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Our June cover

Sam Talbot tries Combined Services

NEXT ISSUE



Daniel O'Dea went back to his youth when he got his hands on two new excellent and affordable air rifles from Stoeger - the RX5 and RX20 Sport.

Shotgun expert John McDougall takes to the field with the new Miroku MK70 28-gauge game gun which he says was "a treat to use".

A hunt in New Zealand's Southern Alps alerted Chris Redlich to the benefits of a quality spotting scope and he runs the numbers for us on the Swarovski ATS 65.

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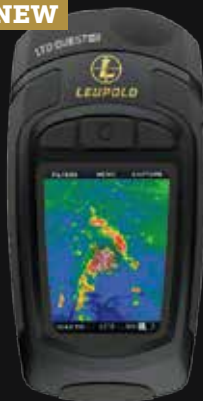


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SSAA National News

Spirits high at SSAA National AGM



The SSAA National Executive, from left, Kaye McIntyre, Denis Moroney, Geoff Jones, Alf Bastian and Lance Miller.

SSAA delegates from across Australia converged on Perth over the May 4-5 weekend to discuss and map out the future of our Association during the 57th National Annual General Meeting.

Spirits were high as SSAA National President Geoff Jones opened the meeting with discussion on our strength in numbers with membership heading towards 200,000. National CEO Tim Bannister also reported a positive previous 12 months. "Nothing happens by accident - it involves forward and strategic planning, professional conduct from both employees and the volunteer-led boards and branches," he said.

Key staff members also presented to the delegation, including Media and Publications Managing Editor Allan Blane who reported that more than 2.6 million copies of our publications had been printed over the past 12 months. National Life Member Tony Warner was also in attendance along with observer Gary Paterson.

The formal dinner on Saturday night featured a rousing speech by Ian Goodenough MP, Liberal Member for Moore and paid-up life member of the SSAA. Ian spoke of how he took up shooting at age 11 and went on to become a regular hunter and keen firearms collector. Despite being only two



MP Ian Goodenough addresses delegates at the dinner on Saturday night.

weeks out from the Federal election, Ian was more than happy to spend the evening talking with delegates.

After serving our Association diligently for many years, Paul McNabb stepped down from his role as Senior Vice-President, his departure meaning Lance Miller now fills that position with Denis Moroney continuing as Junior Vice-President. SSAA National President Geoff Jones, Secretary Kaye McIntyre and Treasurer Alf Bastian all retained their positions. The 2020 National AGM will be held in Victoria. ●

SSAA - Protecting shooters since 1948

6.5 Creedmoor worth its salt

IT WOULD BE unfair to ascribe the growing popularity of the 6.5 Creedmoor to marketing or its adoption by the US military to 'military decisions' as Steve Larkins did in his letter to the March edition of *Australian Shooter*.

Trials by US Special Operations Command which resulted in the selection of the 6.5 Creedmoor took place in 2017, when 23 different cartridges in 6.5mm Creedmoor and .260 Remington were tested on the US Army's 2000m Doppler radar-equipped range at Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground.

This was followed by a reliability test using two firearms currently in US service - the FN SCAR Heavy and KAC M110 - with two weapons of each type used, one in .260 Remington and the other in 6.5 Creedmoor. They found both weapons performed equally as well and were just as reliable in either calibre, with both cartridges being similarly accurate and reliable.

The conclusion was there was more room with the Creedmoor to further develop projectiles and loads, with that cartridge eventually getting the nod for US Special Forces' next generation self-loading sniper rifles.

I've been delighted to shoot my Tikka T3X TACA1 in the 6.5 Creedmoor calibre. Compared to my previous Steyr SSG-69 in

.308 it has less recoil and less drift and drop, especially at longer ranges. Our ACT branch of SSAA Combined Services successfully advocated with our national office last year to introduce the Creedmoor into the accredited list of calibres for state and national SSAA events, so more shooters can enjoy shooting this great calibre in competition.

Long may our sport flourish based on venerable older cartridges as well as innovative newer rounds such as the 6.5 Creedmoor.

