken up residency around my home and found the view through the Predator AFs did exactly what Steiner intended. Switching back and forth between the Predator AF and other more traditional-styled binoculars

I found the deer showed up considerably better when using the Steiner optics.

While I like many of the features on the 8x30 Predator AFs there was one thing I found not so appealing and that was how the front lens cover caps were attached to the body of the binoculars. A small rubber strap secures them so they don't get lost and while this general concept is a good one, I occasionally found the caps had a tendency to partially block the full view through the lenses. If this should become a problem the lens covers can be easily and completely removed.

The body of the Predator AF comes

Tom found the BluHorizons 10x26 a good choice in the field.



coated with a highly protective IPx4-rated rubber armour which is textured for a secure, non-slip grip, a durable protection that will be great in rough field conditions. The Predator AF is covered by Steiner's Heritage Warranty, good for the life of the binoculars, and each unit comes with a neck strap, neoprene carrying case and lens cloth. RRP will be about \$480 for the 8x30s and \$640 for the 10x42s.

BluHorizons

These 8x30 mini binoculars fit my needs for small and lightweight hunting items perfectly but they have a lot more going for them. Light conditions can vary sometimes dramatically from dawn to high noon and beyond and those conditional changes result in significant challenges for optic makers and, in particular, how effective the user's view is through the lens. Steiner has addressed those issues in a big way with their breakthrough sunlight adaptive binoculars - the BluHorizons with Autobright.

This system was designed around all light conditions including those times of low light and harsh glares frequently encountered while hunting. The sunlight adaptable lens technology of the BluHorizons automatically adjusts brightness through the lenses to best compensate for those conditions. Whether the sun is directly overhead and shining brightly, bouncing off a body of water or snow-covered ground, the BluHorizons lenses are engineered to gather just the right amount of light while reducing glare to produce optimum viewing opportunities.

The BluHorizons are built to survive hard handling with a semi-soft protective covering on the binocular tubes. They come



The Predator AF and BluHorizons are dwarfed by the Nikon 10x50s.

with a single diopter adjustment ring on the left eyepiece and fast-focusing wheel in the centre between the barrels. Each eyepiece has a slightly oval-shaped eyecup which can be easily rotated to provide the highest degree of both comfort and viewing potential. Two models are available - the 8.8-ounce 8x22s and 10.6-ounce 10x26s - both of which are small enough when folded to fit inside most shirt pockets. I chose the slightly larger 10x26 model for this review.

I had the chance to do a side-by-side comparison of the light gathering abilities of the BluHorizons 10x26s with the older, similarly sized Oshman's 8x27s. I'd used

this unit for many years and while never all that satisfied with its light gathering abilities, I accepted that was the price I had to pay for light weight and handy size. I could not have been more wrong! I never realised how much I'd been handicapping myself until I looked through the BluHorizons.

The difference was incredible. There will always be sacrifices if you choose not to carry full-sized binoculars, but in this case those concessions are nowhere near as earth-shattering as I once thought them to be. With Steiner's Autobright feature the user can have the best of both worlds - light-weight and small enough to fit in your shirt



When folded the BluHorizons fit most shirt pockets.



The BluHorizons fit in the palm of your hand.

pocket yet with impressive light-gathering capabilities. RRP for the 8x22 BluHorizons is \$220 and \$230 for the 10x26.

The way I see it

While it's nice to enjoy the features inherent with larger optics sometimes 'small' just makes more sense. If, like me, you appreciate the advantages of compact and lighter weight binoculars, I'd encourage you to consider the Steiner Predator AF and the BluHorizons. You just might find the advantages of 'bigger' may not carry quite the same weight they once did. ●

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Three new Federal Premium hunting cartridges

Thomas Tabor



The new Federal ammo shot superbly off the bench.

It wasn't that long ago if a hunter wanted to shoot high-quality hunting bullets he or she had no choice but to handload their own ammunition and I have a gunroom full of handloading equipment and supplies to support that assertion.

While I still handload a considerable amount of hunting ammunition, today there's a very viable alternative for hunters as it's now possible to buy factory-loaded ammunition of the highest quality. A classic example can be found in Federal Premium's new line of hunting ammo, a series of cartridges including three categories of shells based on the type of bullet used including Barnes' Triple-Shock X, Berger's new Hybrid Hunter and the Nosler AccuBond.

In each of these the vast majority of the traditional centrefire rifle rounds are included as well as several magnum calibres

and in some cases bullets of varying weights are offered.

Barnes Triple-Shock X

The Federal Premium loads containing Barnes' highly favourable Triple-Shock X bullets consist of 14 cartridge calibres in 18 bullet weights. The Triple-Shock X is a solid copper bullet with no lead core or jacket to shed and because copper is lighter than lead, these bullets typically carry higher ballistic coefficient values which equates to flatter trajectories and an ability to buck the wind better than more traditional jacketed/lead-core bullets. Their deep hollow-point design is meant to encourage a faster rate of expansion and better mushrooming capabilities and their grooved shank helps minimise barrel fouling and promote a higher degree of shooting accuracy.

The Triple-Shock X bullet is a good choice for different types of hunting and I've used them for many years while targeting roos and deer-sized game all the way up to the largest and toughest of species like Asian water buffalo. In virtually every instance I've found these bullets expand well and penetrate deep, yet always hold together to retain almost 100 per cent of their weight no matter what impediments they encounter along the way.

As such they've become one of the favourite hunting bullets for medium to large-sized game and the component parts are some of the best available, including Barnes' finest nickel-plated brass and Gold Medal primers.

Berger Hybrid Hunter

For many years Berger has been heavily



This target is typical of many shot using Federal Premium 30-06 ammunition loaded with 180gr Nosler AccuBond bullets.



Federal Premium ammunition loaded with the Berger Hybrid Hunter produced great groups.



Federal Premium cartridges loaded with Barnes TSX bullets is superb ammunition.

Three new Federal Premium hunting cartridges

involved in the production of projectiles for target shooters, their bullets typically designed to possess low-drag, high ballistic coefficient values and potential for pinpoint accuracy, and the company has brought those same traits and characteristics to brand new hunting bullet the Hybrid Hunter. In this case the construction is the more traditional lead-core/copper-jacketed hollow-point design, its hybrid nose which combines tangent and secant ogive features helping enhance its abilities as a hunting bullet.

The new Federal Premium ammunition loaded with Berger Hybrid Hunter bullets has been loaded to tight specifications and includes Gold Medal primers, nickel-plated brass and specialised propellants. Ten loads are currently available in 10 standard and magnum calibres.

Nosler AccuBond

Shortly after the development of the Nosler AccuBond bullet a company official told me that while Nosler Partition bullets were primarily designed for hunting the largest and toughest of game animals, they were working on one that would target slightly smaller, thinner-skinned game.

The AccuBond was apparently produced with those objectives in mind but no-one should underestimate its potential on large and tough game animals - I once took a huge African bull eland weighing upwards of a ton with my 375 H&H loaded with a 260gr AccuBond bullet. A single shot through its shoulder and lungs at 100m did the trick, meaning its head was bound for the wall of my trophy room.

The bullet penetrated the animal's huge shoulder, stopping just under the skin on the opposite side, the retrieved bullet retaining

65 per cent of its original weight and mushrooming perfectly. Since the introduction of this bullet I've successfully harvested a vast array of medium to large-sized animals and have always been happy with the AccuBond's performance.

The AccuBond bullets loaded in this new Federal Premium ammunition come with a white-coloured polymer tip, a feature which helps encourage quicker bullet expansion upon impact and increases the ballistic coefficient value. It's a boat-tail design with tapered copper jacket that's thicker at the base and thinner as it approaches the tip.

The AccuBond Federal Premium ammunition is currently available in 15 calibres and 17 loads (three of which are in 30-06) and those cartridges include many standard hunting calibres as well as five magnums.

The way I see it

There are clear advantages in handloading your own cartridges but when it comes to high-quality factory-loaded ammunition, you may find the new Federal Premium line-up hard to beat. Whether you're after an Asian water buffalo pushing a ton in weight, or a bull red stag of lesser weight but with an



Federal Premium is offering some of the best hunting bullets in its factory-loaded ammunition.



There's no jacket shed with the total copper construction of Barnes TSX bullets.

Berger's Hybrid Hunter is more traditional with a lead core and copper jacket.

The heavier rear of AccuBond's jacket helps ensure better mushrooming.

equal amount of stamina and bullet resistant endurance, the bullets now being offered in this premium hunting line of ammunition are sure to see the job done.

With this ammunition being new to the market I've only had the chance to test it on my firing range, but when the chance presents itself it will be accompanying me on future hunting trips. ●

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Variable Phone Adapter

SWAROVSKI OPTIK VARIABLE PHONE ADAPTER (VPA) is compatible with most smartphones on the market. The adapter quickly and easily connects SWAROVSKI OPTIK spotting scopes or binoculars with your phone to create a super telephoto lens, allowing you to capture detailed close-ups.

