



Mike Papps - reflections on a lifetime in shooting

AUSTRALIAN

July 2020
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Shooter

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REVIEW

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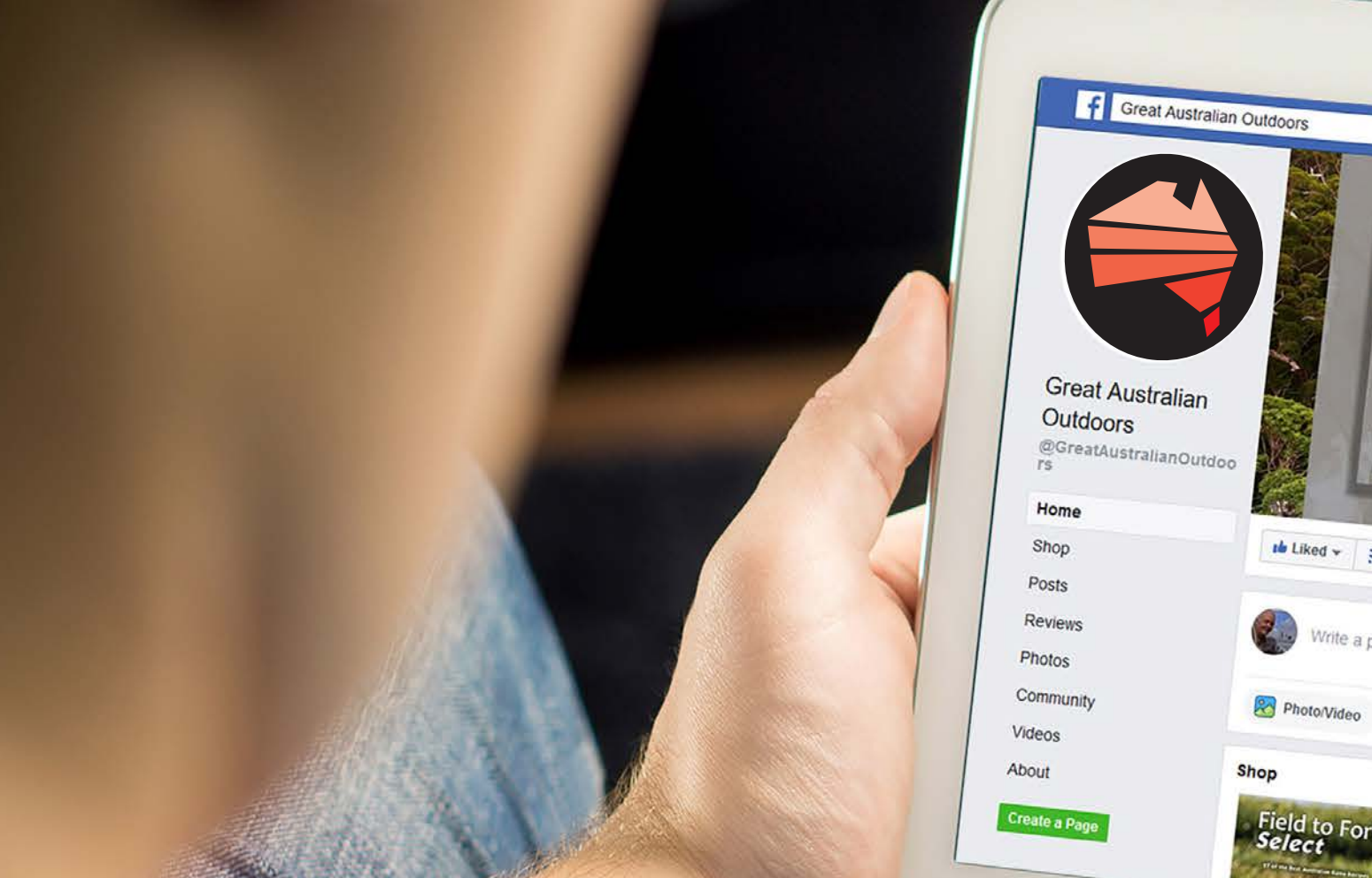
Favourite rifle, cartridge, scope combo - Part 2

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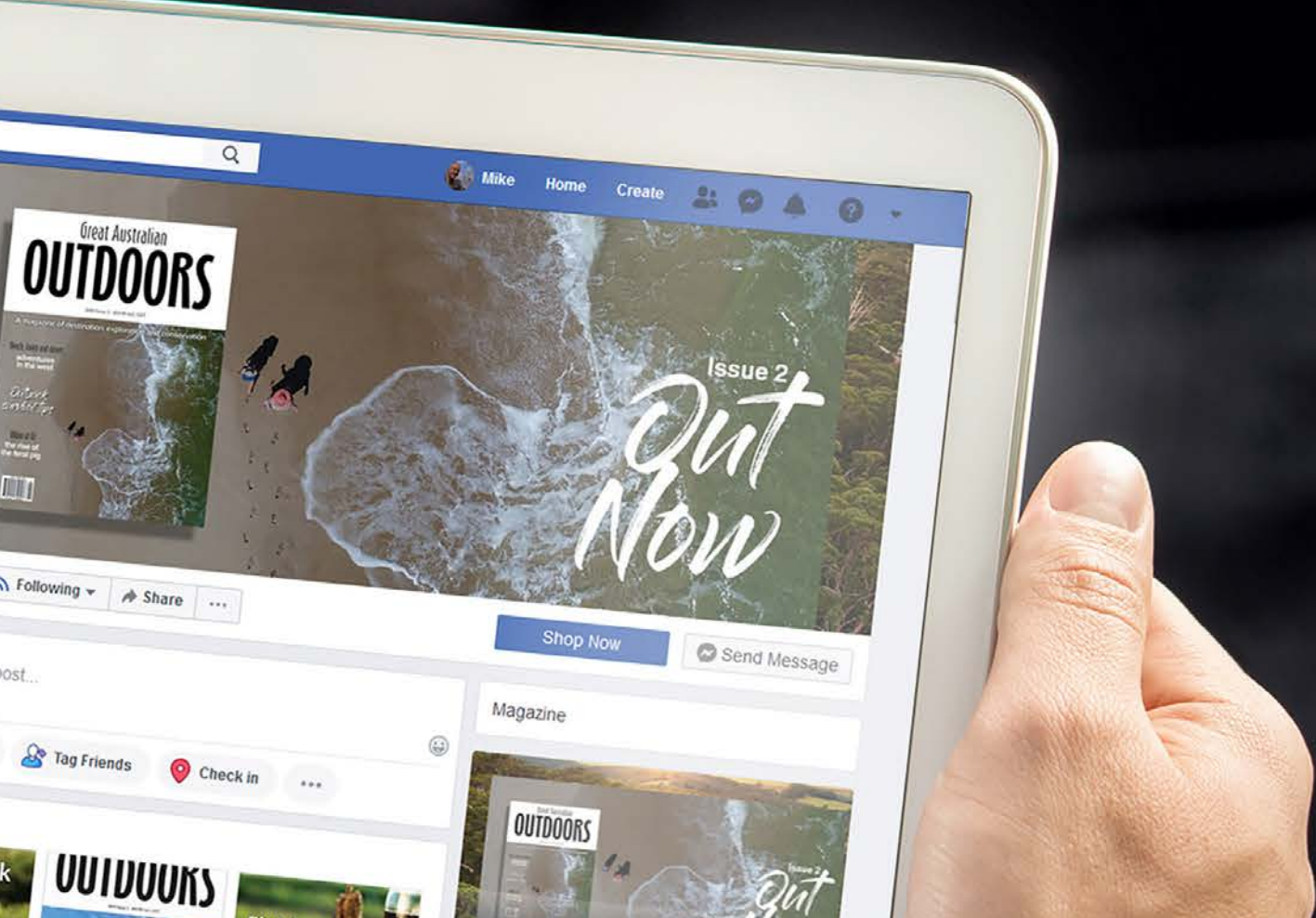
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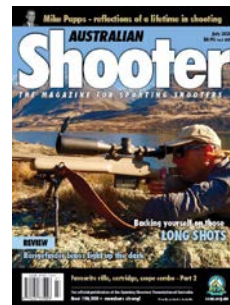
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Australian Shooter

With the enforced changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been necessary to reduce pagination in the print version of *Australian Shooter* in the short term. However, in order to bring you our regular content, we will be publishing a monthly digital supplement on the SSAA National website. When life returns to normal so will your favourite shooting sports magazine. In the meantime, log on to ssaa.org.au for the latest news and to view your digital supplement - Editor.



Our July cover
Long shots -
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NEXT ISSUE



Putting women shooters in the spotlight, we focus on competition shotgunner and ABC identity Liz Rymill.

In nominating his favourite rifle, cartridge and scope combination, Senior Correspondent John Dunn has chosen one influenced by his father.

Chris Redlich has taken to the field with the Sauer 100 Classic rifle which he describes as "a genuine budget beauty".



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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Rural initiative aims to press home firearms security message

The recent release of *Firearm Theft in Australia 2018* compiled by Dr Samantha Bricknell from the Australian Institute of Criminology, has been something of a confirmation that SSAA and our members have been taking the message of responsible firearms' security and storage seriously.

Given the Australian population increase in the 10 years since the previous report was released, there appears to have been no real change to the percentage of firearms stolen per head of population but it's clear there has been a noticeable shift in the focus of such crimes from urban-based firearms thefts where most of our members reside to peri-urban, regional and remote areas where perpetrators believe they have a lesser chance of detection purely through the tyranny of distance. It was also noted the level of security where stealing did occur had increased since the last report was issued.

Our own data supplied by SSAA Insurance Brokers indicated members with SSAA Firearms Insurance had a remarkably low claim rate for firearm loss through theft, with only 0.04 per cent of SSAA Insurance Brokerage customers having made theft claims in the past 12 months.

Of course it's never a desirable situation where any firearm could fall into the wrong hands. As the authorities themselves will admit, it's almost impossible to prevent determined thieves from conducting their unlawful business but victim blaming, which is often a shallow response to a difficult problem where reasonable precautions have been taken, is certainly not the answer.

We can, as we have proved, reduce the opportunity and likelihood of these criminals succeeding and through our long-running SSAA 'Secure Your Gun Secure Your Sport' campaign and members' support we believe we've had a positive impact on this issue through education.

To take this initiative to the next level and because of its demonstrated knowledge, SSAA has developed a rural firearm security campaign which it plans to discuss

with the Federal Government. The initiative would continue to improve the safe storage of firearms and aid in reducing the amount of thefts in regional and rural communities.

On another positive note I recently had the pleasure of a refreshing conversation with a member whose children are coming to an age where they can use and be trained in the safe and responsible use of firearms. Despite the programs and initiatives which all SSAA organisations take to promote and provide for junior firearms training and involvement, this member was taking personal responsibility for creating his own plan and program to ensure his children would be, as part of their whole of life education, properly exposed to firearms to teach them safety, personal responsibility, focus, respect for people they interact with and respect for the law.

We quite often, through any number of factors, find we all too readily leave interaction and life education of our children and grandchildren to others. Exposure to and responsible, safe use of firearms is something we can so easily do, supported by the many SSAA junior programs. If there doesn't appear to be an active junior program at your local branch, I urge you to become involved and solicit the willing support from SSAA state and national associations.

A great place to start is by supporting a junior to join SSAA directly or linking them up through the SSAA 'Sponsor a Junior' campaign with all the information available on the website at ssaa.org.au. After months of lockdown, what better way to encourage youngsters outside to enjoy a great Australian sport and for us to nurture a legacy.

G. E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



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Searching a specialised skill

REGARDING THE LETTER from Greg Kent (*Shooter*, December 2019) referring to Mike Slattery's suggestion for the formation of a search and rescue group for hunters. Each state has legislation outlining who the Hazard Management Authority (HMA) is with regard to searches for missing people on land and those missing at sea. In WA, the Emergency Management Act 2005 stipulates the Commissioner for Police is the responsible HMA.

The police, with assistance from the State Emergency Service, co-ordinate and conduct all operations for missing persons. These organisations have access to personnel and assets including vehicles and aircraft, some equipped with specialised thermal imaging equipment, in order to conduct search operations.

Searching for missing persons requires a coordinated response, however the safety and welfare of responders is a fundamental priority and having untrained and unprepared volunteers could endanger lives. As a former police officer I've conducted many large scale land search operations in a variety of unforgiving terrain across remote WA and know full well the responsibilities attached to the role of Land Search Controller.

I've used people with local knowledge and experience related to specific areas

but all assisting personnel, whether police, SES, local government or civilian, must be managed and controlled properly. Mike and Greg should be commended for thinking about the welfare of our fellow hunters should they become lost, but the risks and costs involved in these types of operations should remain with the relevant authorities.

Dave Tadic, via email

Well worth the weight

I FOUND THE Daniel O'Dea article on customising chassis systems for bolt-action rifles very interesting (*Shooter*, February 2020). I own several Howa 1500 rifles and while the Hogue stocks are very good, I find the AR-style pistol grip more ergonomic for extended periods of carrying at the ready when stalking. I was wondering how Daniel found the weight of the APC and TSP X chassis systems for walkabout hunting, or are they only suitable for target shooting?

Daryl Brenton, via email

• Both APC and TSP X chassis systems are a little heavier than the standard Hogue Howa-stocked equivalent. How much? Using my Howa 1500 in .223 APC as an example, Hogue-stocked it used to weigh-in bare at 3.55kg (7.8lbs), now as an APC weighs 3.8kg (8.4lbs) that's bare but including scope rail (call it 250g or

half a pound). Both systems are designed and marketed for general purpose use and I don't consider either too heavy for stalking. I also agree with you on AR pistol grip designs. Not only are they ergonomic but I find it easier to control muzzle direction while carrying in the field, so arguably inherently safer - **Daniel**.

This one suits me to a T

Full marks to John Dunn for appreciating the T-Bolt (*Shooter*, February 2020). I bought my plain model in 1974 for the exorbitant sum of \$140 with Sniper-brand 4x32 scope and fed it rabbit ammo from K-Mart at \$1.95 a box on special. Absolute pleasure to shoot and easy for this 'kacky hander' to cock by tilting to the left and using fourth and fifth fingers instead of thumb and forefinger.

It now wears a Hawke 3-9x42 HV with factory BCD etchings to suit 1260fps ammo (a 1080fps version is available.) My rifle likes CCI standard Velocitors and Lapua, indeed on a memorable day when the planets and my mouth aligned using Lapua, .3 MOA groups were achieved (target photos not included as they could understandably be questioned). This is not a rig one would part with. Now, if Mr Hawke could be persuaded to make a scope etched for 1500fps ammo. Really, how many factory 22LRs are there with fully floating barrels?

Kerry Wuth, Qld



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q: Hypothetically, if I ever had to make a claim on one of my firearms, how would I prove I actually had it or what condition it was in? What's the best way to prove ownership?

Glen, via email

A: First up, to lodge a claim under the SSAA Members Firearms Insurance you need to provide the following with the completed claim form:

- Proof you're the registered owner of the firearm;

- Quotation for repair or replacement of the firearm;
- A copy of your firearms licence;
- If the firearm is damaged, a report from a dealer on said damage.

As you're probably aware, any firearms more than five years old are settled on indemnity value, that being the current market value taking into account it's age and wear and tear. If you have a photo of the item which shows its condition, I suggest sending a copy of that too.

Another thing to do is ask your gun

dealer if he'd be prepared to give a valuation of your firearm in its present condition and have it updated as necessary. Then, in the event of a claim, you can lodge that also, which would be of great assistance in determining current value of the firearm. If the firearm is less than five years old and needs to be replaced it will be replaced with a new one.

Hopefully this clears things up but if you'd like to discuss this or any other matter in more detail, call us on (08) 8332 0281 or visit ssaaib.com.au.



COVID-19 hunting lock-outs

With everything hunters have had to deal with such as disappointing season lengths and bag limit settings for our hunting seasons, the last thing we needed was further restrictions under the cloud of COVID-19. Being a sector of society which is law-abiding, we wouldn't go about activities which have been temporarily declared illegal.

The hardest thing surrounding these restrictions is being told we must practise social distancing while exercising and we all know that hunting, in most cases, provides an opportunity to do exactly that. Many of us venture out on our own to stalk deer and other species for both recreation and food gathering, demonstrating a fine example of social distancing.

It has been proven that hunting maintains both our physical and mental health, a key point identified in last year's Federal Government survey into the economic and health benefits of recreational hunting. Seeing other activities such as fishing not restricted in most states made many of us feel uneasy and wondering if there were underlying reasons why our recreation has been limited. Why have only some states placed heavy restrictions on our activities? Is there a conspiracy here or is it simply that

more populated states carrying higher risk of infection have introduced draconian actions to protect people? I believe it's the second because, at the end of the day, people's well-being is uppermost in these trying times.