Simon Troeth, ACT

Help worth waiting for

RECENTLY I WAS having difficulty applying for a permit to acquire an additional firearm using the online application process with Service NSW and the NSW Police Firearms Registry. After a couple of fruitless attempts I suspected a problem with the interaction between the two websites so I contacted the Service NSW helpline who passed me to the NSW Firearms Registry.

Eventually I spoke to a lady who couldn't have been more helpful, sensing my frustration (a 71-year-old who knows just enough about computers to get into trouble) and displaying enormous patience as she talked me through the process. Her level of customer service and professionalism was exceptional as it turned out I was using an

outdated internet browser which hampered interfacing of the two websites. I emailed NSW Firearms Registry expressing my gratitude and hope it was passed to that lady.

To all those out there who become frustrated waiting to talk to an operator at the Firearms Registry, myself included, remember there are probably only a small number of them to handle all queries. When you do get to talk to an operator be calm, polite and thank them for their help, even if you don't get your desired outcome. It will help all of us seeking assistance.

Peter Hickey, via email

In search of knife articles

I WAS HOPING you could help with some information. I recently discovered my late father wrote a few articles about knives that appeared in a hunting or shooting magazine back in the mid to late '70s or early '80s. His name was Geof Dunn and it seems he was thought of as a bit of an expert in the field of knives.

I'm eager to track down the articles but have next to nothing to go on except the subject matter and a very broad timeframe. If I knew what Australian magazines were around at the time I'd at least have a starting point and wondered if any of your readers can help.

Tim Dunn, via email



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q I'll soon be moving overseas for six months and plan on storing my firearms at my parents' house for the duration. Will they still be covered or how can I keep them covered?

Rob, via email

A Assuming you have SSAA Members Firearms Insurance your firearms will remain insured against accidental loss or damage whether they're in use or not as long as they stay in Australia - even if you aren't. While you're away they'll be covered regardless of where they're stored, as long as the storage is in accordance with that state or territory's rules and regulations. As long as the gun safe and other safe storage requirements are met, your firearms will remain covered.

It's also worth your parents contacting their home and contents insurer, just in case they have restrictions on their policy that may affect their cover. As you're

probably aware, we can arrange home and contents insurance too and would be more than happy to have a chat about your situation. Give us a call on 08 8332 0281 or visit our website at www.ssaaib.com.au



The advice offered in this column is of a general nature and does not allow for individual situations. SSAAIB recommends that you obtain professional advice before proceeding with any insurance investment. SSAAIB accepts no liability for any actions by an individual to change their insurance plans without seeking professional advice.

From more innocent times



THIS 16-PAGE BOOKLET published by ICI of Australia and New Zealand was owned by the late John Cook from New South Wales, a member of Cessnock Rifle Club. All the rules therein are still valid today although I'm glad the safe storage requirements have been upgraded since the 1960s.

Ray Dennis, via email

Proud to be an Aussie

WORKING IN AN industry where customer service is paramount, I'd like to share a recent experience with an optic warranty claim from Nioa of Queensland. My Bushnell Elite 10x42 binoculars malfunctioned on a hunt and I couldn't even recall where I bought them. I remembered an advert in *Australian Shooter* highlighting 'Bushnell lifetime warranty - no questions asked' and thought I'd ask Nioa if they could help.

From the outset the staff I dealt

with were superb. This was just before Christmas when many companies tend to fob you off until new year. Not Nioa. Within 24 hours I had all the necessary details to return the binoculars.

I then received an email on January 2 outlining the warranty claim. Rather than try to re-attach the focus dial, which had parted ways with the focus spindle, Nioa replaced the unit with a brand new pair of Elite 10x42s.

As well as the outstanding Bushnell warranty the customer service from Nioa was brilliant and made me proud to be an Australian.

Craig Kelly, via email

The RCBS bullet swage

I REFER TO the Top Shots question from Lee in your October 2018 edition answered by Rod Pascoe and thought you may find my experience of interest to Lee and other .228" projectile users. My friend Dr Larry Blackmon at Bullet Swaging Supply in the US recently reworked an old original RCBS 22 cal. Bullet Swage to .228" diameter.