Attaching the VPA is incredibly easy. Use the clamps to adjust the width and height of the adapter to the size of your smartphone and the position of the camera attach the correct adapter ring to the corresponding eyepiece cup in the screwed-in position. No special tools are needed. The anthracite-coloured adapter is light yet rugged thanks to the use of fiberglass-reinforced plastic.

For more information visit www.swarovskioptik.com

See them at the SSAA SHOT Expo, Melbourne Oct 19,20



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Zeiss Conquest V6 riflescopes

Con Kapralos



Conquest V6 scopes as reviewed, from top: 5-30x50, 2.5-15x56 and 1.1-6x24.

The Conquest series has been somewhat in the riflescope wilderness at Zeiss. Originally the entry level riflescope offerings assembled for Zeiss in the US, they were replaced by the current Terra line-up. The Conquest name then adorned the DL and HD5, mid-range riflescopes with great glass, superb performance and various configurations to cater for all hunting eventualities.

Zeiss decided to refresh its mid-range collection, phasing out the Conquest DL while maintaining the HD5 and adding the vigour and class deserving of the Conquest banner in the form of the V6. The flagship choice in hunting riflescope optics is the German-made Victory, with the HT and V8 being some of the most technically

advanced scopes money can buy. But not everyone can afford, nor desires such top-flight glass and this is where the Conquest series steps up with the HD5 and V6.

The V6, designed on a six-times magnification range, encompasses five models from the 1.1-6x24 up to the impressive 5-30x50 long-range option. The Conquest V6 is made in Germany alongside the top-tier Victory variety, another reason why it's worth a closer look. Outdoor Sporting Agencies, Australian distributor of Zeiss Sport Optics, supplied three models - the 1.1-6x24, 2.5-15x56 and showcase 5-30x50.

Conquest V6 up close

The six-times magnification provides exemplary vision be it involving stalking, driven

game or long-range hunting and shooting. Utilising the same FL (Fluoride) lenses found in the Zeiss Victory riflescopes as well as the T* lens coatings, they give 92 per cent light transmission for extremely high image brightness in low and challenging light conditions, making target clarity and resolution brilliant. This level of light transmission is equal to that of the Victory V8 and only bettered by the Victory HT.

Zeiss' hydrophobic LotuTec lens coatings ensure image quality is never compromised, with water simply beading and running off the surfaces. Quality turrets provide precise and repeatable windage and elevation adjustments while on the larger models of the V6, they can be swapped out

for the Zeiss ASV Bullet Drop Compensator (BDC) turrets.

The superb fibre optic illuminated red dot Reticle 60, as well as the non-illuminated Reticle 6, 43 and the ballistic ZBR and ZMOA long-range reticles in the Conquest V6, takes this Zeiss 'mid-range' scope to a heady level. The illuminated reticle is operated using a step-less rheostat dial adjacent to the elevation turret. Pulling the dial body out to turn on the illumination, the red dot can be adjusted to whatever brightness the user requires.

Additionally, the illumination system is enhanced with the inclusion of an integrated motion sensor capable of activating and deactivating the illumination according to the position of the scope. Tilt the scope towards the vertical or cant it to the left or right and the illumination will switch off. Restore the position to the horizontal and illumination returns. This innovative feature assists in prolonging battery life. Being contained in a one-piece aluminium tube, nitrogen purged and filled to ensure no ingress of moisture, dust or dirt and coated with an anodised, scratch-resistant matte black finish, the Conquest V6 sets the standard for the mid-range.



Conquest V6 models with illuminated Reticle 60 use a single button-style battery.

Conquest V6 1.1-6x24, 2.5-15x56 and 5-30x50

The V6 1.1-6x24 is a scope perfectly suited to driven game where shots encountered would be within close proximity. The minimum 1.1 magnification setting together with the 90mm eye relief make this model suitable for the heaviest recoiling calibres. Even the ability to wind up the magnification to six allows shots to be taken out to

300m and beyond. It's a lovely compact rifle scope and comes fitted with the Reticle 60 in the second focal plane with the illuminated red dot reticle.

The V6 2.5-15x56 would have to be the ideal all-round rifle scope for general hunting and shooting in poor light or under the spotlight. Its generous magnification range from 2.5 to 15 makes it a flexible rifle scope in that it can be used on the lowest setting where a maximum field-of-view is required and, on the other end of the spectrum, wound up to maximum 15 power for the longest shots. The 56mm objective lens ensures maximum light gathering and, in lowlight conditions or shooting under the lamp and with the second focal plane Reticle 60 illuminated reticle, this would be hard to beat as an excellent all-round hunting scope.

The gem in the Conquest V6 group is the 5-30x50 which is squarely aimed at long-range hunting applications as well as being right at home on closer extents, thanks to its impressive 5-30x magnification. It's available with the Reticle 6 and Reticle 43 (non-illuminated) as well as the ballistic reticles in the ZBR and ZMOA. These two come in handy with the ASV BDC system which makes for a versatile, long-range hunting scope. With a side parallax adjustment and 62 MOA of elevation adjustment, the V6 in 5-30x50 will provide the perfect scope for medium to long-range hunting applications.

Specifications

Zeiss Conquest V6	1.1-6x24	2.5-15x56	5-30x50
Magnification	1.1-6.5	2.5-15	5-30
Effective lens diameter	10.5-24mm	24.3-56mm	47.8-50mm
Exit pupil diameter	9.5-3.7mm	9.7-3.7mm	9.5-1.7mm
Twilight factor	3.1-12.5	7.1-29	14.1-38.7
Field of view at 100m	38.1-6.6m	16.4-2.7m	7.4-1.2m
Dioptr adjustment range	+2/-3 dpt	+2/-3 dpt	+2/-3 dpt
Eye relief	90mm	90mm	90mm
Adjustment per click at 100m	1cm (1/3MOA)	1cm (1/3MOA)	¼MOA
Centre tube diameter	30mm	30mm	30mm
Parallax	Fixed-100m	Fixed-100m	45.7m
Elevation adjustment range	103MOA	67MOA	62MOA
Windage adjustment range	103MOA	67MOA	34MOA
Reticles/Focal plane	Reticle 60 (illuminated) second focal plane	Reticle 60 (illuminated) second focal plane	Reticle 6, 43, ZBR, ZMOA second focal plane
Eyepiece tube diameter	45.5mm	45.5mm	45.5mm
Objective tube diameter	30mm	62mm	56mm
Coatings	LotuTec/Zeiss T*	LotuTec/Zeiss T*	LotuTec/Zeiss T*
Nitrogen filled	Yes	Yes	Yes
Water resistance	400 mbar	400 mbar	400 mbar
Length	290mm	352mm	380mm
Weight	505g	690g	740g
RRP	\$1990	\$2440	\$2498
Distributor	Outdoor Sporting Agencies		

At the range, in the field

OSA sent concurrently for review with the V6 scopes two nice rifles in the Howa/GRS Varmint in 6.5 Creedmoor and a Lithgow L102 Crossover in .243 Winchester. Additionally, my own Howa M1500 Sporter in .204 Ruger would be used as a test platform.

Zeiss Conquest V6 riflescopes

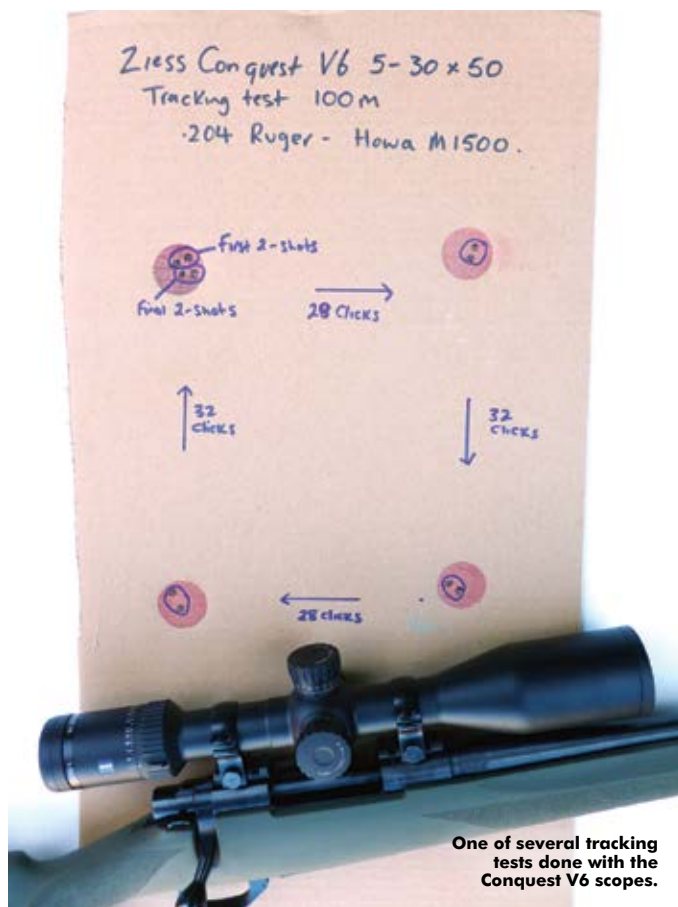
The V6 1.1-6x24 was mounted on the Lithgow, the 2.5-15x56 on the Howa/GRS combo in 6.5 Creedmoor and the 5-30x50 on the Howa in .204 Ruger. All were tested at various distances up to 300m and in all instances images were crystal clear, with colour and contrast outstanding and edge-to-edge clarity top shelf.