States like New South Wales and Victoria declared hunting as non-essential travel and put further heavy restrictions on activities by not allowing hunting access to state forests, game reserves and other public land. Camping on public land was restricted in most states and that has a major impact on hunting activities. My regular camping spot in South Australia, where I set up base for duck hunting sessions, was closed by the local council and that was reason enough for me to reschedule my opening duck hunt of the season. I'm fine with a little short-term pain for the greater good of the community.

Once the dust settles on this crisis we'll all venture out again and enjoy some hunting and quality time with friends. When that will be is still unknown but when I can finally head out I'll again experience the pleasure of doing something I love. All I can hope for is that we as a community can work through this crisis with the minimum impact to the wider population. While we're 'locked up' so to speak, game and pest animals will still be doing their thing and be there for us to hunt when we can.

It's good to see some states have recognised the fact that pest animals are still impacting farmers and allowances have been made to let volunteer shooters become involved in pest management on farms. This has provided an opening for some of us to go hunting as part of on-farm pest control programs. As I write this there has been some good news on the COVID-19 front with new cases falling and talk of easing restrictions across the various states. Hunting is certainly a low-risk activity and should be one of the first to come back on line. Dependant on travel restrictions, we should soon have the chance of a weekend hunt to fill our freezers with free-range organic meat.

I can't wait to do this and if the wider community heeds direction from health experts, a return to normality will arrive sooner than later. Until then, I hope my fellow hunters stay well and prepare to hit the wetlands, paddocks and forests as soon as we can, to enjoy what we usually do to maintain our physical and mental health.

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Primers for rifle and pistol cartridges

Let's have a look at primers, after all, they are the 'spark plug' of the cartridge and selecting the correct ones to reload rifle and pistol centre-fire ammunition is crucial. Most centrefire cartridge cases today have a single, central flash hole and use 'Boxer' primers, named after British military inventor Edward Boxer. These are ideal for reloading as the primer can be easily removed by pushing a small diameter pin down the inside of the case through the central flash hole of the brass cartridge.

Boxer primers consist of two metal components - cup and anvil - with the explosive mixture located between them. Early primers had a chemical mix which caused weakening of the cartridge brass and rusted the barrel if it wasn't cleaned soon after use, though thankfully modern non-mercuric, non-corrosive primers don't cause this problem.

At about the same time as Boxer, a US ordnance officer named Hiram Berdan invented another primer system which bears his name. His was different in that an anvil was built into the primer pocket of the cartridge case itself and the primer cup with the explosive mixture seated into the primer pocket.

This was a simpler and cheaper primer to manufacture but because the cartridge case itself had two or sometimes three small off-centre flash holes, it was very difficult to remove the primer by de-capping from the inside. These primers can be removed by prying them out of the primer pocket from the outside, or by hydraulic method, but both are slow and tedious tasks and subsequently the use of Berdan primers and cases is now minimal.

Primers come in sizes large and small and the cartridge case being loaded generally determines which size of diameter



primer is used. In general, for either rifle or pistol, the small diameter primers are used for small cases and large diameter for large cases but it's essential to always consult a reloading book to determine the correct one to use.

Because the striking force of handgun firing pins is usually lower than that of rifles, and handgun cartridges usually operate at lower pressures, there are differences in the manufacturing specifications of primers made for them. So we find that pistol primer cups are made of a thinner, softer material and have less explosive mix than rifle primers of the same diameter and, except in rare instances, we should never use pistol primers in rifle cartridges or vice versa.

If using large capacity cartridge cases with heavy charges of slow-burning powder, a hotter priming flash of longer duration is needed for proper ignition, so a Magnum primer is required. These are made for both rifles and pistols and have a more explosive mix to give a longer-burning, hotter

flame than standard primers. There are several primer manufacturers who make quality products and all can be used with confidence, though I suggest always using the same brand when loading batches of cartridges, as different manufacturers have different specifications so performance and accuracy may be compromised if a mixture of primers is used.

For safety reasons always keep unused primers in their original factory packet in a cool, dry place so you'll know what type they are and their shelf-life will be almost indefinite. As an additional safety measure don't store unused primers in a metal tin or jar as they could ignite through heat or static electricity with devastating results.



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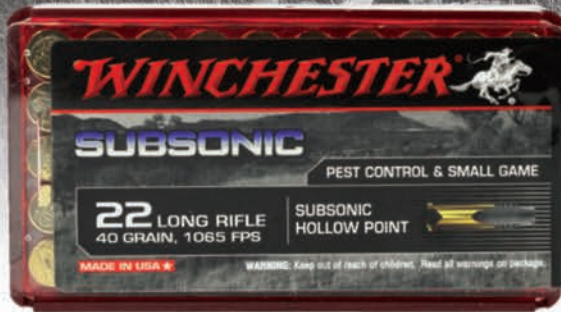
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Clay Target Q&A

WITH RUSSELL MARK

Q It was pleasing to see the Australian Olympic shooting team for Tokyo contained so many SSAA members and great that the announcement received decent coverage in the national media, including *Australian Shooter*. What I don't understand is in some events we have two competitors yet others, like Pistol, only one. Years ago I had quite an interest in Pistol and remember up to three athletes competing in each event. I also noted the unrest that Skeet shotgun shooters felt over not having an extra member added to their team. Can you explain the difference in competitor numbers and why shotgun didn't get that extra place?

Joy Sandilands, Vic.

A The number of competitors each country can send to the Olympics is determined by designated international competitions, starting roughly two years before the Games. These events carry what are called 'quota places' or starting places for successful competitors, essentially 'beds' in the Olympic Village. The majority of quota places for our Olympic shooting team are won at the Oceania Games. This event was held in late 2019 and Australia was able to secure 11 quota places from the 12 Olympic events on offer.

In 2018 and 2019 Australia clinched an additional four quota places at the World Shotgun Championships and two other World Cup competitions, secured by James Willett, Laetisha Scanlan and Penny Smith in Trap and Sampson in Air Rifle. Through the efforts of those four athletes and the other 11 who won at the Oceania Games, a total of 15 Australians will have 'beds in the village' in Tokyo.

In Men's Trap, Women's Trap and Men's Air Rifle, Australia will have an extra starter as there's a maximum of two athletes per event. Dane Sampson won the right at the Olympic trials to be a 'double starter' as he also qualified to compete in Men's 3-Position Rifle.

Pistol won four quota places at the Oceania Games but no other starting slots in any other designated international events, therefore have only one competitor in each of their four individual Olympic events. There's a chance a pistol competitor with an Olympic Minimum Qualification Score in the alternate event they've not been nominated in can actually cross over and compete in that event too, but at this stage that hasn't been verified.

Your other question as to why Shotgun wasn't awarded an extra place takes some explaining! In reality there was no 'extra place' to be swapped or allocated to another event such as Skeet. Rifle, courtesy of Sampson, won that discipline an additional place at a World Cup event in 2019 and it's important to note the quota place is awarded to the *country*, not the athlete who won it. After the Olympic trials there was much speculation that Rifle would send the same two athletes to both events as they finished first and second, and if that happened it would in turn free up an extra 'bed in the village'.

Shotgun clearly would have liked this as the competitor who qualified in second place is a current world record holder. There was lots of finger-pointing about where this quota-swapping story started as evidenced by a report in Fairfax newspapers yet the reality is swapping a quota is always an option before a team is announced, but is

never as straightforward as many competitors assumed.

Now it gets messy. The International Shooting Sports Federation were contacted and stated the quota could not be 'swapped' from one discipline to another until *all* international Olympic quota places have been distributed. Because of the COVID-19 disruption there are still two international quota places to be awarded and this process will now not be concluded until after the European Games next April.

The Australian Olympic Committee decided they didn't want to wait until next year to name the full team so Shooting Australia opted to keep the quota with Rifle and a third athlete from that discipline was named in that starting position (see May's edition of *Australian Shooter* for the full team).

In conclusion, Shooting Australia may well have decided to use this strategy regardless, as they're under no obligation to swap a quota place from one discipline to another. I realise this is as clear as mud but after COVID-19 nothing in the sporting world is completely transparent any more.



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Q I have inherited an 1875 revolver which has been in my family for some time. Since it was given to me I've tried to find out more about it but haven't found anyone who has seen one or knows anything about it. I was told by my father (who knows little about firearms) this revolver was given to our ancestors in Wales if they joined the army to fight South Africa in the Boer War. He also told me the revolver was a .45 calibre. It bears the stamp 'J5' on the barrel as well as an engraving which reads: 'William Marks Maker' patented by HRH The Prince of Wales. Any help greatly appreciated.
Ferdinand Engelbrecht, via email

A You have an interesting though not entirely rare firearm, commonly referred to as a Hill's Patent Self Extracting Revolver. Although Mr Hill was indeed a gun maker operating in Birmingham in the second half of the 19th century, he may have had little to do with your gun. The place and date of manufacture of yours and similar examples cannot be positively determined.

They're often found marked 'Stanley' or 'The Stanley' or 'Hill's Patent Extractor' or combinations of these markings but can also be found with no stamping at all. Contrary to popular belief the Hill's British Patent of 1878 was for improvements to the sear and had nothing to do with the extraction system which was developed in Belgium with the original patent of 1873 by Deprez & Joassart. This unique extracting system may also be found on proprietary revolvers such as Gasser and Webley.

Your example may be British but could also be of Belgian origin. Under the 1888 terms of proof, Belgian guns could be exported without proof so long as they were 'unfinished' and sent directly to a

foreign proof house. Unfinished could simply mean the guns were shipped without grips or engraving or there's no plating or bluing. Once these guns were proofed in either London or Birmingham they were deemed 'finished', at which time they became a British gun regardless of where they were made.

As for the inscription 'William Marks', Boothroyd's *Revised Directory of British Gunmakers* does list a W.H. Marks of 65 Foregate St, Chester, Cheshire in 1868 but that could be a red herring as this date may be a bit early for your gun. There may have been a Mr Marks who had something to do with the finishing of the gun or he may have been the retailer.

As to the inscription 'Patented by HRH the Prince of Wales', the royal system of granting patents had long finished by the time your gun was made. The patent system changed in the 1830s when the British Patent Office was established. Gun makers and dealers of the time were not averse to putting markings on guns to increase the value and credibility of their products and references to royalty was a popular selling point.

Unfortunately, as with many guns of the period, any stamping, inscription or branding cannot be relied upon as being accurate which also makes finding anything about the origin of your gun difficult. Having said that, there may be London or Birmingham proof marks on the cylinder and those marks will be genuine. The front sight looks like an attempt to replace the original, presumably lost. I can't entirely take credit for this answer and wish to thank my good friend Dennis Cooke for his thorough research.

Rod Pascoe

Q I'm an experienced handloader, having successfully worked up loads for a variety of calibres. One thing I've always wondered is what powder increments to use so as not to waste time with too small an increment but also not miss out on an accurate load with too big an increment. Can you please advise a rule of thumb for various calibres from 223 to 45-70.

Jeff, via email

A The method I've found most successful in establishing accuracy for a particular rifle is to load the suggested starting load - taken from a reliable reloading manual - into three cartridges then increase that by 0.5gr in another three cartridges etc up to near the maximum load suggested in the manual.

Fire these into a target at 100m and locate the charge with the smallest group. Using this load as a starting point, load a series of three cartridges 0.3gr, 0.2gr and 0.1gr above and below this starting point and again fire into a target at 100m. The load giving the smallest group will usually prove to be the most accurate one for that particular rifle.

Barry Wilmot



Q I'm sending photos of a family heirloom hoping you may be able to confirm its age and estimation of value. The engravings are worn though I'm able to make out Chas Osborne & Co. Very possibly the shotgun was modified by or for my late father who wasn't blind in his right eye but visually impaired due to an accident as a youngster.

He was right-handed but leaned over the stock in order to sight with his left eye. Dad was a professional shooter, his rifles set up with high scope mounts as with the shotgun, and he'd lean over the stock sighting with his left eye.

One of his brothers confirmed the shotgun belonged to their father, my grandfather, who had two versions of the same gun. The one in the pictures was looser than the other, can't remember why, but dad preferred it over the other. My uncle is unsure when dad acquired the gun but said he had it most of his life.

Helen Fraser, via email

A It turns out there was a succession of Osbornes working in Birmingham from around 1767 (Robert, John, Thomas, Henry and two Charles, who were probably all related). Ultimately Charles Jnr became a prolific maker of double barrelled shotguns and rifles for 'the colonies' with the company continuing in several locations right up to the late 1920s.

Your gun is a double barrelled, 12-gauge, hammerless model using the Anson and Deeley box-lock design, made and proofed in Birmingham before being sold through Charles Osborne's shop at Great Scotland Yard in the district of St James, Westminster.

Because the company moved to this address in 1892 and because your gun is marked Chas Osborne & Co (without 'Ltd'), it must have been made after 1892 and before 1896 when Osbornes became a limited company. This date, however, is confused by the proof marks which are in a format supposed to have dated from 1904. Prior to this, Birmingham proof and view marks were supposed to have been in the format of crossed sceptres with a crown over the top and 'P' or 'V' respectively below. Perhaps your gun was made for the old address and not completed until the new proof laws came in, suggesting one of those mysteries that may never be solved.

The photographs show a well-used old gun which was obviously your ancestors' pride and joy and could doubtless tell some tales, a fairly plain model compared to some of Osborne's heavily engraved and detailed ones. His company actually patented one of the early single trigger systems although yours has double triggers.

The gun has had a recoil pad added and stock modified to accommodate your dad's vision impairment. My friend Mike Williams has again helped with this enquiry by sending me a picture of a 'saddle-type cross-eye stock' described on P30 of Michael Yardley's book *Gunfitting - The quest for Perfection for Shotguns and Rifles*, which exactly matches the modifications to your gun's stock.

The proof marks reveal it was proofed for black powder and smokeless powder with 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ oz loads. The left barrel is full-choked (from 0.729" down to 0.692") while the right barrel has a half choke (diameter reduced to 0.709"). As to value, I'm afraid the gun

is likely to be worth far more as an heirloom than to most other shotgun fanciers, although a dedicated Osborne collector might be prepared to part with a few hundred dollars.

Geoff Smith

Q I'm concerned as I get older (68 now) I'm becoming less tolerant to recoil in my shotgun. Is this typical for shooters as they age and what can be done about it? I want to continue enjoying my shooting - both in seniors clay target and out in the paddock whistling foxes with my 12-gauge - and shooting for as long as possible.

Bill, Canberra

A If we're being honest with ourselves, once we crack the magic 60 years of age both men and women start to notice recoil at the end of a day's shooting. This is especially true of days spent shooting 100 clay targets where you get through about 100 to 125 shells depending on the discipline you're shooting.

In these situations it pays to experiment with shells which are travelling a little slower like 1250fps or so. There are even lighter competition shells than this on the market in 12-gauge with lighter payloads (24 and 21 gram) than the typical 1oz (28 gram) loads we shoot today. They're often advertised as low recoil and hit the targets very well as they throw beautiful patterns due to going a little slower.

This is a big subject but the difference in lead between the fastest and slowest commercial competition shells made today is less than five inches on a target crossing you at 40m and travelling about 80km/h - hard to believe but true. Who among us is good enough to be able to pick that difference in lead?

Most shooters use fast, heavier recoiling cartridges because they give them confidence. The fastest shells tend to produce poorer patterns unless they're loaded with higher antimony shot. Try some of the lower speed options - especially in 24-gram loads - and you'll be amazed how well they break targets and how you feel much less tired at day's end. Keep shooting as long as you're enjoying yourself - I know I will.

Paul Miller



Q I have a rifle (pictured) in very good to excellent condition with mint bore in 7.92 x 57 and in all my years have never seen one like it. I've searched the internet but still can't find a commercial one like this. The woodwork is beautiful timber with a diamond inlet pattern on the butt. I'm wondering what it might be worth as I see in America that lesser commercial ones than this go for US\$1500 and more. Any help appreciated.

Leonce Kealy, via email

A The rifle is a World War 1 issue Mauser which has been cut down and 'sporterised' by a bush mechanic. This is evident by the chequering on the grip - certainly not up to Mauser commercial standard - and the end of the grip itself which has been built up to form a pistol grip.

The diamond inlay in the stock definitely isn't Mauser though such decoration was quite popular in the 1960s and was usually applied as a 'custom' touch by the owner. I've seen the same sort of decoration on a number of firearms including Browning pump action rimfires, an 1892 Winchester and a Lee Enfield .303. The fore-end has also been modified and though it's a neat job, once again it's not commercial quality.

Mauser ceased production of commercial rifles in August 1914 and didn't resume until 1920. The markings on the barrel indicate the gun was made in 1917 so it falls well and truly within that non-commercial production period. The rifle would be worth around \$500 maximum and would actually be worth more if the modifications hadn't been made.

John Dunn



All set for Tokyo -
The Walther OSP was a game-changer.