I've just finished a run of 530 70gr soft point in .228". The RCBS bullet swage is definitely not a production type die but more suited to the hobby bullet maker. The die is two-piece separating at the junction of the parallel shank and ogive (nose) section for removal of the pointed bullet, all being very labour intensive and therefore

expensive. My thoughts may also be of interest to Allan Palk whose article on his .204 .22Hi-Power in February was most interesting. I always enjoy reading the Top Shots column. Keep up the good work.

Gary Little, via email

Quick fix for the Norinco

WITH REGARD TO Jim Nash's question in Top Shots (*Shooter*, April 2019) I have a near identical Norinco JW23 and had the same sighting-in problems. I tried several combinations of ammunition and scopes etc and was ready to junk the lot until a wise old head at Eagle Park said "why not try standard speed ammo".

The result? Six shots, six bulls. It relates to the rifling twist in the pipe. Now, 3/4" groups are no problem at 75m and bunny head shots at 100m are the norm. Remember, this one shoots much better with a clean barrel.

Bob Moore, via email

Happy to be of service

JUST A LINE to express my appreciation as a SSAA member of the content and arrangement of *Australian Shooter*. Recent editions have been excellent and worthwhile to keep as authoritative references on sports shooting. I look forward to future editions.

Graham Shaw, via email

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Dear oh deer - the spiky question of management

Deer management has again been in the spotlight with an ABC Rural report suggesting hunting had failed and new research into baiting and trapping methods was needed to stop what they termed a 'deer plague'. The report would surely cause many hunters to roll their eyes if they read through to the section headlined 'Hunting has failed'. That was a quote from a landholder who had teamed up with five neighbours all with properties adjacent to Kosciuszko National Park.

This group of landholders removed 5000 deer in 2018 with the assistance of a professional shooter, yet even with this astonishing number culled, the landholder suggested they didn't know whether it was enough to manage the population - they didn't know if they'd reduced it or still had a long way to go.

The landholder was of the opinion that "deer are really smart and learn really fast - hunting had failed to control the population and that's been demonstrated over a long period of time". This quote was used to form the headline of the report to suggest hunting had failed as a management option.

We need to critique this statement to understand why many within the hunting community would not be overly excited at such a declaration. Firstly, if the landholder is talking about his efforts to reduce deer as a 'failure' then it's not 'hunting' at all (re-

creational hunting). He'd be better served calling it culling where landholders in the group have tried to cull as many deer as they could with the assistance of a professional shooter.

The other main issue is they're culling deer along the border of the Kosciuszko National Park. For many years national parks have been seen as safe havens for wildlife including those not native to this country. If their properties provided a grassy fringe area adjacent to the national park it would be expected that deer after deer (and other grazing species) would wander on to their private lands to feed.

The main issue here is not that 'hunting has failed' but access to the national park for the purposes of hunting is not available. That means the majority of the area where deer persist is excluded from recreational hunting programs. A fact which has been demonstrated over a long period of time is that if an action or tool is excluded from an area it will have no effect on the control of species within it.

The report also indicated that in New South Wales there has been a long campaign to declare deer a pest species. My view has always been it doesn't matter what classification an animal may have, that particular animal just needs appropriate management. In the traditional sense a game species means a species under management - it's not about giving them a name

(like changing the classification to a pest) and thinking the problem is solved. Game status allows regulations to be adaptive and these can be fit for purpose depending on management objectives.

For example, regulations on bag limits for species such as wild duck are in place to ensure sustainability of their populations and there's no reason why regulations can't be in place for wild deer to ensure sustainability of the environment and pastures/crops where they become overabundant and/or problematic.

This is what DPI NSW did recently when they lifted restrictions on bag limits and methods that deer can be hunted on private land among other things. There's no point spending time and energy messing around trying to change the name or classification of something when there are a number of stakeholders with differing opinions. All you need do is roll up your sleeves and focus on managing the species of interest in a way that achieves management objectives.

It's not hard and can be done no matter what a species is classified as on paper. Aggressively tackle them where they're a problem and strategically manage them in other areas to ensure they don't become a problem. It's as simple as that.

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Finding the best load for a cartridge

When somebody asks me “what’s the best load for this cartridge” I always answer by asking “best for what?” Do they mean the highest velocity, most muzzle energy, best accuracy or perhaps even the most barrel life, all of which require a different answer.