Put your eye anywhere near the ocular and you have a wide, bright image instantly without any need to bounce your cheek all over your riflestock. Making adjustments to windage and elevation when setting up for a 100m zero, clicks were precise and audible. Further tracking tests of all three scopes at 100m, by moving the point-of-impact around the target, gave wonderful results, the first two and final two shots within a half-inch.

The ASV BDC turret on the 5-30x50 was excellent. Testing out to 300m on the .204 Ruger with the point-of-impact zeroed at 100m, adjustments of the ASV turret with the 40gr Hornady Superformance ammunition ensured bullseye hits at 200m and 300m. Once the ASV turret was returned to its original zero position, it was again spot-on at 100m.

While the scopes gave superb images in daylight, the period around dusk and last light is where they excelled. When the human eye could not make out a steel silhouette target or deer at 100m, the light gathering ability and image quality provided by the T* coated lenses was outstanding. When hunting during daylight, be it stalking heavy woodland cover with the V6 1.1-6x24 or shooting

Close-up of the ASV BDC turrets on the long-range 5-30x50.



One of several tracking tests done with the Conquest V6 scopes.

at long distances with the .204 Ruger and the V6 5-30x50, image quality and field of view was superb.

The Conquest V6 is a new chapter in the Zeiss mid-range selection. While the DL and HD5 are excellent scopes in their own right, the V6 exceeds the standard expected. With the V6 trio starting at \$1990 for the 1.1-6x24, the 2.5-15x56 at \$2440 and deluxe 5-30x50 retailing at \$2498, they're an investment in quality. More at osaaustralia.com.au ●



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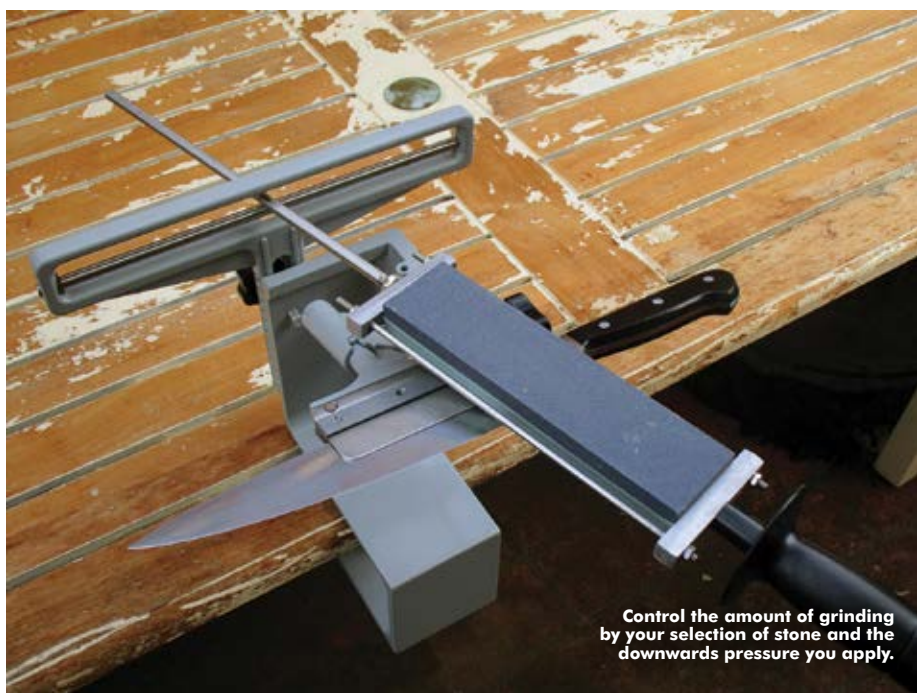


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EZESharp Blade Sharpener giving you the edge

Steve Bain



Control the amount of grinding by your selection of stone and the downwards pressure you apply.

Recently I had the challenge of resurrecting a set of old knives I'd been given, quality knives in 'no-rust' condition but needing new cutting edges and some minor chips honed out. A couple of them also had broken tips, no doubt courtesy of being knocked off a bench only to land point first on a hard floor. On learning of my predicament, *Australian Shooter* sent me an EZESharp Blade Sharpener they'd been given for review by EZESharp of Western Australia.

Basic concept

The EZESharp BS1000 Blade Sharpener is essentially a vice that holds your knife blade. Additionally, the vice holds a rod connected to a sharpening stone and via

a combination of adjustments, the angle between stone and knife blade can be set. With the angle set, the sharpening stone is passed along the full length of the blade's edge to sharpen one side of the knife. The knife is regularly flipped over during sharpening so both faces are stoned to put angles on each sides, thus creating a very sharp and long-lasting edge.

In detail

The EZESharp BS1000 with 100mm Flip-Over works by safely holding the knife blade in a rotatable vice-like clamping jig. A T-bar guide at the rear of the device holds the abrasive stone in a shaft at a very accurate angle in relation to the blade being sharpened. I used my left hand on

the T-bar to control the shaft and right hand to carefully control the movement and pressure placed via the stone on the edge being sharpened.

By simply adjusting the 360 degree dial on the frame of the flip-over rotatable jig, you can achieve a precise edge at your desired angle with repeatable accuracy. The jig makes it easy and efficient to flip your knife for speedy sharpening on both sides.

The 100mm flip-over 'clamp' is recommended for knife blades up to at least 300mm in length. At the shorter end of the scale I was able to adjust the set-up angles in order to sharpen the full edge and slightly reshape the tip on a 120mm blade. The EZESharp Blade Sharpener can accommodate sharpening stones from 200mm x 50mm to 225mm x 75mm in size, the manufacturer recommending lubricating the sharpening stone with either a detergent and water mix or kerosene and light oil blend.

To use the assembled sharpener, firstly smear the rough side of the stone with lubricant then push the stone along the blade from handle to point, counting the strokes it takes to achieve a burr (burred edge) on the underside of the blade. Then flip the blade over and apply the same number of strokes to the other side. Pushing the stone along the full length of the blade before lifting it off and returning to the start point counts as one stroke.

Now flip the blade over and run the lubricated finer side of the stone very lightly along the full length of the knife edge for eight strokes using the same push and lift pattern. Flip the jig over again and very lightly 'stone' the other side of the edge for eight strokes and progressively flip the knife over and reduce the number of strokes successively on each edge. The

EZESharp Blade Sharpener giving you the edge

instruction manual provided covers this sequence in more detail and has some handy suggestions for appropriate set-up angles. Finish by using just the weight of the stone to glide over the blade edge. Using this sequence I was able to sit at the bench and enjoy working my way along each knife until they were ready and very much acceptable for the kitchen.

For any subsequent sharpening, knives should be clamped in the 'vice jaws' in the very same position as for the original sharpening. Taking a photo on your mobile phone and emailing it to yourself is a good way to store this information. Once in the kitchen the edges can be maintained by honing them at the same angle with either a steel or ceramic rod prior to use. The EZESharp Blade Sharpener retails for \$295, more at ezesharp.com.au ●



The knife bracket rotates similar to the 'head' on a camera tripod, allowing the angle of the knife edge to be managed in relation to the T-bar/stone.



The T-Bar is height adjustable and calibrated on the left-hand side.



The tools for assembly and adjustment of the EZESharp Blade Sharpener are all included.



See them at the SSAA SHOT Expo, Melbourne Oct 19,20



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For more information visit spika.com.au

Historic rifle club marks 160 years

Dave Rose



Looking downrange from the 800m mound.

Ipswich & District Rifle Club is ready to celebrate its 160th birthday as one of the oldest sporting organisations in Australia. The volunteer-run not-for-profit club is linked to the SSAA via the Stewartdale Target Sports Complex and will mark the milestone with a two-day shooting festival on the last weekend of July.