Mike Papps

A lifetime in shooting

Australia is blessed with its fair share of sporting champions but as Senior Correspondent **Rod Pascoe** discovered, Mike Papps is more than that - he's also a successful businessman and quiet achiever

Michael Papps' life has revolved around the shooting sports. His childhood in Adelaide in the 1930s and '40s was typical of many at the time, his introduction to shooting aged seven or eight by way of the air rifle. The leafy back yard in suburban Glenunga afforded plenty of room for him to show his four siblings how it was done, brother Peter and sister Margaret taking to the game with equal enthusiasm. Like their older brother, both would go on to international competition with father Leo being the catalyst for the family's interest in shooting. Owner of a firearms business, Leo doted on the children with, among other things, an endless supply of pellets and targets.

As he progressed through school, Mike's extracurricular interests were further encouraged. "I was in the Cadets at school and shooting was a great activity which further increased my interest in firearms and shooting competitively," he says. Mike shot in Cadet competitions with great success. "It was a turning point getting into competitive shooting and in later years a reputation in shooting would also be good for business."

By now the air rifle was replaced by equipment with which Mike could get into serious competition, pistol shooting becoming his main interest. "In South Australia pistol shooting recommenced in 1947 after shutting down during the war," he says. "There was plenty of enthusiasm to get things up and running again and it didn't take long to find suitable premises



Mike's success in military shooting was the turning point in national and international competition.

and build a range. More pistols were available and the police commissioner of the day was quite cooperative in issuing the permits."

From the early '50s most pistol and rifle competitions centred around a quarry at Glen Osmond, near what locals called the Old Toll Gate which was close to the Papps' family home. The quarry was also the new home of Adelaide Pistol Club and at the

time was the only pistol club in the state. Not long after, it was announced Australia would host the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. "We were keen to find out what pistol events would be contested and that turned out to be 50m Free Pistol and Rapid Fire," says Mike.

"Melbourne had no facilities as at that time pistol shooting wasn't a recognised sport in Victoria, so a temporary pistol range was built at the windswept Williamstown rifle range just for the Games. My brother Peter and I were practising like mad to get our standard up but had no idea about international competition and training. When you think of the preparation our shooters go through now to get ready for international competition, a lot of time and money is spent on those guys, but at the time we didn't know any better. At least as South Australians we had a head-start on the other states as we were the only state shooting pistols competitively then."

The laws in Victoria were changed in time to allow Australian shooters to compete in elimination contests to select the national teams. "We had shooters from New South Wales, Victoria and SA all vying for a spot on the pistol team," says Mike, who made it to the elimination shoots in the Rapid Fire and Small Bore rifle events for the Melbourne Games but didn't make either team. In the Rapid Fire elimination shoot Mike missed a scoring ring by one eighth of an inch, about 3mm, and had he made that shot would've been shooting

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Mike Papps: A lifetime in shooting

alongside his 16-year-old brother Peter in Australia's Rapid Fire team.

"We ended up with two Victorians and two South Australians at the '56 Olympics," Mike recalls. "It got off to a pretty rough start with the makeshift range. The Europeans had any number of international-standard ranges and probably started building them in the late 1940s so the Melbourne set-up was a bit of an embarrassment. The availability of Olympic-style pistols was almost zero until the mid-fifties when the top European manufacturers were able to provide Free pistols for 50m shooting, and some Olympic athletes were using US-made .22 semi-autos for the 50m event while the Europeans had long-barrelled single-shots like the Hammerli.

"In Rapid Fire you needed a semi-auto shooting the low-recoiling .22 Short ammunition over 25m with guns from Beretta, Walther, High Standard and Hammerli. I went to the Rome Olympics with a High Standard in .22 Short but it took a few years



Mike with the coveted Bibby Cup on which his name appears many times.

before people realised European guns were the most competitive."

After his Melbourne experience and subsequent World Championships, Mike learned that top performers in shooting, like any sport, practised and exercised both mind and body - the bigger the competition the bigger the commitment. He realised the mechanical aspect of shooting is instinctive and routine, requiring little or no thought, it's the mental approach which demands intense concentration.

After Melbourne, shooting proficiency at major competitions grew rapidly. "Intensity and enthusiasm in pistol shooting arrived at the first National Championships in Hobart in 1958 - that was the turning point for competition in Australia," says Mike. Other states dragged their heels but all eventually embraced target pistol shooting as a legitimate sport. Mike recalls how the sport blossomed as year-on-year scores were improving at both state and national levels.

"We were all keener, smarter, had better equipment and practiced harder."

Although Mike's specialties were Centrefire and Rapid Fire pistol shooting, he kept practising Free Pistol and Small Bore rifle and after the Melbourne Games tried several times to win a place in Australian teams for these matches, going on to represent his country on six occasions at Rome, Cairo, Tokyo, Wiesbaden, Jamaica and Phoenix. Mike continued to vary his shooting interests and before the Rome Olympics, now an army reservist lieutenant and later as Captain Papps of the 3/9 Mounted Rifles, was seven times SA state finalist in the Queen's Medal for military rifle shooting.

"At Rome in 1960 the Italians did it well and by then the Americans were competing in Olympic shooting. They had home-grown events like the Camp Perry matches and figured they were the kings of the shooting movement but the Europeans ran the International Shooting Union (ISU) very well," says Mike, who came 31st with a score of 569 at the Rome Games.

The 1962 World Championships program in Cairo allowed four shooters to a team and with Mike shooting Centrefire and Rapid Fire, his sister Margaret was also making a name for herself, entering the Ladies Match 25m pistol event and finishing in the top 10, another turning point for Australian pistol shooters as she attracted much welcome media attention.

Mike had to wait two years for his next attempt at the Olympics but this time had some special help. "It didn't take long for the word to get around that if you wanted to make the 1964 Tokyo Games you needed



The makeshift and embarrassing facilities at the Melbourne Olympics. During this elimination shoot, Mike failed to make the Rapid Fire team. Note the dirt floor, jacket and tie and gumboots. Here Mike is using his Beretta pistol



The Hi-Standard pistol Mike used in Rome.

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Mike Papps: A lifetime in shooting



The custom-made wraparound grip carved and personalised for Mike.

the good equipment,” he says. “In 1962, Walther came out with the revolutionary OSP model which set the standard for the next 20 years. Coaching was introduced by the National Coaching Council who reported annually to the Amateur Pistol Shooting Union of Australia (now Pistol Australia) and in 1964 limited funding became available for shooters going to Tokyo.” Just prior to those Games Mike set two Australian records in Rapid Fire (586) and Centrefire (578) then in Tokyo finished 19th on 582 out of 600.

At the 1966 World Championships in Wiesbaden, Germany, Mike placed 16th in Rapid Fire with 586 out of 600, same as the national record he’d set two years earlier. “1966 was a big year for international competition, we went from one side of the world to the other,” says Mike. “I won a silver medal in Rapid Fire at the Commonwealth Games in Jamaica with 578.” Conscious of not putting all his eggs in one basket at Jamaica he also competed in Free Pistol, scoring 511 for 10th place then scoring 561 for 9th in Centrefire. Up until that point, after just nine years of competition, Mike had won all but one national championship in Rapid Fire, was now 34, married with twin sons and running a successful firearms agency.

He bowed out of international shooting at the World Championships in Phoenix, Arizona but never lost contact with his many shooting friends. “We met a lot of very helpful people along the way, particularly the US teams whose support helped Australians at international competitions - it was a great opportunity for us to learn and take it all in.”

The business

“I took over dad’s business after he died in 1960 just before the Rome Olympics,” Mike recalls. “The business had been registered as International Arms, a partnership between dad and I, and at that time was importing Hammerli pistols for Australian

shooters trying for a place on the team for Rome. “Involvement in the shooting sports certainly had a flow-on to marketing and the better we performed on the firing line the better the opportunity for promoting the products, especially the Walther OSP rapid fire pistol. So at national championships all our products were on display and being scrutinised by potential firearms buyers.”

With pistol shooting expanding in Australia, US giant Colt needed a business to represent them here and following a recommendation from another importer, a meeting was set up between Colt’s export manager with Mike and brother Peter in a Melbourne hotel. “They were impressed by our presentation and we convinced them we were the right people to represent them. At that meeting we got the go-ahead to be Colt agents, the beginning of a lucrative relationship. We had some pretty good years initially with Colt as we could sell M-16s and the entire Colt range.”

Following that meeting the brothers founded Frontier Arms to capitalise on the Colt franchise. “Colt, while a money-spinner for us, technically wasn’t up to the Hammerli or Walther in terms of quality in the guns we were selling at the time, so we had to build the market as people were saying ‘we have to have a Colt or a High Standard, a Beretta or Smith & Wesson’ and didn’t appreciate the quality of the European standard.”

During and after his time on the national and international stage, Mike worked on a number of committees and spent a fair bit of time on Pistol Australia’s national coaching council, providing written training material. “That was before the AIS was established where now money is spent to provide the best opportunities to upcoming shooters,” he says. “But even then, talented shooters with potential received the best coaching available. It was in the 1980s when things improved for the shooting sports, especially pistol shooters.”



Silver medal for second place in Jamaica.



Twins Bernard (left) and Damian share dad’s interest.

Mike’s most active and successful years were from 1956 to 1977 when he won 15 Australian titles and over 48 years he entered all national pistol and rifle championships after which he retired to club and social shooting. Business continues to do well and Mike is running Frontier Arms in Adelaide with help from family members, also shooters, the firm representing several international manufacturers including Walther, Hammerli, Thompson/Center and the German made Colt .22 pistols. ●

• In *Australian and New Zealand Handgun 19* later this year, read how the 1956 Melbourne Olympics changed the face of shooting in Australia and how Mike’s younger brother Peter was at the forefront of a pistol shooting revolution.

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Making the Olympic team is a dream come true for Laura Coles.

Preparing for Olympics during a pandemic

Nadia Isa

The Olympic Games have been cancelled three times in their 124-year history but have never been postponed - until now. The issue facing athletes selected to compete in this month's Tokyo Games, now rescheduled for July 2021, is the first of its kind. After much debate the Games were pushed back one year and athletes selected to compete now have 15 months to remain at the top of their game.

SSAA member Laura Coles, 33, will make her long-awaited Olympic debut in Women's Skeet. After missing out on the Rio Games in 2016, Coles gave up shooting completely for several weeks before deciding her passion for the sport was too great. "Those weeks I didn't shoot anything but did genuinely miss training and decided to eventually keep going," Coles said. "I can't imagine my life without it and don't know what I would do to be honest. To stop shooting would be almost the equivalent of chopping my right arm off."

For Coles, the chance to compete for Australia at the highest level is a dream come true. "It means so much, I don't think I can even put it into words. I remember questioning whether I'd ever get there and how I could live with not making it and

that was always a painful thought. To have it actually happen was almost like living a dream. For the first week I was like, is this real, is this actually happening?"

But for Coles the Olympic dream was in serious danger. After she was selected the Australian Olympic Committee considered withdrawing from the Games amid COVID-19, before organisers announced the competition would be postponed for a year. "Then we didn't know if those qualifications would stand so it was about 10 days in limbo, not knowing whether I was actually going," she said. "I thought the universe had a twisted sense of humour so yes, I was concerned and didn't really know where to let my head go."

But with selection firmly secured, Coles has turned her focus to preparing. Under normal circumstances, the Skeet shooter would train five days a week at her local range in Whiteman, WA but instead has been focusing on her mental game. "We're just going to have to go with the flow a bit and make the best of this situation but when it does come around I'll be in the right headspace for it."

Also making her Olympic debut will be young-gun Katarina Kowplos from South Australia. The 18-year-old SSAA member

was a favourite during qualification but still stunned when told she'd made the team. "Honestly surprised, really pleasantly surprised," said Kowplos. "Going to the Olympics you can't not be excited, but also a little apprehensive with all this stuff [COVID-19] going on. Australia is doing pretty well in the midst of it all but other countries aren't, so you don't know how it's going look come next year."

Unable to head out for training, Kowplos has implemented the use of dry fire with a SCATT machine which allows her to analyse results. "At home, just aiming at a wall can really help, just holding practice and doing a bit of dry firing helps during this time."

The youngster has split her final year of school to manage her shooting commitments and is currently completing Year 13 at Golden Grove High School while working part-time and using her extra free time to focus on studying. "I've been giving myself a bit of a mental break which I believe is helping a lot, as it's been a big rush during the past four months. I'm only 18 so it's hard to balance a full-time shooting career, now Olympic selection and also Year 13."

But she'll be back in regular training soon and will use the Olympic delay to her

[illegible]

**Katarina featured in
our Youth in Focus slot
back in May 2015.**

You can't hide class

the Zoli Kronos HR 11 Competition

John McDougall



Antonio Zoli established Zoli Spa in 1945. Located in the Italian province of Brescia, the Zoli factory has been making their own barrels and components for more than 55 years, top Australian sporting clays shooter Chris Brown being someone who uses a Zoli shotgun to very good effect. Zoli has control of all metal parts within their base and produce high-quality shotguns with the Zoli HR 11 Competition Kronos on review being no exception.

The guns are characterised by excellent stock wood and a triggerplate assembly that's detachable from the receiver along with a Boss locking system. Zoli claim to be the world's first manufacturer to employ industrial silver soldering of their barrels

and are so confident of their workmanship they guarantee the point of impact for their assembled barrels.

Barrels

Well, I could say they're amazing but that would be an understatement as they're finished to perfection. Not overly polished but toned in a deep blueing and topped with the high rib option available to the HR 11 Kronos, I was impressed at first glance and even more so on closer inspection.

At the muzzle end the barrels are fitted with fully internal titanium-treated choke tubes measuring 50mm (2"), a white barrel front sight and adjustment for the floating rib which enables a 50/50 pattern up to a 30/70 high pattern adjustment. This

potential to alter the point of impact allows the user to customise their shooting - whether a flat shooting gun to point of sight and impact or a gun which shoots higher than point of sight.

There's a small wind-up dial at the muzzle, just between the rib and the barrels which allows such adjustment. With the rib lifted as high as possible the gun will shoot a 50/50 pattern - 50 per cent above and below point of sight - and with the rib wound down it will shoot 30 per cent below point of sight and 70 per cent above. The rib height is around 18mm from the top barrel while it tapers from 10mm at the chamber end to 7mm at the muzzle, drawing the shooter's eye to the target.

The barrels are joined by ventilated ribs which are fluted and complement the barrel set well as they run the full length of the barrels. These side ribs are also designed to accept magnetic weights to customise the balance of the gun to the shooter's desire. At the chamber end the ejectors are superbly timed and substantial, robust enough to endure shooting over many years. Chambered for 76mm (3") cartridge loads and proof stamped with the Fleur de Lys (indicating the gun is proofed for 'High Performance' steel shot loads) the Zoli Kronos HR 11 Competition could also double as a hunting gun for waterfowl.

Although designed primarily as a full-on competition gun for sporting clays, it's nice to know it has versatility as steel shot loads for clay target shooting are 'Ordinary Steel' based on shot sizes smaller than #3, rather than 'High Performance' loads of size #3



The Zoli Kronos HR 11 Competition in its smart case with accessories.



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- Threaded barrel with thread protector.
- 9 round rotary magazine 22WMR



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The Zoli Kronos HR11 Competition

shot and larger (remembering the larger the shot size, the smaller the diameter).

Jewel polishing about the monobloc is appreciated for retaining lubricants and the gun is engineered magnificently. Priced around \$7550 I guess that's what you're paying for along with a five-year warranty.

Receiver

This is forged from a solid billet of alloyed steel suited to the rigours of pressure from shotgun loads. The triggerplate is similar, being separate from the monobloc and removable for servicing and adjustment if needed. The jointing system is via bifurcated lugs in the receiver wall that mate with recesses in the barrel monobloc, while the locking system is a 'Boss'-style mechanism with lugs passing outward from the receiver face to lock over recesses to the rear of the monobloc, beside the lower chamber.

In its deeply blued colouring, the receiver matches the barrels well. A little gilt inlaying about the receiver indicates the gun is a Zoli while on the underside is a logo along with the Kronos model inlaid. Metal-to-metal fit is excellent as is the wood-to-metal inletting about the tangs of the receiver into the stock. Design of the triggerguard is generous and as mentioned the trigger action is fitted to the triggerplate, which is removable. The hammers must both be fired on to 'snap caps' and the safety engaged before the 2.5mm hexagonal key can be used to undo the screw which is fitted permanently to the gun.

To reassemble the triggerplate to the receiver, the trigger selector must be taken off safe and the front of the triggerplate eased into the receiver and rotated home. Once seated correctly, the retaining screw

can be tightened. The instruction booklet then suggests the hammers be re-cocked and, with the use of 'snap caps', the gun fired to check all is working. All necessary tools for this process, the stock adjustment and its removal are supplied along with a spare set of trigger coil springs and firing pins for the mechanically minded.

The triggerfoot is adjustable to three pre-set positions for comfort, trigger pulls identical for both barrels set at 5lb (2.27kg) and the trigger system on this model is inertia activated, requiring firing of the first barrel before the second can be fired. The top lever design is smooth to operate, well adjusted for wear and sitting left of centre to enable the action to wear over time, the barrel selector also positive to operate.

The action open showing the locking recesses on the barrel.