The powder load that gives the highest velocity from a cartridge would probably not be the same load that gives best accuracy and would almost certainly not give the longest barrel life. Further, the best hunting load may not be the one that gives the accuracy required for benchrest target shooting, so what we really need to do first is decide what we’ll be using the cartridge for.

Basically a cartridge that has a suitable projectile and is almost full of a suitable powder when ignited, will burn efficiently and produce adequate but not excessive pressure to expel the projectile from the barrel - but finding the right combination is what we’re after.

Best starting point is to look at the loading information provided by the manufacturer of the powder you want to use, or examine the loading details in one of the many good reloading manuals available from your firearms dealer. If we’re going to use the cartridge for hunting at ranges out to 200m then pinpoint accuracy is not

Best starting point is to look at the loading information provided by the manufacturer of the powder you want to use...

essential, in fact any load that will group three shots in about 30mm at 100m will suffice because, in my opinion, at this range bullet placement is the most important criteria.

For this type of shooting, a powder load using about 95 per cent of the maximum powder suggested in the manuals would be ideal, giving reasonable velocity, muzzle energy and long barrel life combined with modest recoil. Shooting game at longer ranges - what some call ‘sniping’ - out to 400 or 500m is a different matter and accuracy similar to that necessary for benchrest shooting is required.

A good way to find an accurate load is to load three cartridges with the suggested powder load shown in the manual, then increase it by 0.5 grains and make another three. Do this until you’ve loaded up to just under the maximum powder load. Fire

all these cartridges, starting with the lightest, at a 100m target and note the velocities obtained with the aid of a chronograph, at the same time recording how well each of the three shots group.

Then for each of these loadings deduct the lowest velocity reading from the highest to find the loading with the smallest velocity spread. Taking this powder load as the starting point, increase the charge by 0.1 grains and load another three cartridges, then increase by another 0.1 grains and load another three cartridges and so on until you have loaded four lots of cartridges. Then do the same again but from the original load reduce the powder by 0.1 grains.

Go through the same exercise as before, shooting at a target and noting the velocities for all cartridges used and the three-shot group size. This procedure may seem a bit complicated but in fact is quite simple when you get going and is an excellent method of finding the most accurate load of a particular powder. In practice, the velocity spread for this accuracy load may be as low as 10fps.





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Never, ever go it alone

It was always going to be a depressing task but nevertheless my mission was to try to find out how many individuals had seemingly disappeared without trace in the bush during the past 10 years or so. I never fully completed my research as I became sidetracked by reading what was known about each case and the efforts made by the various authorities to locate the body - or the supposed 'victim' perhaps still alive and living under cover far from the scene of the initial search.

As you might imagine, the stories related by families left behind were harrowing and sad. Worst of all perhaps were the ones where there was no resolution because, until this day, there has been no trace of the victim, leaving the family with little hope of closure and not a shred of satisfaction surrounding the circumstances of their loved one's disappearance.

One of the most prolonged and extensive searches lasted for months. It was that for Prabhdeep Srawn, a 25-year-old Canadian citizen who disappeared in the rugged Australian Alps. Several teams searched for Mr Srawn for months with no good evidence of his trek in the mountains ever being found. His is only one among several cases that remain unsolved, every one of them involving an individual trekking solo in rough country where visibility

through the scrub sometimes can be less than a couple of metres.

Obviously it's next to impossible to spot someone in that situation as searchers must rely on them being conscious and able to respond to calls and signals. Vehicles belonging to most of the lost individuals were found within hours of a search commencing, but none contained a sketch map, written plan or even decent hints of the direction the hiker planned to take.

But even armed with information like this or a marked-up map, it's challenging for searchers to be sure they're on the right track and the possibility of the hiker having deliberately altered his planned course, inadvertently changed direction or simply become lost cannot be ruled out by search coordinators.

After the No.1 rule of never going it alone, the next rule should be to leave clear indications of your planned route and timings. In most cases it's best to leave these with a trusted acquaintance who's been briefed to alert police when an agreed time without confirmation of your safe return has passed.