SSAA holds the rights to the range at Ripley just outside Ipswich in Queensland where IDRC members shoot regularly and club captain Glenn Rush said they were ready to savour the occasion. "Where

do you start? We'd be one of the oldest surviving rifle clubs in Australia," said Glenn. There were earlier clubs in New South Wales, Glenn noting the records of the National Rifle Association of Australia show a club by the name of Sydney's had formed in Parramatta in 1843.

"The sport has changed a bit over the years, plenty has happened but the social side and what happens on the range remains," said Glenn. The club operates the full bore range at Ripley with six firing points and eight target lanes and uses the

HEXTA electronic scoring and recording system for weekly competitions.

When the club was founded there were security fears among many Queenslanders amid a backdrop of unease over the guarantee of protection from Britain, the mother country. "There seemed to be two groups in Ipswich - concerned citizens and a military infantry group," said Glenn.

Events unfolded that would hasten the advent of the Ipswich club in 1859. Queen Victoria had put a prize up for marksmanship and the National Rifle Association



Historic rifle club marks 160 years

of Great Britain was heavily involved. In 1860 she fired the first shot at the NRA of GB's Wimbledon range - not surprisingly recording a bullseye with a well-prepared rifle - and news spread to Australia.

Over the years the IDRC used various ranges in and around Ipswich. "Eventually urbanisation pushed us out," said Glenn. "We know where all the old ranges were but they're long gone." He says a couple of members were tasked with looking for somewhere new when they came across Stewartdale.

"They drove up to a farmhouse to be greeted by an old farmer," said Glenn. "Instead of chasing them away he listened to what they had to say, came aboard and signed up - in those days range approvals came in the form of a signed agreement drafted by the Defence force.

"The SSAA was looking for somewhere at the same time so it worked out well. The farmer has long since passed away and the SSAA was lucky enough to secure the land," said Glenn. "It works out perfectly for us - you couldn't have better landlords than another shooting group."

As the anniversary draws near, the club is gearing up for a big weekend. "We have a prize meeting day every July," said Glenn. "This year it will be two days and a lot of people travel, some up to five or six hours. We usually have about 100 but hope to have about 120 this year.

"We have about 85 active members and a great committee which includes a lot of young professionals who are always volunteering for the club," said Glenn, a fourth generation member. "It's a real mixed crowd with our oldest active shooter a



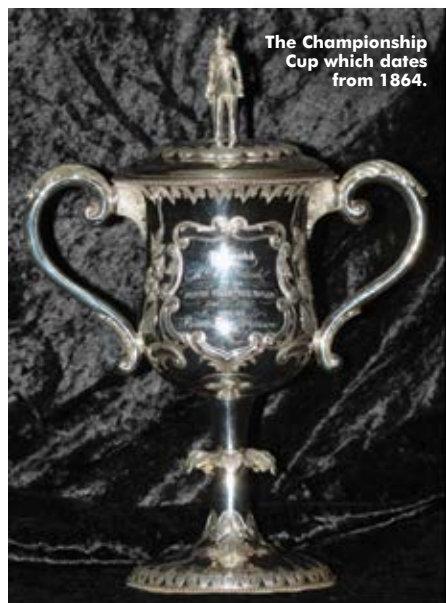
An image from the 1950s shows Bill Smith, Morrie Marsh, Jack Pommer and Jim Rush who's aiming an SMLE .303 down the Redbank range.



An Ipswich and District Rifle Club team from 1933.



A team from the Ipswich club in 1918.

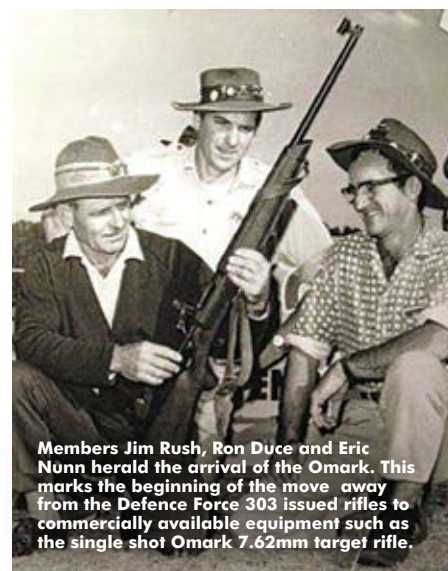


The Championship Cup which dates from 1864.

90-year-old from England and the youngest an 11-year-old, the minimum age in Queensland."

Up for grabs this month will be the club's Military Cup which dates back to 1864. The silverware went missing for a while but returned in freakish circumstances. "It found its way back to us by accident," said Glenn. "One of our members worked in a jewellery shop in Brisbane in the '70s. Someone came in to sell a trophy for scrap and he recognised it as our Cup. It was handed over as a gesture and luckily wasn't melted down."

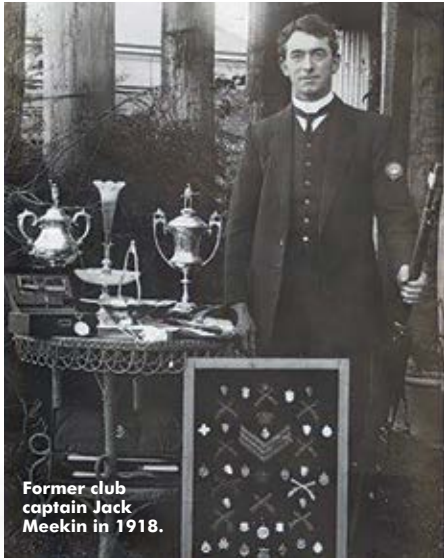
Many 'box office' sports can trace their origins back to the Victorian era. English club Notts County, founded in 1862, are the oldest soccer club in the world and in cricket, Australia's Sheffield Shield was first contested during the 1892-93 season. The



Members Jim Rush, Ron Duce and Eric Nunn herald the arrival of the Omark. This marks the beginning of the move away from the Defence Force 303 issued rifles to commercially available equipment such as the single shot Omark 7.62mm target rifle.

first Open golf championship was played in Scotland in 1860, the year after the establishment of the IDRC who were pipped by a matter of weeks by Melbourne Football Club (May 1859) as Australian Rules football emerged.

All of which underlines the passion which has ran through the Ipswich club for all these years. Congratulations - and happy 160th! ●



Former club captain Jack Meekin in 1918.




A photo from Ripley showing eight electronic targets at the 2018 annual prize meeting.

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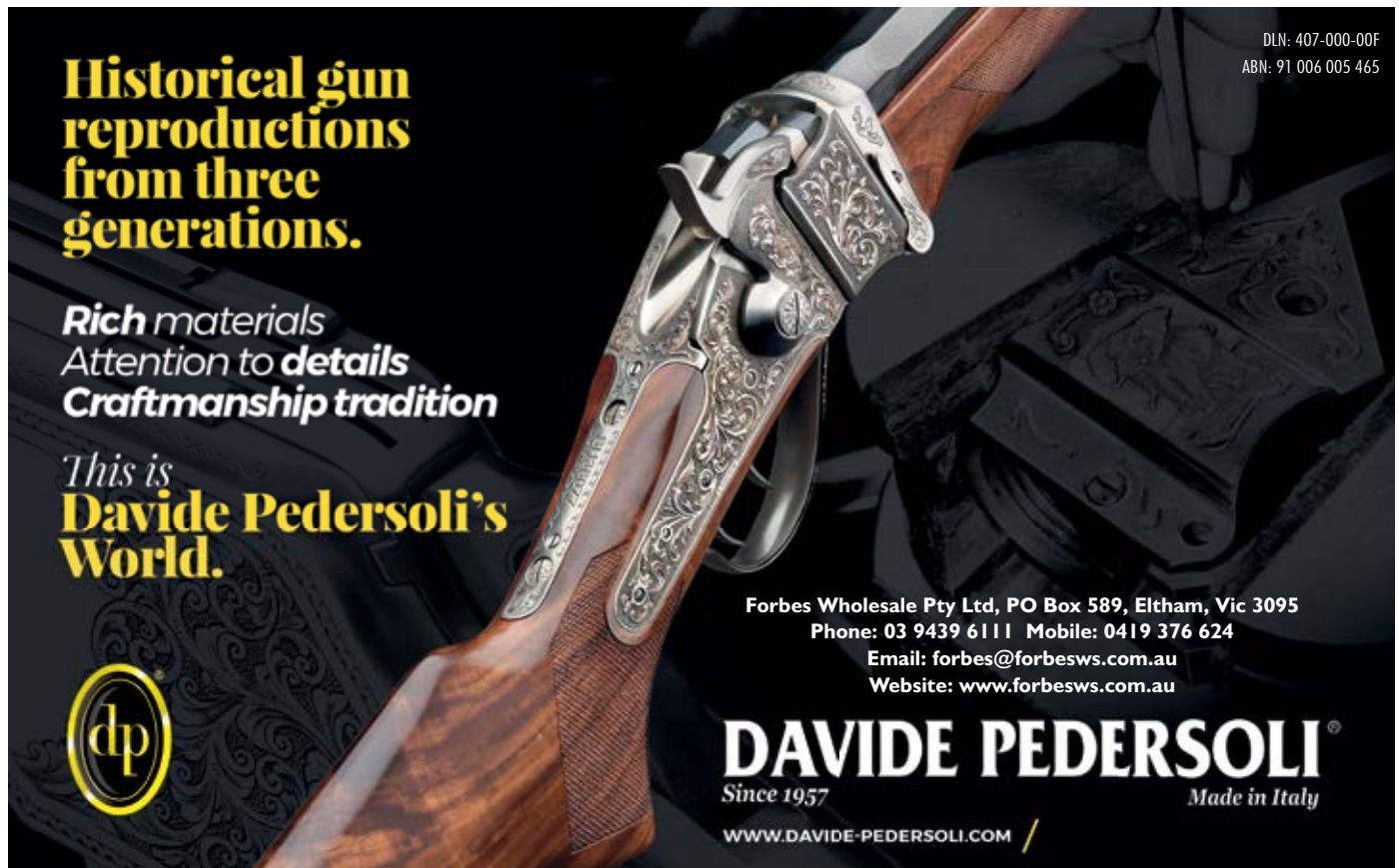
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Records tumble at Benchrest Nationals