Stock and fore-end

The walnut woodwork is perfectly matched in colour and exhibits excellent character and grain for a gun of its price, chequering extensive on both fore-end and pistol grip, much appreciated for excellent hold and running about 18 lines per inch. The Monte Carlo stock with adjustable comb piece requires elevating the shooter's head to align with the high rib, essential as it enables the shooter to cheek the stock with an upright head instead of creeping along the comb, thus avoiding head tilting which can lead to eye strain from looking out of the top of the eye sockets. All tools are supplied to adjust the comb piece and remove the stock.



Close-up of the receiver with basic gilt inlays, adjustable triggerfoot and excellent wood-to-metal fit.



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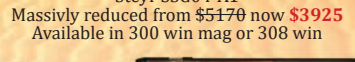
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PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Zoli Kronos HR11 Competition

Fitted to the butt is a substantial recoil pad, appreciated not so much for reducing recoil from 28-gram loads but for taming recoil from heavier shot loads while providing a non-slip surface for consistent gun mount. The design of the gun, barrels, weight and stock combination is such that during shooting recoil was almost undetectable.

Design of the pistol grip is quite raked and provides an excellent reach for the trigger as well as control of the gun during 'swinging' and fast 'pointing'. A moderate palmswell is formed on the right-hand side for improved shooter comfort and additional control, the HR 11 Competition available in both left and right-handed configurations.

In the field

This shotgun was a delight to review and shooting it was equally enjoyable. The lack of perceived recoil, despite the brisk English Hull cartridge loads used for evaluation, along with a variety of other loads seemed well tamed. The gun came up superbly when mounted while the choking used for testing at Frankston Australia Gun Club absolutely pulverised targets. It's been a while since I 'smoked' that many targets in a single round of clays - and recoil was almost non-existent.



Made from quality walnut with excellent grain and character, the woodwork is befitting of a gun twice its price.

These two factors are testament to a manufacturer who appears to have engineered and built a gun which performs unbelievably for a price tag around a third to half that of similar makes in its class. I can't offer any greater accolade than to say the Zoli Kronos HR 11 Competition was sensational.

With all the tooling, accessories and excellent back-up from distributor Clay and Hunt, I recommend this shotgun highly to any shooter looking to improve their scores in sporting clays or simulated field shooting and believe that, once purchased, you won't need to look beyond a Zoli. ●



There are five choke tubes supplied from cylinder to full choke.



John used the gun on sporting clays at his local club on Phillip Island.

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Zoli Spa, Brescia, Italy
Distributor: Clay and Hunt, Melbourne
clayandhunt.com.au
Model: Zoli Kronos HR 11 Competition
Overall length: 1245mm/48½"
Barrel length: 780mm/30¾"
Overall weight: 3.77kg/8lb 5oz
Barrel weight: 1.55kg/3lb 7oz
Chamber/bore/proof: 76mm chamber, 0.730" bore, HP Steel Shot proofed
Chokes: Skeet 2/Cylinder: 0.728", Imp. Cylinder: 0.722", Modified: 0.712", Imp. Modified: 0.701", Full: 0.692"
Trigger pulls: Under: 5lb, over: 5lb
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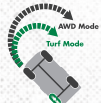
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Unbeatable combination for deer



In Part Two of our series on favourite rifle, cartridge and scope combinations, **Con Kapralos** outlines his choices and explains his thinking

Rifle: Sako M85 Finnligh

Cartridge: .270 Winchester

Scope: Ziess Duralyt 2-8x42



When deciding on a classic stalking rifle there was only one choice for me - the Sako M85 Finnligh in the legendary .270 Winchester calibre. Fabled American outdoorsman Jack O'Connor put all his trust in the calibre and if it was good enough for him, it would serve me very well indeed.

My intended quarry was deer and having just started hunting this game species back in 2010, I needed a lightweight rifle that would carry suitably in the field and be able to take shots out to 300m. The Sako 85 Finnligh with its stainless steel barrelled action and synthetic stock was perfect for the task and was ordered through my good friend Gary Georgiou at Safari Firearms. The bare rifle weighed in at just under 3kg.

When it came to an optic, the only serious contender back then was Zeiss and the Duralyt in 2-8x42 was ideal. With its simple reticle and 30mm tube, being able to wind down to 2x for hunting scrub or timbered areas to 8x for longer shots over open pastures and across gullies, the Duralyt has never let me down. Its silver/grey colour goes with the stainless barrelled action of the Finnligh and setting up the scope in matching Sako Optilock rings was a given.

As to how and why the rifle was bought? My wife decided to spoil me and bought the Finnligh and Zeiss Duralyt as a wedding gift, something I'll never forget and am extremely thankful for. My wife likes to accompany me on the occasional deer hunt under the strict provisions that we don't get

wet and don't walk too far! Our preferred method is to set up a ground blind and wait for deer to emerge from their cover into the open. We've been successful on many occasions and she has even helped with the carry-out.

As for ammunition, for many years I'd used the factory Barnes Vor-Tx .270 Winchester load with 130gr TTSX projectiles, the choice down to my hunting buddy requesting we only use lead-free ammunition. This was his concession and I happily agreed, even though at \$75 per box of 20 it wasn't cheap, but one box of ammo lasted a while and produced 20 deer every time.

When my supply of Barnes ammunition finally ran out, I opted to revert to a traditional bonded 130gr projectile and tried Federal Fusion ammunition. What's



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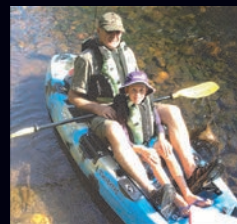
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pleasing is that so far, Federal Fusions have been brilliant at taking deer out to 300m with no second shot required, and they group well in the rifle at around 0.75 MOA.

Early days and the 'better half'

My initial memories of the Finnlight and deer hunting were actually conducting South Australian pest controlling activities with a good friend using a spotlight at night. While spotlighting deer may be frowned upon, this wasn't hunting but culling pest animals on a property inundated with them. Just before heading out on the night's shoot, the property owner told me there was a nice fallow buck at a particular point on the property he wanted us to leave as he planned to shoot it himself.

True to his word the animal was where he said it would be - and looking at the biggest fallow buck antlers I've ever seen through the Duralyt still sends shivers down my spine. I recall my hunting buddy saying: "Con, you could've shot him 100 times," as we watched him prance away. I felt good that we'd done the right thing by our landowner friend but sadly some

people aren't so mindful, as the owner told me later another hunter had visited soon after us and shot that buck, much to his displeasure.

The first free-range stalking deer I bagged with the Finnlight/Duralyt combo was a red hind on my trip to a new patch. It was hard work and I now look back and laugh as the deer materialised out of nowhere in a shallow swamp and taking it with a single shot, the enormity of what was to transpire then set in. Gralloching a huge red hind in ankle-deep water and trying to manoeuvre the beast by myself was a comedy of errors and slip-ups, not to mention lugging huge red deer legs for 2.5km back to my car. I learned a lot that day and have since refined my gear and deer stalking techniques to make the task much easier.

Some of the best hunts with the Finnlight and Ziess Duralyt were with my wife as company. Our original outing together saw us stalking a lightly timbered patch which I knew held deer but where I'd never enjoyed any success. My wife reckoned I reminded her of Elmer Fudd but was keen

to "see what I do when I go hunting".

Stalking slowly over a grassy knoll, two fallow - a buck and a doe - emerged in front of us at around 50m. I quickly lined up the doe and took the shot. "That's what I do when I go hunting deer, dear!" She was amazed, shocked and elated all in one. We took some pictures then gralloched the fallow, carried it together to the vehicle and called it a day - a memorable hunt indeed.

More recently the Sako Finnlight was in need of attention. The original stock which had a rubber finish to it for enhanced grip in wet weather had deteriorated over the years to the point it was now tacky and sticky. I tried cleaning it but to no avail so contacted the team at Beretta Australia who gave some valid advice, though in the end I decided to replace the original stock with a grey Sako 85 laminate version.

The new stock only added about 200g to the overall weight of the rifle which still carried well. On the first outing with the new stock, my hunting partner and I were stalking that same lightly timbered patch. My partner was to my left and if there were any deer about they'd be pushed towards



Con takes a breather with the Sako Finnlight 85.



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me. Upon coming through some scrub into a long clearing I noticed movement in front of me, three fallow bucks in early velvet were feeding and unaware of my presence.

At around 80m and with the Duralyt wound down to 2x, three shots of Federal Fusion's finest had a trio of deer on the ground for venison. I radioed my buddy on the UHF but couldn't reach him and when he finally arrived at the clearing he was delighted with what he saw. But once the high-fives subsided we pondered how on earth we could take the deer out of this timber. As my deer cart was back at camp we decided to drive slowly through the scrub, me out front signalling pot-holes and things to avoid.

We managed to find the deer, loaded them into the truck and made our way out. We headed back to camp and reflected on the effectiveness of the Federal Fusion ammunition in the Sako Finnlight and the clarity of the Zeiss Duralyt scope - the trio had pulled it off yet again.

10 years on what do I like?

The Sako 85 Finnlight in .270 Winchester continues to be my preferred deer stalking outfit, the five-shot detachable steel magazine excellent as it can be either removed and reloaded or top-loaded through the ejection port with magazine still in place. Even with the new laminate stock the rifle carries well over the shoulder and is a tad smoother to shoot with the extra weight behind it. The original stock was great and I'd have liked a replacement but in the end the laminate won over.

The Zeiss Duralyt scope sadly is out of production as Zeiss are always refreshing their riflescope options. The Duralyt was replaced by the Conquest DL and HD5 and while these were excellent in their time, I swear by the 2-8x42 Duralyt as the perfect lowlight stalking scope.

The only variable over the past 10 years has been the ammunition put through the rifle. At one stage I was exclusively using monolithic (gilded copper) factory ammunition in the Barnes Vor-Tx range in the Sako 85 Finnlight .270 Winchester, my Sako 85 Hunter in .243 Winchester and Howa M1500 in .30-06 Springfield.

However, going over to a premium bonded projectile in the Federal Fusion factory ammunition for the .270 Winchester hasn't seen any detriment in performance. My only hope now is that I can squeeze another 10 years or more out of the Sako M85 Finnlight and Zeiss Duralyt combination. ●



Successive shots from the Sako 85 using Federal Fusion ammo yielded three fat spring-time fallow deer.



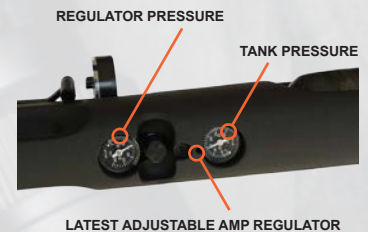
The reason Con favours the lightweight 85 Finnlight - stalking for miles with a backpack.

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Home-made gun trade alive and well

John Maxwell

When criminals can't find the firearms they want on the black market, or the prices are simply too high, some still manage to lay their hands on home-made guns. These account for just a small amount of guns seized by police across Australia but turn up often enough to indicate they're a genuine problem - and that some crooks are willing to take substantial risks.

Those risks come in two areas. Most of these are not firearms manufactured in modern factories using quality materials and precision machine tools, they're made in backyard workshops using basic tools which can make them as dangerous to the user as to the intended target. Secondly, making illegal firearms attracts heavy penalties - in NSW that's 10 years' jail rising to a maximum of 20 years for manufacture

of a prohibited firearm or handgun. With the advent of 3D printing, concern was expressed in some quarters that criminals or anyone else could use this new technology to start turning out their own Glocks and Uzis but that reflects limited understanding of firearms and 3D printing, referred to in the industry as additive manufacturing. In traditional manufacturing, material is removed to create the finished component, whether by use of a file or CNC milling machine. In 3D printing, material is added layer by layer according to a computer program to create the finished product.

3D printers are readily available with basic units costing a few hundred dollars. These use a plastic filament which is melted and applied to create the finished item, clever technology which has far reaching implications for manufacturing and much more.

But can it make guns? The answer is yes, sort of. In 2013, US anarchist and gun rights activist Cody Wilson released plans for a single-shot handgun in .380 ACP which could be made on a 3D printer. He named this the Liberator after the single-shot handgun the US Office of Strategic Services planned to distribute to resistance forces during World War Two.

This created quite a sensation and plans were downloaded more than 100,000 times before US authorities pulled the plug (just how many guns were actually made will never be known). Media reports at the time suggest those who tried were mostly experimenters and reporters curious to see if it would really work. Wilson's design might have had greater success were it not for their tendency to blow up, sometimes on the first shot.



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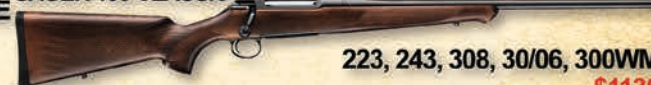
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Home made gun trade alive and well



Plastic barrels and even lower power handgun cartridges are not a good mix. High-end 3D printers used in the aerospace industry to make precision metallic components could do better but these are priced well beyond the reach of your average backyard gunsmith. That's not to say the risk of 3D printed firearms is trivial and Australian law enforcement is aware of the potential but assesses the threat as low.

In its 2016 report on Illicit Firearms in Australia, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) said this technology did not commercially enable mass production of printed components which matched the reliability and cost-effectiveness of factory-made firearms. ACIC noted that one Australian police agency had

created and tested a 3D single-shot pistol which would shoot a single round but was also found to be unreliable and potentially dangerous to the user.

"Since instructions to produce a 3D printed firearm were published online, the ACIC has identified only three attempts to manufacture such firearms in Australia," it said in the report. "Of those identified, none were functioning when detected by police.

"3D printing technology is improving rapidly, with new materials in use and commercially available. However, at this time the capabilities of 3D-printed firearms are limited and, in the short term, this production method is unlikely to be a significant source of illicit firearms. As technology improves and 3D printing becomes more

affordable, the threat of this manufacturing method is likely to increase."

ACIC said over the same period it traced almost 1000 factory-made handguns, demonstrating that conventionally made guns continue to be more readily available at this time. And there are other types of home-made firearms. ACIC said items such as single-shot pen guns, key-ring guns and submachine guns were still believed to be illicitly made in Australia but remain in small numbers compared with factory-made guns on the black or grey markets - only 1.7 per cent of the illicit firearms traced by ACIC's Firearms Trace Program in 2015-16 were of this type.

However, in 2014 the head of NSW Police Firearms and Organised Crime Squad said 10 per cent of guns they seized were home-made. "A lot of them are very crude and dangerous, especially to the user. They misfire, don't fire at all or even explode in the user's hands," he said.

Home-made firearms continue to be found in police raids and arrests - often in connection with drug busts - in the hands of people who figure they have need of a gun, any gun. Images of these devices have been released by police media departments, indicating they range from the downright crude (and surely dangerous) to some which resemble factory-made firearms.

In January 2016, Queensland police seized a home-made single shot .22 calibre pistol after a three-year-old girl was shot in the leg and seriously wounded. That apparently wasn't intentional but a man and woman were subsequently charged with causing grievous bodily harm and unlawful possession of an improvised handgun.





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Home made gun trade alive and well

As ACIC noted, single-shot pen guns continue to be made and in 2014 NSW police arrested a man who had created something of a cottage industry in these highly dangerous and illegal devices by modifying metal work centre punches. Queensland police have also seized a number of home-made revolvers in 38/357, one in the possession of a 22-year-old woman along with drugs. These appear to be reasonably well made and the fact they're popping up in Queensland suggests a common source.

ACIC also reports that home-made sub-machine guns (SMGs) are also popular with criminals. In January of last year, police raided a house in Toowoomba and found a home-made .22 calibre SMG along with various machine tools, gun components and methamphetamine and last May police on the Gold Coast raided a home and seized a handgun, drug stash and a pair of home-made SMGs.

That followed an earlier bust in Queensland in January 2016 in which a police raid netted a meth lab and make-shift SMG manufacturing facility and three finished firearms which appear to be based on a design by British gun rights advocate Philip Luty, a kindred spirit of Cody Wilson who believed in unrestricted access for everyone.

Luty published a number of designs for SMGs which could, in theory, be made by anyone with basic tools and skills though

even the best made Luty guns are regarded as nothing special, with marginal reliability and dismal accuracy. In line with Luty's DIY philosophy the barrel is smoothbore, as rifled barrels are generally beyond the capability of most backyard armourers. Luty died in 2011 but guns based on his plans continue to turn up in the US, West Bank, South America, Europe and Australia. One was used by a right wing extremist in an attack on a synagogue in Germany last October in which two people died. Reportedly the gunman experienced multiple stoppages and reverted to an improvised shotgun.

So home-made guns in criminal and terrorist hands is a global problem. In countries such as Brazil, criminal groups turn out functional SMGs in well-equipped workshops, Indian police have seized home-made rocket propelled grenade launchers from insurgent groups and police in PNG regularly seize home-made firearms from bandit gangs, the basic operating mechanism a hardware store regular.

The US would appear to have sufficient handguns available legally and illegally that criminals just don't need to make their own, although it still happens, an emerging trend seemingly for crooks to convert their Glocks from semi-auto to full-auto through the addition of an illegal selective fire conversion kit. These are made in China and marketed on the internet for as little as US\$15.