In every case about which I read, the hiker was ill-prepared and carrying no effective shelter, protection from the elements or signalling device such as a loud whistle, which brings us to the well-known '10 essentials' without which no-one

should venture into the scrub, even if they are with a companion.

Remember, parties have been known to separate (another absolute no-no) so carry your own gear in case you do become stranded or the weather turns nasty and you can't go on. In your day pack include a square of insulated pad to sit on, a couple of big orange plastic garbage bags for sit-up shelter, remembering to cut a corner out so fresh air gets in. Add plenty of water, warm clothes, a small first-aid kit and don't rely on a mobile phone alone for navigation - carry a proper map and quality compass and make sure you know how to use them.

Finally, consider food and fire. I choose these two essentials relevant to the terrain I'll be visiting rather than the planned duration of the trip (remember Murphy's Law). In rough wilderness areas where a twisted ankle or worse is possible, I carry more of both.





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Q I have the chance to buy a high-grade secondhand Sporting shotgun for a reasonably good price.

The gun was imported from the US where the previous owner had some special barrel work that made the top barrel shoot considerably lower than the bottom one. I'm keen to hear your opinion on this. I've asked around and most people are telling me to think hard before buying the firearm.

Greg McIntosh, WA

A Think very hard. I'm really struggling to find a good reason why you'd want one barrel deliberately shooting lower than the other. Having heard plenty of theories about this over the years, I'm yet to be convinced the practicality of this will help you hit more targets.

Major gun manufacturers go to great pains to have both the top and bottom barrels of their over-and-under shotguns hit in exactly the same place. If I bought a new shotgun and found one barrel hitting a different point of impact than the other I'd be asking for a refund.

In many cases the second barrel is called upon as soon as you realise you've missed with your first shot. This usually happens within tenths of a second and the extra shot required will become completely instinctual. Your brain simply doesn't have time to make a calculation to readjust for a second barrel with a different hitting point from the first.

The point where you pull the trigger of

your shotgun in relation to the target is called your sight picture. In many cases this imprint between your eye, brain and trigger finger takes many thousands of shots to perfect. If you start interfering with this you're inviting a whole world of hurt in my opinion.

You might be able to throw examples of situations where the second shot required is at a flatter target than that of the first. In Trap shooting, the Double Rise event at times can present this scenario. In perfect conditions the second shot in Doubles is often fired just as the clay is flattening out on its horizontal trajectory so you may argue that a lower-shooting second barrel could help. But if all of a sudden you're faced with a howling headwind and the second target is climbing faster than the first, a flatter-shooting second barrel would be a disaster.

I'd be asking a few more questions about the barrel and exactly why this unusual adjustment was made. If it was me and I had the money, I'd find someone I really didn't like and give them the shotgun as a gift!

Q Is there any advantage in shooting higher velocity shotshells with fewer grams of shot at clays? I've often thought a really high velocity load of 21 grams of shot would work well in any of the clay target disciplines. I shoot a bit of Sporting for fun and Trap at times and still manage to break clays with these lighter shells. I've found a reload recipe I'd like

to try that gives me the added advantage of an extra 60m/second in velocity and the extra speed would mean I'd need to lead the target less and less shot would mean less recoil. It seems a win-win situation - do you agree?

Tony Grech, NSW

A In a word, no. I could leave it there but let me briefly explain by example. If you were using typical 3 per cent antimony 28 gram 7½ shot at a Trap or Sporting Clays target you'd be getting about 350 pellets per shotshell - 21 grams means almost 100 fewer pellets. At targets more than 30m away those extra 100 pellets will be a huge advantage where shotshell pattern density becomes an advantage.

The simple age-old shooting rule of 'more lead more dead' applies here. Sure, 21 grams of shot will bust clays at short distances all day and with standard velocity loads the recoil will be less, but speed really doesn't come into how far you need to shoot in front of crossing targets in Sporting or angled targets in Trap. You may be surprised how little difference there is in the vertical lead required between the fastest and slowest commercially available shotshells when shooting at a 40m target, but that's a whole new topic.



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The Central No.4 sight.