This year's Centrefire Benchrest National Championships were held at the Dairyville range just outside of Coffs Harbour, arguably one of the most picturesque of all the SSAA ranges. The Unlimited Class kicked things off on Good Friday, numerous 100yd 10-shot groups of less than two-tenths of an inch recorded, the best of them a .169 by local shooter Ray Beavis, the aggregate won by Ean Parsons with .2364.

The longer yardage match was shot in almost still conditions, Brendan Atkinson posting the smallest group of .359, the aggregate won by John Babic with .2723 and the Ron Marsden Shield for overall winner going to Ean Parsons ahead of Milan Morrell and Les Fraser.

Lightweight rifles were next up in the Sporter Class where Paul Sullivan waited until the final target to send down a .096 Screamer which no-one bettered, aggregate victory going to John Babic with a .2320.

At 200yds Ray Beavis shot a .297 for smallest group with aggregate victory going to Steve Sori with an outstanding .2189 which, when ratified, will be a new national record. He also received the Alan Peake Memorial Shield. In the midst of all that, Sullivan snatched overall victory by a mere .0003 from Sori and Babic.

Easter Sunday brought the Light Benchrest competition, Max Coady kept busy measuring tiny groups with the best of them a .115 shot by Babic. Aggregate victory went to Kerrie Moore with a tidy .2040 to earn her first point in the Hall of Fame standings but the best was yet to come.



In the 200yd competition Morrell, from Adelaide, took aggregate victory with an outstanding .1653 for his first Hall of Fame point and another national record in the process, that man Babic taking the grand aggregate prize ahead of Morrell and WA's Trevor Pearson.

Calm conditions held for the Heavy Benchrest showdown on Easter Monday, the tightest group a tidy .094 shot by Phil Jones. The aggregate win went to Keith Sewell with a superb .1760 ahead of Pearson and Ron Sinclair. A fiercely-contested 200yd competition had anything over .300 barely rate a mention, best group

shot by Sinclair with a .210 who went on to win the yardage with .1999, the grand aggregate taken out by Sewell comfortably in front of Pearson and Sinclair.

Two-gun aggregate: Trevor Pearson .2196; Three-gun: Steve Sori .2339; Four-gun: Steve Sori .2483. ●



The four-man team event was won by NSW - Mitchell Tallar, Ean Parsons, John Babic and Steve Sori.



3-gun winner Steve Sori (left) receives the Max Coady trophy from the man himself.



Ron Sinclair won the Harry Madden Memorial Shield for 200yd Heavy Benchrest, presented by club president Rod Madeley.

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Gun & Knife Show List

2019

July 6-7	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
July 13-14	Ballarat Sports & Events Centre, Wendouree, Ballarat	Eureka Arms and Militaria Fair	Nick Smith 03 5342 4433 or ballaratarms.com.au
July 20-21	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria etc	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
August 3-4		Sydney Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
August 10-11	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
August 24-25	Bendigo Major League MultiSports Complex, Golden Square	36th Annual Arms & Collectibles Show	Greg Penna 0427 400 930 or gccabendigo@gmail.com
September 7-8	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	330+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles & more	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 14-15	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	Geoff Smith 0419 955 284
September 21-22	Maitland Federation Centre, Maitland	Hunter Valley Arms Fair	huntervalleyarmsfair.com.au
October 5-6	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
October 7		NSW South Coast Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
October 19-20	Melbourne Showgrounds	SSAA Shot Expo	ssaashotexpo.org.au
October 26	Illawarra Sports Stadium, Berkeley	Illawarra Outdoor & Adventure Expo	Chris Sainsbury 0448 129 932 or ssaexpo@gmail.com
November 3-4		Adelaide Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
November 9-10	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
December 2		Canberra Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com

2020

May 23-24	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
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

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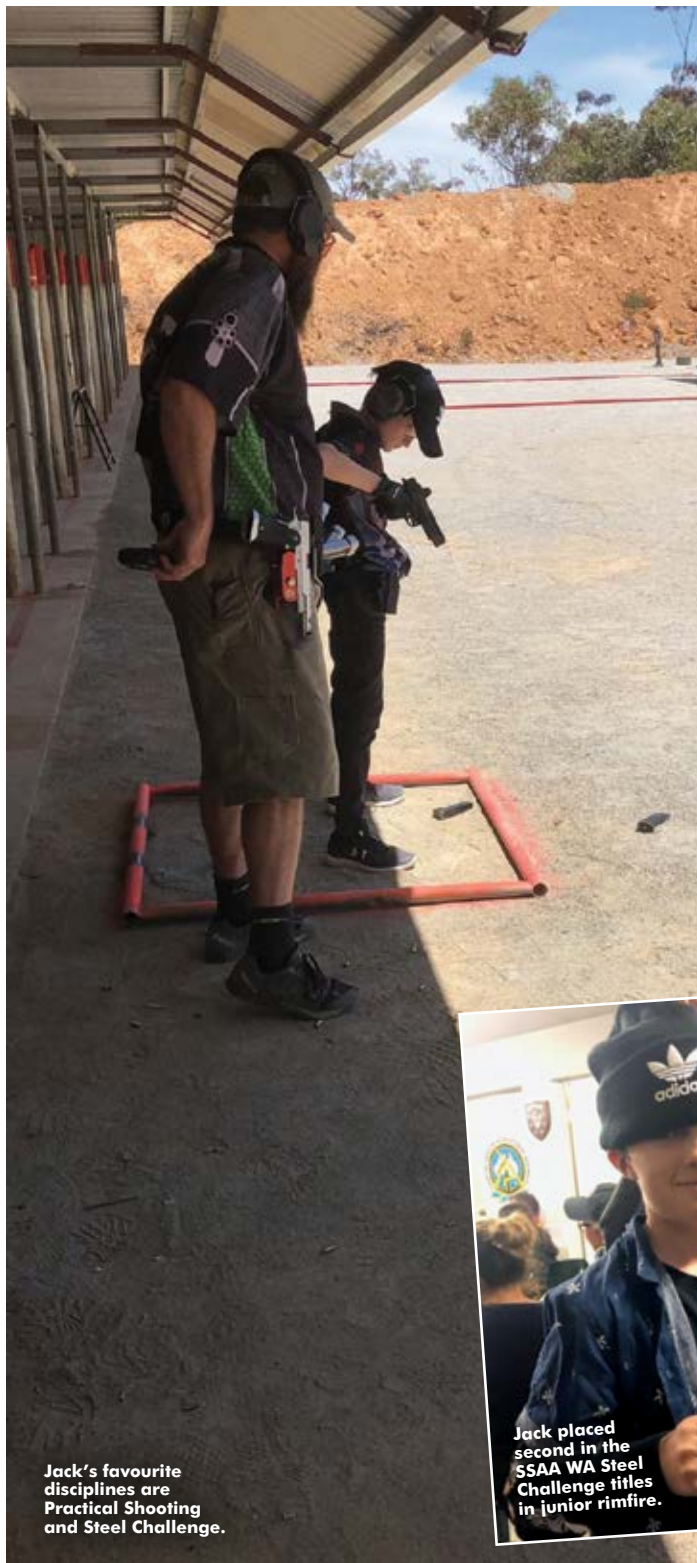


02 8805 3900



Jack Oehme

Communications Officer Sam Talbot



Jack's favourite disciplines are Practical Shooting and Steel Challenge.