Home-made guns in Australia mostly aren't the product of curious hobbyists and turn up in the hands of serious criminals, especially drug dealers and outlaw motorcycle gangs, media reports even suggesting bikie gangs have sought to recruit those with metalworking skills to become armourers.

The ACIC report said Australia's illicit firearms market was driven in part by outlaw motorcycle gangs, Middle Eastern organised crime groups and others engaged in trafficking illicit commodities such as drugs. "A wide range of criminals acquire and use firearms to conduct their business, protect their interests, intimidate others and commit acts of violence," it said. "Organised crime is exploiting the rapid development of technology and its increasing availability to users worldwide. Criminals are likely to exploit new and emerging trends to acquire and traffic illicit firearms."

The extent of the firearms black market and grey market (guns not surrendered in the buybacks) remains unknown and potentially large but police have achieved considerable success in cracking down on illegal guns. One indicator is the high prices charged, especially for handguns for which a criminal could pay upwards of \$10,000, and unsurprisingly some will seek to acquire guns elsewhere. All of which puts paid to an oft-repeated claim by anti-gun groups such as Gun Control Australia that all guns in criminal hands start out as legal. Clearly they do not. ●



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Back yourself on a long shot

Trenton Hardie

Long Range Precision is a SSAA discipline which has been developed in Australia to encourage shooters to achieve greater accuracy at extended distances while using a hunting platform with the aim of achieving first-shot accuracy. The match simulates hunting conditions with a lightweight bag and bipod and no wind flags so it's up to the shooter to read the wind, make adjustments and take a well-aimed shot.

What is 'long range'?

Well that depends on the cartridge being used. Whether it's a .22 rimfire at 150m, a .223 at 400m or a .300 Win Mag at 600m, 'long range' is relative to the cartridge we're applying. The .22 rimfire is a great way to practice, train and learn the variables of distance shooting without the expense or requirement of a long distance facility and Long Range Precision shoots a rimfire event for this reason.

I was drawn to Long Range Precision by the desire to become a better hunter. Like most, I sighted in my hunting rifle at 100m and simply aimed off to account for elevation differences at varying distance, normally out to a maximum of 300m. The size of the game and short distance allowed me to achieve accuracy with reasonable precision but after spending time on the range, I realised this method had its limitations and what I thought was precise needed some work.

Long Range Precision is the perfect discipline to develop those skills required by the serious hunter or target shooter looking to increase distance to target. Seeing your grouping on a target gives you a lot of information about you and your rifle and starts you on a journey of discovery and development which can continue to drive you in pursuit of ultimate precision.

Advancements in modern firearms, ammunition and accessories are giving

more shooters the ability to accurately engage targets at greater distance - and successfully take game. As hunters we have an ethical and legal responsibility to humanely take game with minimal suffering to the animal and as we stretch our hunting distance, many more variables come into play to achieve first-shot hits or kills. It's essential to the hunter to have the confidence of a first-shot hit and understand the capability of the shooter and firearm before taking the shot.

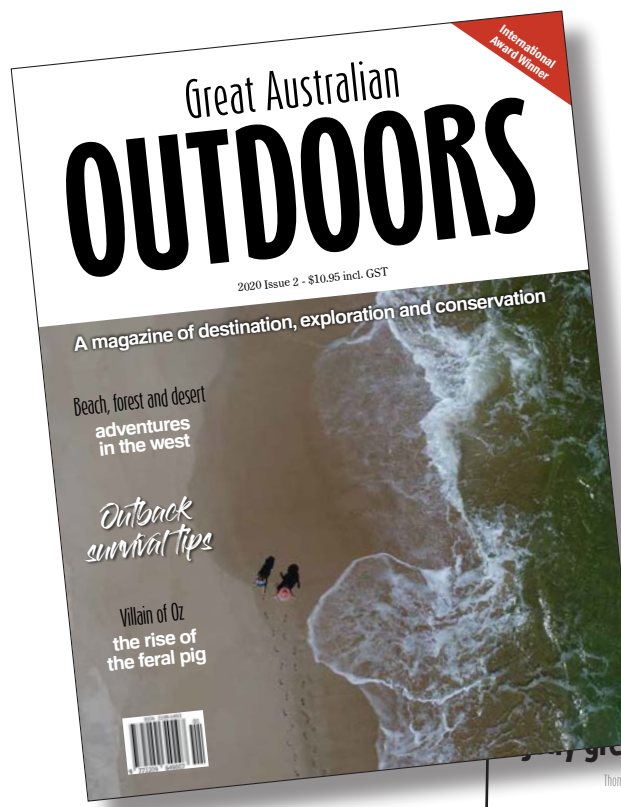
There are an increasing number of long range rifles appearing on the market and it's easy for the general shooter to think that because they have a long range rifle, they can go hunting and start shooting game at ever-increasing distances. Well it's not quite that simple.

The firearm may be capable, however I can't stress enough the need to test, practise and understand your gun before you attempt to take game. The impacts of

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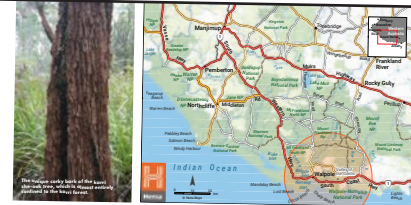
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Back yourself on a long shot

wind, unknown distance, environmental and geographical features increases dramatically as we extend our distance and knowing how much these variables affect our point of impact is important. Just because you have the latest ballistic app doesn't mean it'll be accurate to your combination of firearm, ammunition and shooter, so there's a very real need to test and practise on a range before heading to the field.

You don't have to spend big to get into the sport. There are many factory rifles now which hold their own on the range and you can't go past Howa or Tikka for value for money, to name just two. Starting with a .22 rifle is a great way to get into the sport without hefty ammunition costs and the Class A match also allows for hunter class and field class rifles. Hunter class rifles must be off-the-shelf, conform to standard barrel dimensions and have a maximum weight of 4.6kg. Field class can be modified and weigh up to 8.4kg including bipod.

Choosing a cartridge that's right for you is important, weight of the rifle, recoil, cost of reloading and ability to make the distance just a few considerations. Size, weight and speed of projectile will have an impact on recoil and its ability to hold up in the wind at longer distances - the heavier the projectile the more momentum it carries and energy it needs to get moving. We can use muzzle brakes to reduce felt recoil and barrel weight will also impact on felt recoil and how quickly it will heat up. As with most things it's a matter of deciding what's important to you as, unfortunately, there's no one perfect cartridge.

I wanted to be able to be competitive at the range and have good enough terminal ballistics in the field, after all if I'm going to invest time and money to achieve as much precision as possible in this rifle, I also want to be able to hunt with it. In my case I traded weight to find the performance I was after and went for a larger calibre with heavy projectiles which hold in the wind and have adequate terminal ballistics to take game effectively at distance. This also meant the firearm was heavy, to reduce felt recoil.

Once you have a rifle in the desired cartridge you'll need a scope and ideally you should be after something in the 5-25 power range with an objective lens of around 50-56mm (the discipline allows for a maximum scope power of 25). You can have a higher power scope but it will need to be taped at 25 for a national match.

Once again there's a vast range of scopes to choose from at varying prices and I've seen some pretty good ones for reasonable money. One crucial point is that when



A good riflescope combination is vital in Long Range Precision.



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Back yourself on a long shot

making elevation or windage adjustments, sometimes cheaper scopes don't always move to the desired correction and return to zero and consistency is key to shooting well.

Good mounts are a must and a scope level is worthwhile once you start stretching out the distance. Long Range Precision is shot in the prone position so a ground mat, bi-pod and rear bag are accessories you'll need at some stage. Some clubs have spares available to use or even club guns you can hire to let you try the discipline. If you're just starting, begin shooting at 100m/yds, make sure your zero is good and progressively move back and each time you move to the next distance, record your elevation adjustments so you know what to dial to next time.

It's highly likely you'll also start reloading, not just because of cost but also to improve performance and adjust the load to suit the firearm. SSAA clubs are a great place to find the assistance and information to start on the reloading path.

So if you're looking to stretch the distance and improve your shooting capabilities for the range or next hunt, Long Range Precision is a great way to hone your skills and develop those skills for first-shot hits.

- Trenton Hardie is chairman of the SSAA's Long Range Precision discipline. ●

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Sauer's German precision sheer perfection

Daniel O'Dea



Daniel lines up behind the Sauer S100 Ceratech.

J.P. Sauer & Sohn are recognised as Germany's oldest manufacturer of hunting firearms, having been in business since 1751. My early memories of Sauer were that it was one of those boutique European companies which made fancy high-class firearms often with a price to match, such as three-barrelled 'Drillings' combination for which I understand they held the patent and won a gold medal at the 1881 World Exhibition.

Likewise, they made high grade traditional bolt-action rifles of typical German quality and features such as finely engineered claw-type mounts and 'butter knife' bolt handles. At the other end Sauer was also prevalent in military manufacturing during both world wars so it was not uncommon to come across a Sauer-made K98 Mauser in times of abundant surplus.

These days Sauer & Sohn still make high-quality traditional rifles but also offer a large variety using the latest metal finishes and polymers of modern design – and at surprisingly affordable prices. One such

rifle is the Sauer S100 Ceratech and local distributor Outdoor Sporting Agencies sent *Australian Shooter* one for review.

The Sauer 100 series has been with us for several years and no doubt was designed with more thought towards the huge US hunting market than just local European supply. It uses modern manufacturing processes such as a breech ring (locking bush) as opposed to bolt lug recesses being cut directly into the receiver. This provides an index point for the barrel when mated (screwed) into the receiver in production, and being a more precise process of manufacture as opposed to cutting bolt lug recesses into the receiver it all but guarantees correct headspace. The system is similar to what Lithgow Arms uses on the LA102/5 and is quickly becoming the standard with modern bolt-action rifle production.

As a result, the Sauer has a 'fat' bolt where the body runs the full diameter and multiple bolt lugs (three in this case) are cut out of the leading edge. This, combined

with a matching tubular receiver in which the bolt slides, seems to be the trend over more traditional receiver designs. In the case of the Sauer 100 the tolerances are extremely tight and there's no hint of binding, the three-lug bolt design also providing a 60-degree bolt lift for sharp, swift operation on the reload. The bolt head has two ejector plungers instead of the usual one and a generous claw extractor recessed into one of the bolt lugs. Extraction was positive while the ejectors literally launched fired cases when cycled from the action.

The Sauer S100 has a trigger adjustable between 1000-2000g (2.2-4.4lb) and out of the box I found this factory trigger to be excellent. It's single stage with absolutely zero creep and broke cleanly and precisely at about 1200g (2.6lb) as measured on my Lyman trigger gauge.

The rifle has a squat double stack polymer magazine which sits flush in the stock and holds five rounds in standard calibres. The magazine release is a push-button

design just forward of the front edge and is deeply recessed into the floorplate to prevent accidental activation. I noted the magazine, which is full length, had an integrated block to control cartridge length for short action calibres. As the magazine is squat, the well is quite cavernous and easy to locate for insertion without looking.

Moving to more specifics for the Sauer S100 Ceratech, the name is a direct giveaway, the main feature being that all metalwork (barrel, action, floorplate) are Cerokoted in a 'Grey-Ice' finish. Cerokote, which is applied almost like spray paint and oven baked, is a ceramic coating which provides outstanding wear and durability properties in all hunting conditions.

The rifle is fitted with Sauer's Ergo Max synthetic stock, claimed to be 'ultra-rugged' and featuring a neutral cast to suit right and left-handed shooters. It certainly looks rugged enough and includes all the internal ribbing and bracing expected on a modern quality polymer stock. Raised stippled panels on the fore-end and pistol grip also provide tactile gripping surfaces and the Ergo Max stock uses Sauer's Ever Rest bedding system with a solid alloy bedding block epoxied into the unit which mates perfectly with a recoil lug and tension bolt coming off the receiver ring.



The three-position safety is well positioned with three raised semi beads.

The stock also features a generous black rubber recoil pad, QD sling swivels and, in keeping with its European heritage, a 'Schnabel' styled fore-end tip which I haven't seen before on a polymer stock but it sure looks the part. Neat finishing features have the Sauer logo embossed on the pistol grip cap, fore-end tip and recoil pad. The test rifle was chambered in 6.5

Creedmoor which, in recent times, has been heralded in terms of a long-range rifle calibre but it should not be lost that it's an effective hunting round, closely mimicking 6.5x55 ballistics in a more modern and efficient case design. The 6.5x55 has long been a popular hunting round in Europe and while perhaps underrated in Australia, it saw plenty of use on pigs when many

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Sauer's German precision - sheer perfection

M96 Swedish Mausers were sold as surplus in the 1980s and '90s. I remember Fuller selling rifle/scope packages for \$199 and recall they proved a popular and successful budget option with many Aussie farmers.

The Sauer S100 Ceratech comes with a 22" (560mm) tapered barrel stretching to 24" (actually 620mm) in Magnum calibres, the barrel also threaded to accept a muzzle brake or suppressor where permitted. Sauer barrels are cold hammer forged and known to produce good accuracy and the rifle comes with a five-shot sub-MOA guarantee.

Sauer S100 models will accept standard Remington 700 rails and bases for scope mounting purposes which gives a myriad of mounting options. OSA supplied a set of one-piece ring bases along with a Whiskey 3 Sig Sauer 4-12x50 scope and I'd note that at time of writing there were some deals going around with the one-piece ring bases being included in the price. After mounting the scope it was off to the range bench for testing, where I fired several groups using a selection of Hornady factory loaded 6.5 Creedmoor ammunition I had on hand including 140gr ELD Match, 143gr ELD-X Precision Hunter, 129gr InterLock American Whitetail and 140gr HPBT American Gunner.

There wasn't much between the ammo types with all shooting around one MOA or better for three-shot groups. The 140gr HPBT American Gunner was a standout, shooting several three-shot groups at half MOA or just 12.5mm at 90m, this ammo continuing to impress as



Grip stippling on the fore-end and 'Schnabel' styled tip.

I've used it in a couple of reviews and it always shoots tight. In my book it's the best value 6.5 Creedmoor ammo currently on the market.

Apart from the smooth bolt operation, a three-position safety is well positioned to the right rear of the receiver with three raised semi beads, two green and one red, which indicate both the safety position and rifle status. All the way back is safe with both trigger and bolt locked, two beads forward is safe with the trigger locked but bolt operational and the last red bead is the fire position. The raised beads can be felt with the left thumb when operating the safety and give a good felt reference in lowlight (or no light) conditions. Likewise there's an exposed red cocking indicator protruding from the rear of the bolt shroud, again giving both visual and tactile references to the load condition.

The rifle feels slick to use and is well balanced, relatively light as set up with



Recessed three-lugged bolt head features two plunger ejectors and claw extractors.



Flush-fitting polymer magazine is easily released via a recessed press button.

Stippled panels on Sauer's Ergo Max synthetic stock's fore-end and pistol grip give tactile gripping surfaces.



the Sig Sauer Whiskey 3 scope and would make a great general walk around hunting rifle. I found myself easily able to carry the rifle single-handed for swift presentation to the ready position. Apart from 6.5 Creedmoor the Sauer S100 Ceratech is available in a selection of calibres including all the popular options such as .223, .243, .270, 7mm08, .308, 30/06, a few magnums in 7mm Rem Mag and .300 Win Mag and even a few Euro exotics

such as 6.5x55, 8x57IS and 9.3x62, although I'm not sure OSA will stock many of those in Oz.

One of the biggest surprises of the Sauer S100 Ceratech is the price, a quick search online finding them for around the \$1100 mark, remarkable value for a German-made quality shooter but, based on the Aussie dollar pre-COVID 19, that may have changed by now. More at osaaustralia.com.au. ●



Specifications

Rifle: Sauer S100 Ceratech.

Action: Bolt-action with 60-degree bolt lift.

Trigger: Single stage, adjustable for weight.

Trigger pull: Adjustment 1000g-2000g (1200g as tested).

Calibre: 6.5CM (tested).223Rem, .243Win, .270Win, 7mm08Rem, .308Win, 30/06 SPRG, 6.5PRC, 6.5x55, 8x57IS, 9.3x62, 7mm RM, .300WM.

Capacity: Five-round detectable polymer box magazine (four Magnum calibres).

Barrel: 560mm std, 620mm Magnum.

Muzzle: Threaded M15x1 or M14x1

Sights: Compatible with all Remington 700 rails and bases.

Stock: Sauer Ergo Max synthetic with Ever Rest bedding system.



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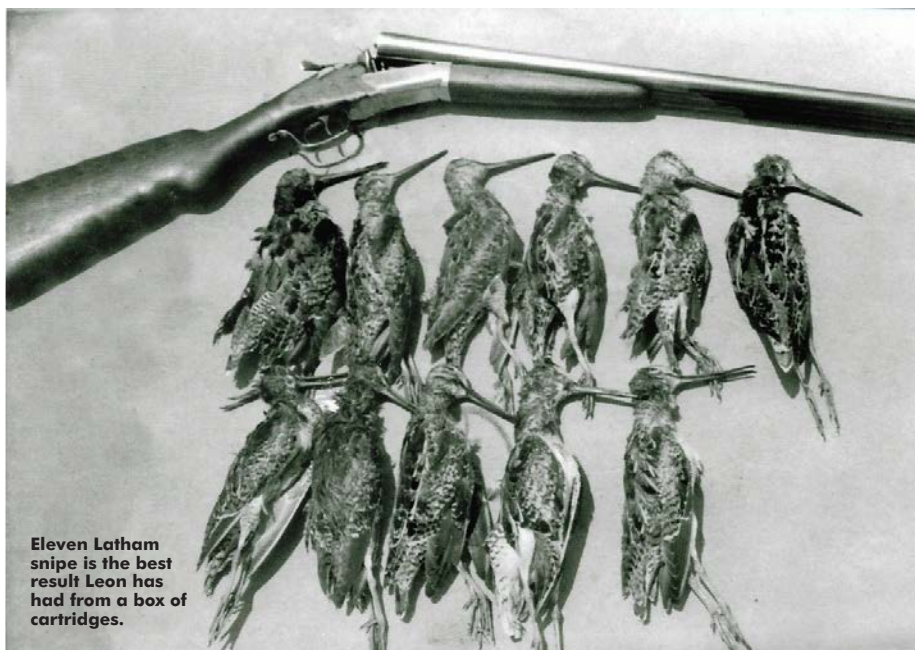
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Fond memories of Jack snipe

Leon Wright



Eleven Latham snipe is the best result Leon has had from a box of cartridges.



Leon with a bag of snipe.

We were way out in central New South Wales, just below Cobar, chasing pigs. The previous day we'd scored a few porkers and while spotlighting that night had seen a couple of sizeable boars which were quick to dash away when the rays hit them.

It was too far to take a shot so we let them run and I was now riding my four-wheeler up the bank of a nearby dam they'd been heading for when first spotted, hoping to spring them taking a dip. I was out of luck - plenty of wallows but no pigs.

Sitting there on the four-wheeler looking at the wallows, the penny finally dropped and I said: "My word, a Gallinago Hardwickii." Actually I whispered: "It's a snipe." Sure enough standing in the wallow, no further than a couple of metres away, stood a Latham snipe, better known as a Jack snipe to those who used to hunt them years ago. Of all the places to come across a snipe, in the middle of nowhere and in a drought at that. After reaching for the camera, for some reason, instead of taking a photo from where I was sitting, I attempted to dismount and flushed the snipe, ruining my chance of landing a snap.

In my opinion, and I suspect many others too, the snipe was the greatest little game bird to ever grace our shores. While familiar to our older shotgun hunters it's probably largely unknown to the younger generation.

Description

Every year around late September-early October, snipe leave Japan and I suspect other Asian countries and on the full moon make the arduous journey to Australia to spread throughout the country, settling anywhere they can find a swamp to their liking.

Snipe have similar coloured feathers to a quail but are about 1½ times their size with long legs, which makes them geared for wading around muddy swamps. They have a wingspan of between 30 and 40cm and a long soft bill used for probing the soft mud for food.

Hunting

Often referred to as Jack snipe, they were hard to hunt. When first flushed and alarmed they tended to fly erratically in a zig-zag pattern, emitting a loud 'keek, keek' call. This fitful breakaway usually lasted for

the first 30m or so before levelling out into a more conventional path. When they first took off they were difficult to bag as their uneven trajectory could be tricky to cover when you shouldered your shotgun.

Added to the fact they're a highly alert bird and would often veer up a good 30m in front of the hunter, they were quite a challenge and in the early days in military units hunters ended up in sniper units, hence the term 'sniper'. Duck hunters sometimes put them up as they share similar swamps as ducks but few of our younger hunters would even know what they are, which is a shame as they'd have to be one of the greatest game birds around.

To hunt snipe all you needed was to find a swamp with muddy areas and you'd have a good chance of flushing the birds. For example, I live beside the Murray River which borders New South Wales, Victoria and flows through South Australia before reaching the sea. Along the entire length of the river there are swamps and billabongs which snipe favour.

Over the years we tried different ways of hunting in the quest for greater success. My German shorthaired pointer, for some



Any swamp surrounded by soft muddy areas was keenly sought by snipe on arrival from Japan.

reason, wasn't that keen on dealing with snipe and would only put in a mediocre effort yet readily retrieve any that fell to the gun. Pointers were favoured for snipe hunting but, in reality, any dog which worked on quail was suitable, I think more to do with the fact that whatever dog was used for duck hunting was taken along after snipe. I know it was in my case.

Snipe were fit for driving, with one hunter at the far end of a swamp, another with the aid of the dog working their way through the swamp flushing the birds as they went. Any snipe missed would fly towards the waiting hunter but by the time they'd covered the distance they had levelled out but were fairly high up, making them a difficult shot to pull off.

Guns and ammo

More times than not the shotgun used for duck hunting was pressed into service on snipe as it was for quail. The same problems experienced by quail hunters also plagued snipe seekers - which chokes were best and what size shot was used so as not to knock the birds about too much, most doubles being bored half choke and full



German shorthaired pointer Duke wasn't keen to point snipe but readily retrieved those that fell.

choke and giving a fairly good account of themselves.

I always hunted snipe with my Lefever side-by-side which I inherited from my grandfather and no doubt he used it on

snipe too. In those early years I was heavily into reloading and experimented with a number of combinations, my Lefever bored half and full choke, but another Lefever had been done up by the previous owner

Fond memories of Jack snipe

and was choked improved cylinder (quarter choke) and modified (half).

One load I remember using fairly often was 32g of No.7 shot pushed along by 23gr of Noble 60 shotgun powder. It was only passable for close-in rising birds, more suitable for bringing down those high-flying ones, especially out of the full choke barrel. If I had no reloads handy I favoured cardboard cartridges such as the Grand Prix in shot size from 8s to 10s if I could find them. The Grand Prix were good for snipe as well as quail.

I was prepared to let the snipe go to around 30m before firing, which usually had them on a straight course and my Lefever could take them as long as I did my bit. I knew some hunters who liked taking rising birds and also trying to take them as they were zigging and zagging as they rose. To counteract their erratic flying these hunters preferred a more open choke for the first shot, using an improved cylinder with a good dense load of No. 10 shot, followed up by a load of No. 8 shot in a half choke barrel.

A side-by-side 12-gauge, loaded in similar fashion, was in my opinion the best combination for snipe shooting. While not having the single plane sighting like the over-and-under, that instant choice of choke given for taking any snipe flushed within range certainly tipped the scales in favour of the side-by-side with the self-loader (legal in those days) being the choice if that was all you had for bird shooting.

Cartridges by Winchester Super X and Icil Specials were great for snipe shooting but fell into the realm of hunters who were better off financially – I'd have been keen to use them had I not been raising a family.

Leon's favourite combination, his grandfather's Lefever side-by-side and Grand Prix cartridges in size No.8 or No.10.



Season closure

Sad to say the days of snipe hunts were drawing to a close, as concerns for the dwindling number of Latham snipe were being voiced. During 1970 the Bird Observers Club of Victoria, the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union and various state authorities expressed the need to ascertain the status of the Latham snipe and, as a result, the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement was drawn up and ratified by Japan the same year.

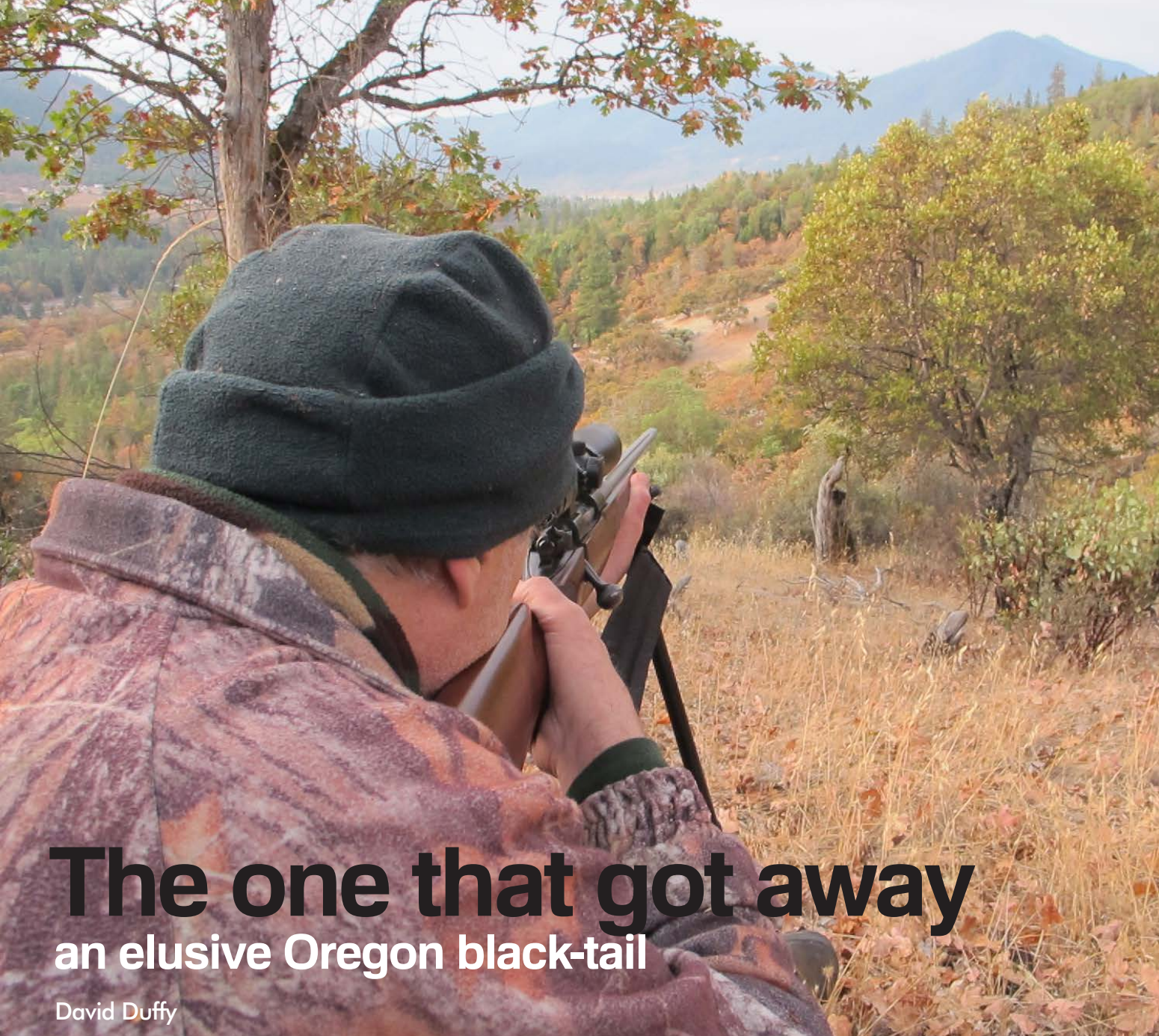
The agreement was ratified in Australia in 1981 and in 1984 snipe were taken off the game list, one of the main reasons for

closing the season being Australian hunters were supposedly bagging too many, even after the campaign had been reduced from 11 months to five with a bag limit of 15.

Bird counts in the Japanese areas of Tokachi and Hushino estimated the snipe population at around 37,000 and, with Australian hunters taking around 10,000 birds a year, it was decided to end snipe hunting in Australia in 1984 and they were given complete protection. Whether Aussie hunters were the cause of the total cessation remains debatable but I doubt we'll ever have the chance to hunt this great little game bird again. ●



Two Lefevers used for snipe hunting, the top bored modified and full choke, the bottom bored improved cylinder and modified choke.



The one that got away

an elusive Oregon black-tail

David Duffy

Sitting in the lofty hills of Oregon with a good set of high-magnification binoculars mounted on a tripod we could see bears, elks and black-tailed deer in the distance. It was the closing fortnight of the rifle deer season and I was hunting on public land for six days having purchased a deer tag and my Oregon hunting licence.

The Columbian black-tailed deer range extends from northern California along the US west coast through Oregon to British Columbia, the Columbian white-tail being found near the Columbia River in northern Oregon and Washington. Further north, extending from British Columbia into Alaska, is the range of the smaller Sitka black-tail and on the eastern side of the

Cascade Mountain Range lies the domain of the mule deer.

A controversial theory claims white-tailed deer evolved into black-tailed deer and later crossed with white-tailed deer again to produce the bigger mule deer, some hunters arguing that of the three, black-tailed deer are the hardest to hunt. If they are, the Coues white-tail would be a very close second.

I had to check the zero on my rifle after the flight so went to the local range and used an existing target at 120 paces. The .240 Page Super Pooper, which is a blown out 6mm Remington, had the correct elevation of around 2" but needed one click to the left.

The next morning we drove into the hills

to glass for deer. Mike, an avid black-tail hunter, was using Swarovski 15x56 binoculars on a tripod and I had my Leica 12x50s on a monopod which, although much better than holding them in my hands, wasn't as stable as the tripod. Even so, I didn't fancy lugging a tripod around for six days.

The bucks were chasing does as the rut had started, but not as much as usual for this time of year as temperatures were abnormally high. Mike spotted a big buck around 3km away - he unscrewed the binoculars and replaced them with the spotting scope. Now Mike, who has some impressive black-tail heads on his wall, was extremely enthusiastic about this one.

Black-tailed deer are only active until about 9am then again from about 6pm as

The one that got away - an elusive Oregon black-tail

during the day they bed in thick brush. As you're usually so far away from bucks when you spot them, you can't stalk them when you see them as you run out of time. Instead you watch them, often for several days and learn what does they follow, what direction they come from and what path they follow to bed down. A good buck could be seen one day and not reappear until several days later but after you've learnt the habits of a particular buck and the does around him, you work out a way to stalk into a position you can shoot from. Knowing where does may be in thick brush is vital as, if they become spooked when you try to stalk in, the buck will be alerted and you probably won't see him again.

We spent the morning glassing a small open patch surrounded by thick brush, the big buck having only shown himself for a brief period before retreating back to the brush - they don't grow big by making mistakes such as staying in the open for long spells during daylight - so it was decided to return in the evening and try to spot him. There was a smoke haze that afternoon and combined with the setting sun facing us, visibility was down. We only saw does.

At sunrise we were glassing the same small clearing but the big buck didn't show. In the evening we went to another location and across the canyon saw a large black bear. There was one doe a long way off but we couldn't find any other deer.

On day three we were back glassing for the big buck without success so around midday it was decided to head for the Cascade Mountain Range for some varmint hunting with the .22LR. There were lots of fallen trees and stumps from a pine forest which had been harvested and we were after California ground squirrels which have a longer tail than the Belding's ground squirrel that inhabit the alfalfa fields in high numbers.

I'd shot a few squirrels around a small dam when I looked at a clump of grass with branches around it. Sitting looking straight at me was a bobcat but as soon as he realised I'd spotted him he was off. He'd come to the dam chasing a meal of ground squirrels and maybe was smart enough to know multiple gunshots equates to an easy helping.

We drove back in the afternoon and at around 6.15pm glassed what we thought was the big buck again but weren't sure

as his antlers didn't seem as black in the afternoon light. It was decided to stalk in there before sunrise next day and try to find a ridge which hopefully would give us a clear shot to the small clearing if he showed himself.

Using headlamps we made our way on game trails as much as possible through the thick brush, trying not to make too much noise but with the leaves on the ground so dry it was impossible to proceed in silence. Hopefully the deer wouldn't be too close and the wind was in our favour though we were surrounded by poison oak.

We made it to the ridge without displacing too many deer and waited until sunrise with rifles resting on shooting sticks, an oak tree in the centre of the clearing ranged at 255yds. Although we waited silently only does appeared at first. A medium-size buck eventually chased some of them but still the big one didn't show so we decided to head back out before our scent contaminated the area. In the evening we checked out a spot where deer migrate down from the mountain and spotted two elks, a bear and a doe with fawn. Dawn saw us glassing for the big buck again as sunlight peeked over the hills



David Duffy aims a .338 Lapua Improved with 300gr projectiles at a metal plate at 647yds.



Using high-magnification binoculars to glass for black-tailed deer on the opposite hill.

The one that got away - an elusive Oregon black-tail

and there were some does in the clearing then a few bucks. Late in the afternoon we stalked towards the clearing again and, reaching the first ridge with another to go, I still had my scope cover on so debris from the brush wouldn't hit the lenses. Some does were spotted just 30 paces away but as they ran off the target buck appeared! I whipped the scope cover off and loaded a round into the chamber of the Winchester Model 70. A large bush was between me and him so I ran to the side and saw his rear end disappear into thick brush. Now all the deer were spooked. After about 20 minutes some of the does came back but the big buck didn't. Then it went dark.