Shooting out of Jarrahdale Sporting Shooters in Perth, Jack Oehme is not only a good shot in SSAA disciplines but a recognised shooter in another sport. Aged just 15, Jack is a member of a paintball team in Perth and will be the youngest professional paintball player in the history of the sport when he makes his debut next month.

And while to the lay observer paintball and shooting may look similar, most of us who've tried paintball will realise Jack's two interests don't have too much cross-over. "Maybe the accuracy part does but you don't aim down the sight with a paintball gun," said Jack. "You still aim but it's more point-and-shoot than aim-and shoot if that makes sense."

So while real shooting isn't quite the same as paintball, when it does come to aim and shoot Jack is more than competent. He recently placed second at his first Steel Challenge state championships and has been shooting Practical for six months. The speedy youngster says working out the best way to shoot stages is one of the most interesting parts of Practical.

"When someone shoots the stage in a certain way it doesn't mean that's the best way to do it. With some stages you have to play to your strengths and figure out the fastest way to shoot it," he said.

Jack was also top open junior at the SSAA WA Practical Shooting state championships last year and his favourite competition is the Kukerin Steel Challenge because "it's not just about shooting but the whole experience, camping and sitting by the fire with your mates". "I've made a lot more friends through shooting than I thought I would."

Friendships aside though, Jack has more state championships in his sights. Primarily he wants to win the state titles at Kukerin as well as attend the IPSC championships. Beyond that he plans to go to university and study mechatronics so he can become an engineer.

To achieve either of these goals though, Jack will need a good coach and fortunately has dad Tony by his side. "My dad's my coach and has definitely made me a better shooter," said Jack, "and I was also helped by lots of Jarrahdale members, especially club captain Derek Bailey."

We wish Jack success in his upcoming competitions and hope he aims straight and true, whether that be at plates for Steel Challenge, targets for Practical Shooting or the opposing team during paintball. ●



Jack placed second in the SSAA WA Steel Challenge titles in junior rimfire.

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.](#)

Photo: Nicholas Loakim

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

☐ \$54 - includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter and four issues of Australian Hunter magazine

Has the junior been a member before? Yes/No

Membership No.

Details of junior being signed up (must be under 18)

Branch (if known) Sex (please circle) M / F

First name Middle name Last name

Home address P/C.....

Date of birth Phone.....

Email

OFFICE USE ONLY

Details of sponsoring member

First name Middle name..... Last name.....

Membership No.

Payment options

Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

☐ Cheque ☐ Money order ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Card number

Expiry date Signature.....

Cheques payable to the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc.

☐ I also wish to donate
\$..... to the SSAA

**MAIL TO: MEMBERSHIP OFFICE ,
PO BOX 282, Plumpton, NSW 2761**

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National

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

February 1-July 31, 2019

All clubs/branches

Program: 40-shot match to be shot between February 1 and July 31, 2019. Scores showing competitor's name, branch, age and results for each shot to Kaye McIntyre at juniorsports@ssaa.org.au by August 31. Prizes to third place in U-15, O-15 and U-18. Contact: Kaye McIntyre.

Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships

February 1-November 30, 2019

Program: February 1-May 31: Special Snap. June 1-August 31: Group Three. September 1-November 30: Stopping Double Rifle. Rules: Championships shot as per current National Big Game Rifle rule book. Scoresheets showing competitor's name, club, rifle, scope power and result of each shot to be sent to Graeme Wright, PO Box 5085, Kenmore East, Qld 4069. Awards to third place and juniors. Entries in junior class to include date of birth. Contact: Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com

National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition

June 1-August 31, 2019

Program: 40-shot match in accordance with SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette rule book. Match must be nominated to your shoot captain before you shoot. Medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade and junior category plus three entry prizes of SSAA merchandise vouchers. Ties decided on countback of turkeys, rams, chickens and pigs. Score must show result of each shot (hit or miss), name, home club, grade, date of match and junior if applicable and emailed by September 10, 2019 to toblerkathy@gmail.com

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

June 1-November 30, 2019

All clubs/branches

Program: To be shot between June 1 and November 30, 2019. Scores showing competitor's name, branch, age and score for each position (with 10s, 9s etc in case of countback), to Kaye McIntyre at juniorsports@ssaa.org.au by December 31. Prizes to third place in U-15, O-15 and U-18. Contact: Kaye McIntyre.

SSAA Combined Services National Postal Competition

July 1-September 23, 2019

Program: Open to all current SSAA members. Rifle event 1: 3P Core Event Match 1 - Standard Rifles. Pistol event 1: 3P Core Event Class 1 Handguns (Graded), Class 2 Handguns (Graded) and Class 3 Handguns (Open) as specified in Combined Services rule book No.4 Only two classes may be entered. Contact Steve Knight 0428 876 991 or combinedservices@ssaa.org.au. See website for full details.

Working Gundogs Association of Australia Multi-Level National Championships

August 16-18, 2019

SSAA Stewartdale, South Ripley, Qld

Program: Friday, August 16:

Competition draw. August 17: Competition starts with 4-5 runs.

August 18: Remaining 2-3 runs, awards presentation. Spectators welcome both days. Nominations: \$45 (includes lunch pack and drink each day). Entrants must be SSAA members and dogs registered with WGAA. Accommodation: Camping available, hotels nearby. Contact: wgaqld@gmail.com. Full details on website.

SSAA/IHMSA National Championships

Sept 27-Oct 4, 2019

Eagle Park Shooting Complex, Little River, Vic

Program: Friday, September 27: Practice for Small Bore and Field Pistol. Sept 28-30: Small Bore and Field Pistol matches. Tuesday, October 1: Practice for Big Bore. Oct 2-4: Big Bore matches. Rules: IHMSA official rule book. Contact: Russell Mowles 0418 819 945 or Michael Arden 0419 429 485. Full details on website.

National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships

October 4-7, 2019

SSAA Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW

Program: Friday, October 4: 8am Light Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Saturday, 8am: Heavy Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Sunday/Monday: 8am IRB 50m. Nominations: \$50 a day, juniors half price (pre-registration required by September 25). Rules: SSAA rule book No.9 and IRB rule book. Prizes: National medals as per rule books. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, barbecue. Camping on range (advise beforehand). Free breakfast, lunch,

tea, coffee. Dinner for small fee. Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billingham 0418 478 160.

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

October 17-20, 2019

Micket Creek Shooting Complex, Brandt Rd, Berrimah, NT

Program: Thursday, October 19:

Practice. Friday: Pistols and rifles.

Saturday: Rifles. Sunday: Rifles.

Nominations: All pistol events \$50, all rifle \$60, individual \$15, all \$100.

Rules: SSAA Combined Services Rulebook No.4. Prizes: As per program. Contact: treasurerssaant@bigpond.com or sean.glenndenning@cdu.edu.au. Full details on website.

Queensland

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No. 2

April 1-July 31, 2019

Program: Smallbore Hunter's Pistol Metallic Sights - Standing (formerly 50m Iron Sights). Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by August 14, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3

May 1-August 31, 2019

Program: Hunter's Pistol Metallic Sights, Hunter's Pistol Standing. Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by September 14, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4

August 1-November 30, 2019

Program: Long Range Conventional Pistol, Long Range Conventional Revolver, Long Range Unlimited Standing, Long Range Unlimited Pistol. Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic

Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by December 12, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld Target Pistol 'Bullseye' State Championships

August 9-11, 2019

SSAA Bundaberg Branch

Program: Open to all SSAA members.

Events: Any Rimfire Pistol 900

Match, Standard Smallbore Pistol,

Distinguished Revolver, Rimfire

Mayleigh Match, Any Centrefire

Pistol 900 Match, M9 Match (Beretta 92). Rules: As per SSAA Target Pistol

Guide to NRA Pistol Rules and

Target Pistol Overview of NRA Pistol

Rules. Nominations: \$6 per event to

maximum \$30, juniors half price - to

be received by July 27. Prizes: State

medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade,

1800 Aggregate and 6-Gun Aggregate.

Facilities: Camping at range, drinks

throughout competition, barbecue

lunch Sat/Sun and dinner Saturday.

Contact: Kendall Summers 0403 727

770 or targetpistol@ssaaqld.org.au

or nominations@ssaabundaberg.org.au

SSAA Qld IHMSA Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships

August 23-25, 2019

SSAA Bundaberg Pistol Range,

Isis Hwy, Qld

Program: Small Bore (100m):

Production, Revolver,

Standing, Unlimited Any Sights; Big

Bore (200m): Production, Revolver,

Standing, Unlimited Any Sights; Field

Pistol (100m): Field Pistol Production,

Field Pistol Production Any Sights.