On my last day we allowed an extra 15 minutes in morning darkness so we could walk as slowly and quietly as possible into position. I was using the dull red LED on my headlamp so the animals would be less disturbed and as we moved into position ready to shoot, a few does were already in the clearing as daylight broke.

After an hour a buck appeared, then another but still the big one was a no-show. The two bucks started to fight and from about 225yds I decided to shoot the larger

one which weighed roughly 60kg and was angling slightly away. This allowed me to aim behind the shoulder in line with the vitals and avoid the heavy shoulder bone with the light 90gr projectile.

I squeezed the trigger and although the Swift Scirocco left the muzzle at around

3350fps, the battling bucks had moved and the larger one spun 90 degrees towards me before the bullet struck, entering his front brisket and exiting the far shoulder. Now I had a Columbian black-tailed deer but not the one I wanted. The big guy had been too smart for me. ●



David Duffy walks back through the forest after shooting a black-tail.



David Duffy shot this black-tailed buck at 225yds on the final day using his Winchester Model 70 .240 Page Super Pooper.

England adventure with the Remington AWR

Mark van den Boogaart



On our regular trips to England I'm often called a name or two - 'bloody Aussie' being pretty much top of the list though I'm also sometimes referred to as a shooting journalist, which takes me a little by surprise. Another is 'travelling gun', a tag I could easily become used to though it's a little misleading as I rarely travel with a gun and have, over time, become comfortable using whichever firearm is presented to me.

So as a travelling gun I had the chance to test the new Remington AWR in .270 Win. The AWR - American Wilderness Rifle - is classed as an all-weather hunting rifle and makes use of a synthetic stock and Cerakoted barrelled action. Advertising for the AWR is that of an inherently accurate

rifle made to handle all kinds of climate, which for many Australian hunters is pretty much their standard operating environment.

As you might expect, the AWR is built around the famous Model 700 action. Love them or hate them, and there are plenty of both, the 700 is a stayer and along with the Model 92 Winchester is one of the most prolific sporting rifles in the world. As supplied, the test rifle was topped with a new German Precision Optics (GPO) scope, specifically an Evolve 6X 2.5-15x56i.

While this review is primarily concerned with the Remington, I was impressed by the GPO which over a few days of use proved highly capable - and it's reasonably priced. In fact, I bought myself a set of 8x32mm GPO binoculars in England and back here in Oz both scope and binoculars produce

great lowlight performance so I'm eagerly awaiting their release of a spotting scope.

As I was hunting in England the AWR was also fitted with a suppressor, something you don't often see and which does change the dynamics of the rifle. However, the extra weight is countered by another piece of English deer hunting equipment - shooting sticks. In England you shoot off sticks and, to be honest, I'm unsure if it's a hindrance or a benefit. During my time there I gave a lot of thought to hunting with shooting sticks and bought myself a set to try back home but at present the jury's still out.

As to the detail of the rifle, the AWR stock is a little out of the ordinary, synthetic though not plastic it's actually a Grayboe fibreglass composite stock, meaning



essentially you have a high-quality after-market stock as a standard feature. As presented the stock is an ambidextrous sporter design with straight cheekpiece, standard palmswell and fore-end. It's certainly no lightweight though feels rigid and solid, displaying earthy brown tones with the coating textured to provide a non-slip finish. The stock also uses aluminium pillars and has a length of pull of 13.5" (standing 6' 2" I found this a good length and comfortable to shoulder).

Like the stock, the AWR makes use of a well-proportioned sporter-style barrel made from 416 grade stainless steel and measuring 24" for the .270 Win. The barrel design includes Remington's 5R or five rifling grooves technology. As stated, the 5R is designed to promote accuracy and

reduce fouling, the idea being AWR can retain accuracy for longer even in less than ideal conditions, which lends itself well to the wilderness pedigree of the rifle.

Sitting behind that barrel is the Remington model 700 action. With its three rings of steel the Remington 700 is regarded as the most popular bolt-action in the world and is used extensively across civilian and military applications. It's also an action that seems to generate a lot of argument about its merits or otherwise among shooters and hunters, though I used the rifle on several occasions and found it a quality action, positive in loading and cycling with clean ejection.

Feeding the action, the AWR uses a hinged floorplate magazine system. To be honest I prefer a removable box magazine

though found the system in the AWR to be reliable and easy to use. As I like to hunt with an empty chamber I was able to work out a way to do so without too much fuss, as to clear the internal magazine all you do is release the floorplate via the button in front of the triggerguard. The X-Mark Pro trigger on the test rifle was set a little lighter than standard and I'd have liked more weight, though it did break cleanly and there was no feeling of creep.

Bringing it all together, the metalwork of the AWR is finished in black Cerakote, something I've become a big fan of recently (I have two such coated rifles). The finish of the AWR is top quality and the muted black tones add to its all-weather claim as well as complementing the stock, giving the rifle a purposeful look.

England adventure with the Remington AWR

Rather than testing off the bench, for this review it was literally off the bonnet of the best Land Rover 90 Series I've ever ridden in. For those interested, it was highly modified, finished in British racing green and super-cool. Our targets were a series of swinging steel gongs and a couple of silhouettes including a roe deer and fox set out in a row at about 100m. With some practice off the bonnet, 1" groups with quality factory ammunition were no problem for the AWR and I believe this could have been improved on with more preparation and experimentation with ammunition.

But the AWR is a hunting rifle and that's what I was primarily interested in exploring. Our target was deer, specifically muntjac, a small forest-dwelling species and our first hunt had me carrying the AWR across forest floor, down muddy lanes and across equally muddy fields. While it's an easy rifle to carry I didn't take a shot, so our test was inconclusive.

All that changed on our next outing where again we spent a short winter's day in search of game. This time the muntjac were about and I managed two - both drop-dead shots with the AWR - and while one was off the sticks the other was from an incredibly awkward position and I was pleased to hit my target with such precision. In

both instances the AWR performed flawlessly and delivered accurate shots on the intended target, even when it was a little tricky.

In considering the AWR, it held up its side of the deal and proved a handy rifle designed and purpose-built for less than ideal conditions. It's also a nicely fitted out rifle from the outset, with a number of features as standard which many shooters and hunters usually add to their chosen rifle as aftermarket upgrades. Where it all matters, the AWR is a comfortable rifle to carry and

shoulder, the action smooth to operate, precise in its movement with reliability in firing and reloading. Most importantly I found the ruggedness of design and its build quality instilled a level of confidence which translated well from the bench to the field.

The Remington AWR is distributed by Raytrade Australia and has a recommended retail price of \$2250. The German Precision Optics Evolve 6X 2.5-15x56i scope is also distributed by Raytrade and has a recommended retail price of \$2415. ●



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Rangeguide binos light up the dark

Chris Redlich



Bright range-finding display and round reticle makes target acquisition easy.

Relatively new to an already competitive sector are German Precision Optics (GPO), a brand catering to the high-end European market with a large array of riflescopes and binoculars. I had the chance to try a pair of their Rangeguide 2800 10x50 rangefinder binos with much anticipation, and as an avid deer hunter I take a keen interest in good quality optics as it's important you equip yourself with the best available for that all-important edge on locating and assessing game.

Out of the box

The binoculars came packaged with two styles of neck support including a neoprene strap for open carriage and separate straps for the supplied hard-protective carry case, neither of which I'd use as I opted for a shoulder harness arrangement instead. Additionally, there are lens covers,

a cleaning cloth and the crucial user's manual. As far as features go, the GPO Rangeguide 10x50 RFs are a relatively easy-to-use design with minimal electronic extras to add confusion.

The weight of 1kg is a noticeable heft but not unusual considering they have a 50mm lens and are packed with rangefinding electronics. The closed bridge hinge design housing the electronics felt bulky to hold but ergonomically sound, the slight thumb indents on the underside adding a subtle extra to the grip. The magnesium lens barrels have a soft black silicone rubber coating, promoting positive hold in slippery conditions and, as per standard, the barrels are hinged to adjust for correct interpupillary distance.

Dual dioptre compensator dial adjustments found forward of the ocular lenses ensure easy tweaking to suit the

individual's eyes, with the right dioptre dial rotated to focus the electronic display and reticle. Two adjustment twists from the eyecups enable correct eye relief fine-tuning and the test pair felt visually comfortable, set on the first twist.

The centre focus wheel has distinct raised grips and is easily rotated for clear view amendment. Located just forward of the focus wheel and to the right of the bridge hinge are the range and mode buttons, comfortably within reach of my trigger finger. The front of the bridge hinge houses a single CR2 battery and is sealed with a water-resistant screw cap, battery life giving roughly 4000 range readings and a warning when it reaches 20 per cent capacity.

A set of binoculars wouldn't be complete without its pair of glasses and the 50mm objective lenses are coated in what German

Rangeguide binos light up the dark

Precision Optics calls GPObright high-transmission lens coating. The 50mm lenses and 10x magnification give a 5mm exit pupil and handy 110m field of view at 1000m.

Electronic features

The four basic settings include:

- Organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display brightness with nine adjustment levels.
- Distance unit readings in metres or yards.
- Temperature unit reading feature in centigrade or fahrenheit.
- Best and last range readings.

In addition, the Rangeguide 2800 also offers four display modes:

- Line of sight (LOS) only (direct distance measurement).
- LOS Angle with actual degrees in smaller characters below the direct distance measurement.
- LOS HR - horizontal distance measurement displayed in smaller characters below direct measurement.
- Temperature reading below direct distance measurement.

A feature I like in modern range-finding binos is the ability to update distances while scanning the binoculars and the GPO Rangeguide 2800 has a fast-scan feature which, according to the user manual, updates ranges at a speed of four per second. On releasing your finger from the range button, the last reading will remain displayed for 15 seconds before switching off.

Purged with nitrogen to prevent fogging in the event of rapid temperature change, the Rangeguide 2800s are built to withstand 500 mbar of water pressure and have a laser strong enough to help calculate a claimed scan of 2800m (3000-plus yards) and I was eager to test their capability.

Field testing

Relentless summer heat is cruel to us and most of our equipment and my first outing just after Christmas on a wild dog hunt yielded precious few feral canines but plenty of opportunity to field test the Rangeguide 2800s.

Quite noticeably, the 40C-plus heat had an effect on the silicone rubber armour coating and in full sun it became quite soft, almost sticky yet very 'grippy'. A depression mark from the gauze when stored in the hard protective cover blemished the top surface but almost disappeared once the rubber began to cool. I tucked them



Binoculars and included accessories.

snug to my chest in a harness arrangement but they were a little tight to remove from the pouch due to the soft armour and marginally larger 50mm lenses which add to their size.

The extended range capability of these binoculars compared with other brands was evident in the field and I was able to take readings at distances much further than any other rangefinder before, without the aid of a tripod or rest. The circular reticle was quick to acquire targets and in scan mode I kept my finger on the range button and swept back and forth across the landscape, scan mode working well with updated distances in the display bouncing back constantly in quick time from long and short-range objects. But I wasn't able to secure the claimed extent of 2800m no matter how much I tried and suspect these assertions can be achieved under controlled environments, but in the field it wasn't realistic.

A pair of binoculars isn't complete without a good view and sadly I was a little disappointed in the image quality, a noticeable deficiency in focal depth (depth of field) evident and making for constant focus adjustments. I did my best to clear up my chosen images at what I'd call realistic hunting distances in the vicinity of 100 to 500m, and at various times I had to check the lenses for dust - but they were spotless.

A slight but distinct distortion was also noticeable around the image peripherals and couldn't be cleared. Frustratingly I believed that perhaps the hot summer glare and miraging might be to blame as I hadn't experienced this before with high-end binoculars and felt neither should I have to. So before I had my eyes checked I compared the Rangeguide 2800s with my old binoculars and confirmed it wasn't my

eyes playing tricks. I accepted the image and moved on. Once the searing sun began to disappear in the west and light started to fade along the timbered creekline, whatever coatings the engineers developed for lowlight worked well. In almost dark conditions the Rangeguide 2800 lenses provided clear images with the last available light.

Conclusion

On first impression I must admit the GPO Rangeguide 2800 binoculars didn't live up to my expectations. You can't always be taken in by fancy advertising and I expected more from a European company marketing high-end binoculars. The rubber coating's reaction to hot conditions concerned me a little but for those living and hunting in cooler climates it wouldn't be an issue and would actually be an advantage in wet, slippery conditions.

Additionally, I believe the rubber armour coating would help protect the binos against a hard impact in the event of a fall in rough terrain. Strangely, in normal light conditions the Rangeguide 2800s were not as good optically as other high-end binoculars I've used and the peripheral distortion was annoying. That said, the ranging capability is one of the best I've tested and the 50mm lenses provided me with excellent lowlight images well after sunset, scan mode impressive, reliable and fast.

These binoculars are not cheap at \$2595 and, as always, I recommend testing wherever possible in varying conditions before you buy any costly piece of equipment - you might reach a different conclusion to myself. Sold and distributed by Raytrade Australia, GPO Rangeguide 2800s are covered by German Precision Optics' lifetime warranty and additional information can be found on their website. ●



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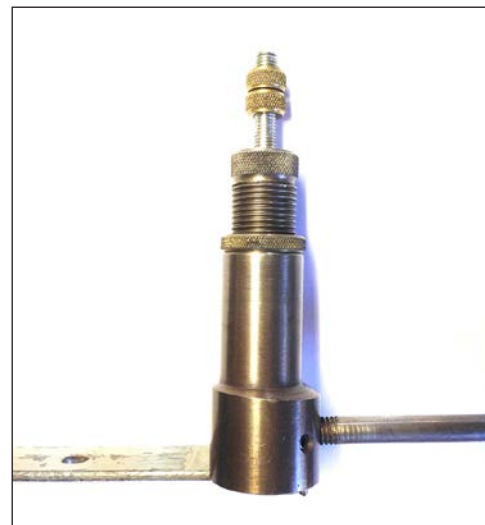
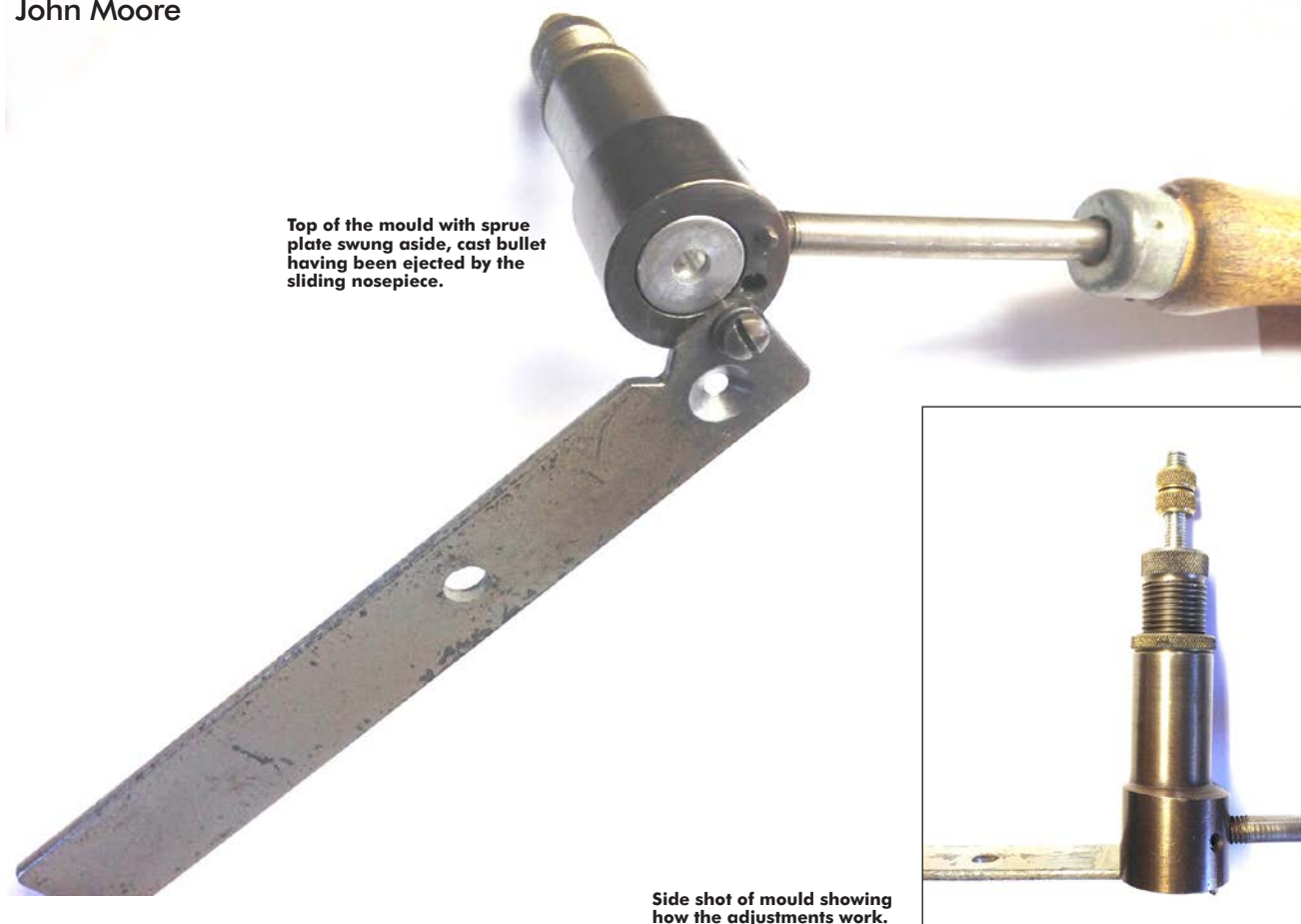
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Cylindrical, adjustable DIY bullet mould

John Moore



In this magazine's August 2019 edition, Geoff Smith in his article 'The Hi-Tek Way' introduced us to Joe Ban's revolutionary invention that's apparently now being used by commercial hard cast bullet makers around the world. You simply cast your bullets, glaze them with Joe's Hi-Tek veneer and shoot them - with the Hi-Tek covering acting as a jacket.