Discipline meeting after shooting on

Saturday. Nominations: \$10 per event

to maximum \$80, juniors half price.

Rules: Official IHMSA rule book.

Prizes: State medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd

in each grade in all events. Facilities:

Camping at range, hot showers,

some power available. Contact: John

Harding 0428 136 527 or ijnharding@bigpond.com

SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships

August 31-September 1, 2019

SSAA Bowen,

Roddy Hughes Rd, Bowen, Qld

Program: Friday, August 30: 9am

practice; Saturday: 9am Open Lever Action match, 40 rounds; Sunday: 9am Classic Calibre match, 40 rounds. State discipline meeting after completion of Open match. Branch delegates must have letter of accreditation from executive. Nominations: \$35 one match, \$60 both, juniors half price. Form at ssaa.org.au/leveraction, send by August 19 to Allan McDonald asjmc2@gmail.com Facilities: Canteen open during matches, breakfast/lunch \$10, dinner Friday/Saturday \$15. Camping at range with water, showers, toilets. Pets welcome. Contact: Allan McDonald 0428 790 940 asjmc2@gmail.com; Kerry Guinea (State Discipline Chair) 0409 262 966 leveraction@ssaaqld.org.au

Police Service Match - Law Enforcement Activities

October 5-6, 2019
QPPC Range, Old Cleveland Rd, Belmont, Qld
Program: This is an individual event, no teams. Shooters may choose revolver or semi-auto in one of the NRA PPC divisions of Open, Distinguished or Duty. Shooters are not compelled to compete against a higher level of equipment.

Nominations: Belmont site user levy applies, nomination fee \$5. Rules: SSAA Standard Rules, SSAA LEAD Police Service Match Rules. Facilities: QPPC has basic facilities, others at QRA compound. QRA accepts bookings for motel or barrack-style accommodation, several accommodation options nearby. Contact: Bob Pierce 0427 172 277. See website for full details.

South Australia

SSAA SA Gallery Rifle State Championships

September 14-15, 2019
SSAA Para Range
Program: Friday, September 13: 12 noon-4pm range open for practice. Saturday: 10am - Imperial Silhouettes (30 shots + 5 sighters); 1020 Match (102 shots); Multi-Target 'Classic Rifle' (24 shots) time permitting; 50m Precision 'Classic Rifle' (30 shots plus sighters) time permitting. Sunday: 10am - America Match (30 shots + unlimited sighters); 1500 Match (150 shots). All events will be graded. Nominations \$5 each for America Match and Imperial Silhouettes, \$10 for the 1020 and 1500 to maximum of \$25 for four main events. Each Classic

event \$5. Prize draw for competitors on Saturday evening. Facilities: Camping available, canteen Saturday and Sunday, barbecue Saturday night (\$5). There will be the annual Subcommittee meeting, advise Dave McCarthy if you wish to attend, email atm3855@yahoo.com.au. Contact: Dave McCarthy

Western Australia

SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

July 11-15, 2019
Hedland Sporting Shooters, Port Hedland, WA
Program: Thursday, July 11: Practice 8am-5pm. Friday: Rifle Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette 80 shots. Saturday: Pistol Cartridge Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette 80 shots. Sunday: Rimfire Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette 80 shots. Monday: Over-run day if needed. Sight-in 7-8.15am, briefing 8.45, first shot 9am. Nominations: \$25 per 80-shot match, 3-gun \$60, juniors half price. Rules: Current Rifle Metallic Silhouette rule book. Contact: Warren Goodfield 0407 440 431 clas@ssaawa.org.au

ACT

SSAA ACT Single Action State Championships

October 18-20, 2019
SSAA Majura Range, Hector McIntosh Grove, ACT
Program: Friday, October 18: Side Matches, Long Range Precision, Pistol Speed Events, Cowboy Clays. Saturday: Opening and Main Match. Sunday: Main Match and presentation. Nominations: \$85 for Main Match and one entry to all Side Matches plus Saturday shindig. Rules: Current SSAA rule book and local range rules. Contact: majurarangers.matchdirector@gmail.com

Tasmania

SSAA Tas Lever Action State Championships

September 29, 2019
Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas
Program: See website for full details. Nominations: \$35, juniors half price. Prizes: State medals. Facilities: Limited camping and kitchen, lunch and drinks available. Contact: David Moulton 0488 441 499 or secretary@ssaabluehills.org.au. See website for full details.

SSAA Official Calendar

INTERNATIONAL

August 19-24, 2019	12th MLAIC World Long Range Muzzleloading Championships	Bisley, England	Kim Atkinson 27honesysuckle@msn.com.au
Feb 1-July 31, 2019	National Junior Rimfire Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships	All clubs/branches	juniorsports@ssaa.org.au
Feb 1-Nov 30, 2019	Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships		Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com
June 1-August 31, 2019	National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition	National event	toblerkathy@gmail.com
June 1-Nov 30, 2019	National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships	All clubs/branches	juniorsports@ssaa.org.au
July 1-Sept. 23, 2019	Combined Services National Postal Competition	Postal shoot	0428 876 991 or combinedservices@ssaa.org.au
July 12-14, 2019	SSAA National Junior Challenge	Springvale and Eagle Park Ranges, Vic	0417 510 002 or j9.taylor55@gmail.com
August 3-4, 2019	Harry Madden Memorial Benchrest Championships with Barry Edgley Trophy		07 3395 0911
August 16-18, 2019	WGAA Multi-Level National Championships	SSAA Madden Range, Belmont, Qld	wgaalqld@gmail.com
Sept 27-Oct 4, 2019	SSAA/IHMSA National Championships	SSAA Stewartdale, South Ripley, Qld	0418 819 945 or 0419 429 485
October 4-7, 2019	National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships	Eagle Park, Vic	0429 335 389 or 0418 478 160
October 17-20, 2019	SSAA Combined Services National Championships	Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW	treasurerssaant@bigpond.com
		Micket Creek Shooting Complex, NT	or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au

STATE

April 1-July 31, 2019	SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.2		Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
May 1-August 31, 2019	SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3		Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
July 11-15, 2019	SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships	Port Hedland, WA	0407 440 431 or clas@ssaawa.org.au
August 1-Nov 30, 2019	SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4		Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
August 9-11, 2019	SSAA Qld Target Pistol 'Bullseye' State Championships	SSAA Bundaberg Branch, Qld	0403 727 770 or targetpistol@ssaalqld.org.au
August 17-18, 2019	SSAA Bananacost Centrefire Championships	Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, NSW	David 0418 478 160 or Ray 0408 649 126
August 23-25, 2019	SSAA Qld IHMSA Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships	SSAA Bundaberg Pistol Range, Qld	0428 136 527 or jnharding@bigpond.com
August 31-Sept 1, 2019	SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships	SSAA Bowen, Qld	0428 790 940 or asjmc2@gmail.com
September 14-15, 2019	SSAA SA Gallery Rifle State Championships	SSAA Para Range, SA	atm3855@yahoo.com.au
September 29, 2019	SSAA Tas Lever Action State Championships	Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas	0400 374 904 or secretary@ssaabluehills.org.au
October 5-6, 2019	Police Service Match Qld State Championships	QPPC Range, Belmont, Qld	Bob Pierce 0427 172 277
October 18-20, 2019	SSAA ACT Single Action State Championships	Majura Range, ACT	majurarangers.matchdirector@gmail.com



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CLOTHING

The ultimate outdoor jacket!



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C0019



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C0021

\$14.95

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.

The vest comes with lots of pockets, has front and rear leather trim and Velcro adjuster, while the back sections are mesh for added breathability.

Comes in blue and green.

Green

SVG001 - Small
SVG002 - Medium
SVG003 - Large
SVG004 - XL
SVG005 - 2XL
SVG006 - 3XL

Blue

SVB001 - Small
SVB002 - Medium
SVB003 - Large
SVB004 - XL
SVB005 - 2XL
SVB006 - 3XL

\$74.95



SSAA Renegade Jacket

The SSAA Renegade Jacket is made from wind and water-resistant breathable material and lined with cosy microfleece to keep you warm.

The clamshell jacket comes with a structured hood to keep the rain off and has a multitude of zippered pockets to keep your belongings secure in the field, on the range, while hiking, hunting or just out and about.



\$94.95

Green

CJG001 - Small
CJG002 - Medium
CJG003 - Large
CJG005 - 2XL
CJG006 - 3XL

Black

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

For correct sizing please visit the online shop as the jackets are small in make.

SSAA Softshell Vest

Our SSAA Softshell Vest is water resistant and made from 100 per cent polyester mechanic stretch fabric and comes with comfy microfleece on the inside to keep you warm.