For a while now I've been making old-fashioned paper-jacketed bullets. These were employed extensively before the metal-jacketed bullets we use today were invented. The paper-jacketed bullets I create work particularly well, especially

in larger calibre handguns and rifles but preparing a quantity for one of our revolvers to set off and shoot metallic silhouette is tedious. So for decades, for my 357 I've been using Lyman's mould No. 358156, a 158-grain SWC GC bullet, my standard load being six grains of Nobel 64 shotgun powder I have on hand to give, I expect, around 1050fps.

Paper-patch bullets are straight-sided and don't need grease grooves so years ago I made a simple mould from a photograph of the old Ideal Cylindrical Adjustable Mould. With this, which is a plain cylinder, there's an adjustment to vary the bullet

weight and a sliding nosepiece which not only forms the bullet's nose but can be slid up and down, enabling the cast projectiles to be ejected.

However, because the alloy shrinks when it cools, these bullets tend to fall straight out of the mould once the sprue is cut and the plate swung out of the way, meaning casting a quantity can be done quickly. I cast bullets for patching to shrink on cooling to bore diameter or just above and because I load for a number of calibres, I make the mould with a removable insert so I could use different additions to cast the various diameter bullets I want.

Cylindrical, adjustable DIY bullet mould

On reading Geoff's article I thought 'why don't I make an insert a bit larger so the cooled bullet is the groove diameter minus what's needed for a couple of coats of Hi-Tek?' The Hi-Tek coating could be like a metal jacket on a straight-sided bullet. I now take two loads for the 357 with me to the MS range - the 158-grain for closer targets out to and including the turkeys and a 200-grain load for the rams at the back.

I made an insert and cast some bullets weighing 154 grains, coated them, loaded them over my standard six-grain load and went to the range. These shot well, into just over an inch at 25yds and after firing a number of groups there was no noticeable leading (I'm guessing the velocity is well in excess of 1000fps).

I also shoot a 44 RM and have done lots of testing with paper-patched and cast bullets with mixed success. I don't like heavy recoil so have rather left it in the safe of late but given the apparent success with the 357, I made an insert and cast some bullets at 225 and 255 grains, coated them with Hi-Tek, sized them and back to the range. I shot six groups of five, three of the 225 grains and three of the 255, each with a different loading. At 25yds one shot into 1.4", the rest around 1" with velocities probably just more than 900fps. There was a trace of lead on the leading edges of the rifling just ahead of the cylinder where the pressure is taken when the bullet is made to turn in the rifling, but this didn't seem to affect accuracy as the last three groups were the best. I'm chuffed as all loads were pleasant to shoot, so it looks like the 44 is back in action.

As an aside, some of the heavier bullet loads grouped a little higher at the 25yd range, I expect caused by the slightly longer time these bullets travelling at lower velocity were in the barrel as the revolver recoiled upwards. As we know, these heavy bullets lose little velocity over range, it's just that they have a rainbow trajectory, so maybe they'll be on target for the rams as well as having plenty of energy to topple them - if I can do my bit.

All bullets were cast from wheel weights, groups shot off sandbags with Leupold DeltaPoint red dot sights, the revolvers used being field grade Freedom Arms, the 357, their Model 353, one-in-14 twist and the 44, their Model 83, one-in-20 twist. All bullets were coated twice with Hi-Tek then sized to precisely groove diameter, my thinking being that with the thin coating it will be important not to shoot oversize bullets or leading may occur.



Plain base 154-grain coated bullet that shot well at 25yds.

I sized the bullets in a swaging press I made so I obtained perfect bases and removed any air bubbles or wrinkles in the castings. I prefer swaged bullets but that's a discussion for another day. In future I'll go with full boxes of each of the 357s and 44s to prove to myself they work as well as they look.

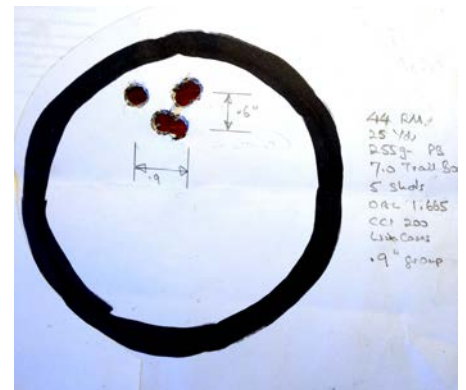
If you have a small lathe and drill press or a friend nearby who has, you could have a go at making one of these cylindrical adjustable moulds. I made mine from pieces of scrap from boxes in my workshop, the body is mild steel (some free cutting if you have a bit) so is the adjustable nosepiece holder but I used aluminium for the replaceable inserts as it's quick to machine.

For the sliding nosepieces I used mild steel as I sometimes want only a slight step on the bullet where the nose joins the body, but I have used aluminium for this too. You can either turn the sliding nosepiece in the lathe or, especially if you want a curved nose shape, you'll need a piece of silver steel and be able to harden and temper it to make the 'D' bit to cut your favourite nose shape. All model engineers can make and harden these easily using a propane torch. I make 'D' bits so I can cut the same nose shape in the sliding nose piece for the cylindrical mould and for the nose punch for the swaging press.

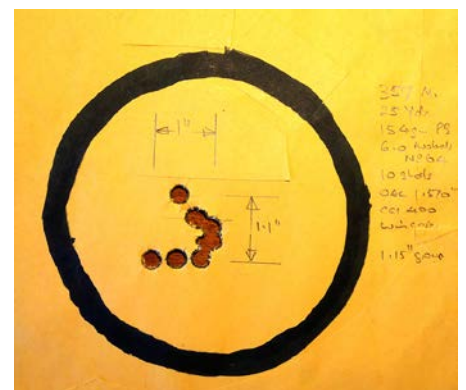
My research isn't complete but I'm convinced I can make straight-sided Hi-Tek coated bullets that work well and if so I'll be able to make and coat my target bullets efficiently, which is what I'm after. My testing has only just began but using Hi-Tek to coat these types of bullets does look promising. All materials used, apart from the piece of silver steel, came from scrap boxes under my workshop bench. ●



The two 44-calibre Hi-Tek coated bullets - 225 and 255 grains.



The 44 RM test target.



The 357 M test target.

BOOK REVIEW

The road to gun control in Australia **UNDER FIRE** by Nick Brodie

Senior Correspondent Rod Pascoe

My copy of *Under Fire* arrived a week after seeing its author interviewed on breakfast television. Nick Brodie described his book as a historical record so I was both intrigued and impressed by anyone looking to take on such a job, appreciating the huge effort required to research and write a history spanning 250 years based on a single topic: Firearms in Australia. He had my attention.

While listening to Brodie's interview I was a touch suspicious, as any law-abiding and somewhat paranoid licensed shooter would be, especially when part of the book's title includes: 'How Australia's Violent History Led to Gun Control', as if guns were somehow responsible for the violence. Nevertheless, I was keen to read this book.

As a historical record *Under Fire* is detailed and complete. In Brodie's own words: "... this has effectively been a research project drawn from the primary evidence". It certainly exposed a huge gap in my knowledge and I was a little surprised and somewhat disappointed I was only learning about this stuff now.

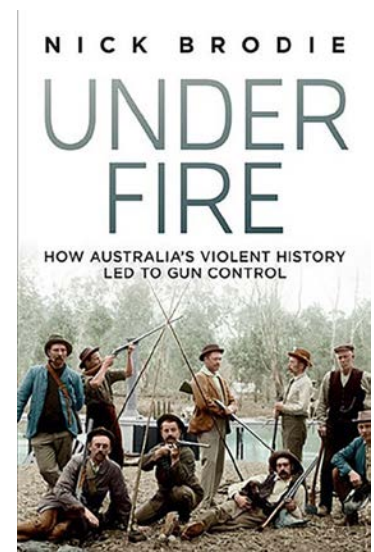
Under Fire taught me about early Australian history and how firearms were such a fundamental part in the establishment of the colony and how early efforts to regulate their use was such an on again, off again affair. It also highlighted how there

was little or no consistency in law-making between states or even between regions and council or towns within those states. Paraphrased from the book: 'Firearms are on no account to be discharged by any inhabitant of the towns of Sydney or Parramatta between sunset and sunrise on pain of being punished'.

Brodie also makes the point on a number of occasions that efforts to bring firearms under control was the result of political knee-jerk reactions to unfortunate shooting incidents. In fact, when reading an account of discussions to introduce gun licensing in 1870, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were reading about the events of 1996.

Under Fire is definitely a historical reference and 746 endnotes support historical accuracy, even though there are many references to newspaper reports of unknown bias. The book also parallels events in New Zealand, the US and UK over the same period and their influences on Australian lawmakers.

Brodie makes a valiant attempt to remain neutral throughout, although occasionally his language gives him away. This *perceived* bias is further reinforced when in the Acknowledgements section at the end of the book he credits Simon Chapman for 'influencing my thinking'. Chapman is an anti-firearms activist. As far as Brodie's agenda is concerned, he occasionally lets slip with a bit



of emotional story telling, if not in his own word, in the words of emotive newspaper reports of the time. I often found myself asking: 'What point is Brodie trying to make here or what position, if any, is he taking?' But I didn't let that get in the way of an otherwise enlightening read. Nick Brodie's *Under Fire* is a book you should read especially if you're after a concise history of firearms and their use in Australia.

Under Fire by Nick Brodie, Hardy Grant Books, 2020. ●

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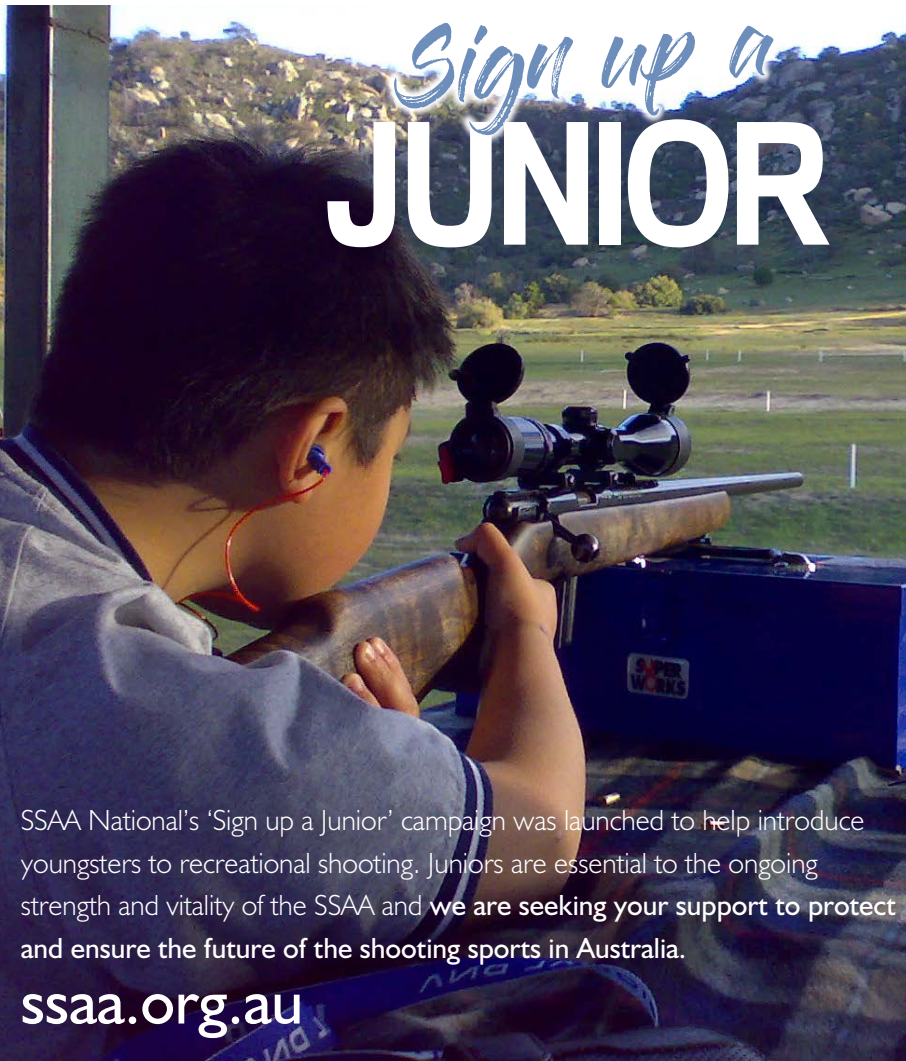
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All that remains . . .

Every decision we make in life produces its own set of consequences - some foreseeable, others unexpected. Either way, changes rarely occur in isolation and what we're left with when the dust finally settles can be a little surprising. Take moving house for example. It's a stressful process for all sorts of reasons and you'd have to have rocks in your head to think that life will go on as normal after the fact, just in a different location. It doesn't work like that.

For the past 20 years I've held a Firearms Dealer's Licence, a definite advantage when you're in the business of writing about guns. Shifting camp meant building new storage facilities and that made me pause for thought - vaults, electronic security and police-approved premises don't come cheaply. Coupled with that was an end-of-year licence expiry date and my growing uncertainty about wanting to renew the licence anyway, so perhaps it was time to pull the pin and do away with everything except the few firearms I needed. I chewed it over for a week or so but in the end it was a no-brainer.

There were a few I knew I'd have trouble parting with so I put them to one side. Some I sold outright, others went to another dealer on commission and my collectable single-shots were all sent to auction. That left me with a mix of essentially unsaleable old stuff or stored firearms whose owners were never going to pay me for because of their generally poor condition and storage fees exceeding their value. These were surrendered at the local police station, not as hard to do as it sounds when your mind is set to clean-out mode.

When I went through those I'd set aside and thought rationally about what I was likely to need in future, there was only one I decided I couldn't part with - a No.1 Ruger in .375 H&H. Though I'd done a bit



Survivors: Two rifles from very different times in firearms history, both important for entirely different reasons.

of hunting with it in the Territory I'd never used it on sambar, an oversight I'd intended to address this year before COVID-19 reared its ugly head. With that outstanding and another buffalo hunt in the pipeline I applied for a PTA and transferred it to my personal licence.

The rest I took to Albury for disposal and I reckoned I had everything under control until I opened the last gun bag. In it was a .54 calibre Pedersoli Mortimer flintlock rifle that's been in my vault for a decade or more. I've always loved flintlocks, a possibly aberrant affection I've carried since I first built one back in the late 1960s.

Lying there on the counter, the Mortimer brought back a swag of good memories of afternoons spent on the range developing hunting loads. And my first flintlock deer, a young rusa stag I neck-shot for venison one morning on the Illawarra coast. Then there was a small sambar stag with velvet antlers which a landholder wanted gone as it wasn't welcome where it was living on the margins of a crop paddock. There were half a dozen

attempts to take a trophy red stag, none of which came to anything as I couldn't quite get my act together. And the last deer - several years ago now - a scrappy antlered fallow buck which succumbed to a round ball through the ribs when he wandered too close to a patch of scrub overlooking his rutting stand.

Nostalgia is a killer of otherwise good reasoning so without so much as a word I picked the Mortimer up and slipped it back into its bag, knowing at the last minute I was taking it home again. As I write there are still a few loose ends that need to be tied up and I'm still a few weeks away from surrendering my Dealer's Licence.

As a true believer in the notion that he who dies with the most toys wins, I never thought that would happen but it has and I'm mostly glad, knowing how fortunate I've been to be able to pursue my firearms interests as I have. Apart from the two rifles I kept, all that remains are the memories . . . and I reckon I can live with those. ●



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- Malicious damage.
- Collision or overturning of the vehicle.
- Fire & extraneous perils.
- Flood
- Theft.

NOT COVERED.

Theft where the equipment was not stored in an approved gun safe as required by State or Territory authority, other than when the equipment is in use or away from the Insured's premises. Where the Insured or any person or entity to whom the equipment has been entrusted to fails to comply with any law relating to either storage, use or handling of the equipment.

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