CSV001 - small
CSV002 - medium
CSV003 - large
CSV004 - XL
CSV005 - 2XL

\$64.95



Front



Back

SSAA mens t-shirt

Get noticed with the Gildan Soft-styled SSAA men's shirts and wear the SSAA logo with pride.

- Pre-shrunk jersey knit
- Seamless double-needled 1.9cm collar
- Taped neck and shoulders
- Rolled forward shoulders
- Double needle sleeve and bottom hems
- Quarter-turned to eliminate centre crease.

MSN001 - small
MSN002 - medium
MSN003 - large
MSN004 - XL
MSN005 - 2XL
MSN006 - 3XL

\$29.49

See complete size details online

CLOTHING

SSAA Buffwear



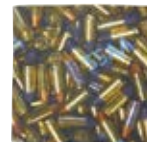
These SSAA Buffs offer a multitude of uses and can be worn to keep dust and dirt out of your face when riding the quad or as a basic headscarf.

They also offer sun protection and are great for fishing as well as hunting and come in a range of colours that can match your favourite outdoor gear.

\$17.95



CBW001
Iron Bark



CBW002
Bullet



CBW003
Coloured Leaf



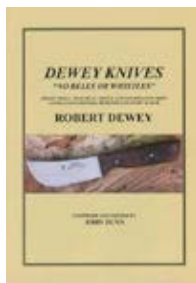
CBW004
Distressed Leaf



CBW005
Oz Flag

Student discount of \$20 on phone orders of this book only.

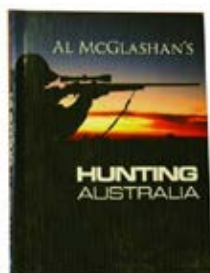
BOOKS



No Bells or Whistles

The story of Rob Dewey's journey as a knifemaker, giving an insight into his philosophy on knife-making and design and a wealth of technical detail about materials and construction.

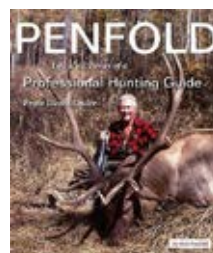
P0058
\$34.95



Hunting Australia

Al McGlashan is one of Australia's favourite outdoors men. A must read for all hunters.

\$29.95 PHA28



Penfold: Life and Times of a Professional Hunting Guide From Down Under

P0050
\$99.95 See online for special offer for Hunter subscribers



This book contains the edited proceedings of papers presented at the Conservation through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife conference in Brisbane in September 2016.

P0055
\$94.95

PATCHES AND PINS



Hat badge antique gold

Our SSAA hat badge is finished in fine antique gold (not real gold), attach on your favourite hat or shirt.

A0068
\$12.95



Hat badge SSAA logo (brooch)

Traditional logo SSAA metal badge for you to proudly wear. Measuring 22mm x 24mm

B0006
\$8.20

SSAA bullet-case pen

The SSAA bullet-case pen has been crafted from a part form bullet case, they take a standard pen refill and is comfortable to hold for smooth writing. The pen comes with black ink and is beautifully presented in a velvet pouch. It measures approximately 14½cm long with a 13mm diameter.



A0020
\$35.95

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KNIVES

SSAA Ka-Bar folder

The SSAA Ka-Bar folder comes beautifully presented in a box to make gift giving a pleasure.

Measurements
Blade length: 10cm
Blade width: 3.5cm (at its widest part)
Handle length: 12.5cm
Handle width: 3cm
Weight: 187grams

\$48.95 KBF001



JKR camo folding knife



The SSAA JKR Camo Folding Knife comes with a handy belt clip so no pouch is required.

JKR203
\$34.95

Leatherman-style his/hers



A his and hers pack that comes with a smart presentation case. Great gift for your favourite couple.

CAMPING AND HUNTING



SSAA bush kettle

These custom-made bush kettles run on a few twigs and leaves and will boil water in less than 10 minutes. Simply get a handful of twigs/leaves and kindling then place under the kettle and light it - the clever design directs heat into the kettle to boil the water.
The kettle can be used with gas stoves and has a stainless construction.

\$69.95 1L Kettle BK001

Pocket-size knife sharpener

This carbide and ceramic hand-held knife sharpener features:

- Non-skid base for stable sharpening
- Crossed carbide blades providing quick edge setting
- Crossed ceramic rods providing a razor-sharp edge
- Pre-set sharpening angles providing guaranteed results

KNS001
\$14.95



MPK00
\$64.95



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JULY 2019

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or charge my MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐

Card No.

Expiry date/..... Signature.....

DISCOUNT RATES AVAILABLE FOR SSAA CLUBS - CONTACT 02 8805 3900.

The color of some of the photos may vary from the actual product due to dye batch lots or current availability.

Members-only competitions

WIN

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 July 31, 2019.

(Name of competition)
SSAA National
PO Box 2520
Unley SA 5061

Enter online at
ssaa.org.au/win

1 of 4 .30-calibre pen sets

Valued at \$186

Kindly donated by Laser
Engraving & Handmade Gifts
customengrave.com.au

Engraved pen sets will
be as per name entered



Door Pro II

Valued at \$75

Kindly donated by Eagleye
Hunting Gear
eagleyehg.com.au



Juniors

GlowShot Sighting-in Adhesive Splatter Targets 50 pack

Valued at \$54.95

Kindly donated by Glowshot Targets
glowshottargets.com.au



Competition winners!

Australian Shooter May 2019

**Hammer Head & Upright
Modular Target System**
Keira Lloyd, Qld

**May Junior - Browning
hoodie (size M) & decals**
Kyle Wallace, NSW

**Lithgow Arms black
hoodie and cap pack**
Marcus McCarthy, Tas

May Best Shots Mug
Shane Richardson, Vic

Hunter 68

Nintendo Switch game pack
Ryan Teitz, NSW

Winchester prize pack
Peter Lee, Vic

SSAA First Aid Kit
Dion Newcomb, Qld

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As someone once said: Enjoy every sandwich

Back in January I spent an afternoon with a friend I hadn't seen for too many years. It was a bit-tersweet few hours. For some years he'd been fighting a cancer that had worn him down to a shadow of his former self. He knew he was running out of time and wanted to say goodbye to some of the people whose lives had meshed with his over the years - friends, neighbours and work mates who'd left good memories and enduring respect. That he included me among them was a privilege to say the least.

We talked as easily as we always had about where we'd been and what we'd been doing, looking back at some of the things we'd done together and how our respective worlds had changed since we first met and worked together all those years ago. The elephant in the room was his cancer and when we shook hands as I said my goodbyes, we both knew it was for the last time.

I drove away with a lump in my throat and a sense of awe about the durability of the human spirit. Here was a man who'd run his race the best he could and was approaching the end with dignity and a clarity of mind that had to be admired. He knew what was coming and there was nothing he could do to change it so he'd chosen to focus on the positives he'd known - the people and places and experiences he'd enjoyed in his life.

On a personal level his outlook struck a chord and cemented in my mind a notion that's been stirring for some time. Like

A falter here and there or a change in plan is fine but giving up should never be considered unless you really have to.

many of my peers I've reached that stage in life where it could be argued my best years are behind me. I like to think I haven't wasted too many of them. The writing business has been good to me, providing opportunities to do most of the things I ever wanted, especially the hunting and travelling that has long been a driving force in my life.

In spite of that I'm starting to slow down and these days it's sometimes easier to create excuses for not doing things than it is to find reasons to make them happen. There's no need to go into detail, many of you will know what I mean as you've done it and perhaps regretted it later.

In terms of longevity our span of life is beyond individual control. We have no choice but to accept the lot that fate or fortune, providence, kismet or karma casts our way. But we can and should make choices about the quality of our lives and those around us, simply because we owe it to ourselves to make the most of whatever time we have. You don't have to check out as a

hero or leave a lasting legacy, just as someone who has lived their life the best they can and enjoyed every step of the journey.

That means setting goals or working on bucket lists of all those things you ever wanted to do. Finding a way to make things happen can be difficult at times, some lateral thinking may be required but sooner or later most of us will find a way to do the things we consider important. A falter here and there or a change in plan is fine but giving up should never be considered unless you really have to.

Des eventually had to, losing the last of his independence when he could no longer walk and had no choice but to go into palliative care. He spent his last few weeks talking to a time-limited stream of people who came to say goodbye. He called them his living wake, holding on to his sense of humour to the end, quietly appreciative of the fact they cared enough to visit.

We didn't have a funeral. It wasn't what he wanted. He asked we have a wake instead so a week or so after he left, around 100 people he'd known or worked with assembled in the lounge bar of a country pub he'd sometimes frequented. We celebrated his life, quietly mourned his departure and told each other stories about a man who'd touched us all in his own inimitable way.

It was all the things a wake ought to be. Des would have loved it and though he wasn't physically there, his spirit had a ball. We all should be so lucky.



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