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Q I read David Proctor's query (Top Shots, February) with regard to his Model 2 Brno losing accuracy as I have a 49 model which is a great little rifle and I'm now looking at acquiring a 55 Model 1. The Anschütz recommendations for cleaning approximately every 4000 rounds really grabbed my attention as I run a nylon brush and a couple of oiled patches down the barrel when I finish at the range.

As I'm fairly new to the scene I researched rimfire cleaning which resulted in opinions ranging from never clean them or you'll ruin the barrel, to clean them every five rounds and spray them with silicon. I wonder if you could point me in the right direction to maintaining the Brno to ensure a long service life without doing damage.

Michael Robertson, QLD

A Some rimfires shoot well with a dirty barrel, others don't. What a particular rifle prefers is something you'll find out as you go. For what it's worth, I like to keep barrels clean, especially during the winter months when there's more moisture around.

I start with a dry bronze or nylon bristle brush and remove any powder fouling that may be present. I then swab the bore with solvent applied on a close-fitting cloth patch, letting it soak for a while before scrubbing the bore again with a brush. I then let it soak again before cleaning with a cloth patch until the patch comes out clean. I then lubricate the barrel with a clean patch before storing the rifle. When I take it out again I patch the lubricant out of the barrel before shooting.

Wherever possible I use a rod guide to ensure the cleaning rod is centralised in the barrel and doesn't damage the chamber (I never clean a rifle from the muzzle end). I apply the same method to cleaning centrefire barrels using a copper solvent. This is the method my father taught me and even if it is a little old fashioned it has stood me in good stead for many years. Most cleaning products have instructions on how to use them and you won't go too far wrong if you follow those.

John Dunn

Q A while back my uncle asked if I'd like his Lithgow SMLE .303 and put it on my licence. It belonged to my late grandfather and my uncle had used it as a target rifle in the early '60s. I had to jump through the usual paper hoops but ended up with a family heirloom. Upside: All the serial numbers match and the rifle is in superb condition. Downside: The barrel was cactus with too much bore corrosion. Claremont Firearms (WA) sorted it out with a new heavy barrel and D.C. Precision fitted it. Also there was a problem in that the rifle hadn't previously been registered, which was ultimately sorted out.

The new barrel was well worth the money as it shoots far better than expected. The limitation is the Central No.4 sight which is the only rear-sight. I'm fine with that but have no instructions having searched extensively online. I've zeroed it at 200m and it's making groups way tighter than I ever expected - then I wanted to hit gongs further out. Have you any information on the sight or know where I might get a copy of the instructions they came with? I've attached a photo - see top of page.

Peter Robins, via email

A Big bore rifle shooting was enormously popular and seriously encouraged across Australia until about 30 years ago. I belonged to one such club as a junior in the 1960s and used a borrowed Lee Enfield with similar sight. Members of these clubs were covered by Australian Rifle Club regulations under the Defence Act of 1903 and as such were not required to have a licence nor their rifles registered until this was repealed in 1997. As I recall ammunition was supplied free of charge by the military.

To your question. After checking my own library I posted a call for help to members of a small collectors group. Mike Williams, a fellow member, is in the same situation as he also inherited his grandfather's Lee Enfield club rifle with Central No.4 sight. Further, his grandad, the late Richard Williams of Quorn Rifle Club, never threw anything out so had the original 1946 instructions (copy

sent to you). The Central No.4 sight was an outstanding piece of engineering made in Australia specifically to suit the traditional target rifles of the mid-20th century and discussions with 'big bore' shooters of today suggest many are still in use. They're a vernier 'peep' sight featuring a vertical elevation column and horizontal windage column with adjustments click stopped at either ¼ or ½ minute of arc clicks. In James Sweet's *Competitive Rifle Shooting* (4th edition, James Sweet, NSW, 1956), the Central No.4 sight sold for £8 17s 6d (about \$17.75 in today's currency).

For longer ranges than 200m you'll need to consult ballistic tables or software to determine bullet drop at that range then do some maths (or test firings on paper) to establish how many clicks are needed at particular ranges and for particular wind speeds.

Geoff Smith

Q As a long-time shooter I've always taken gun maintenance seriously. Recently I had to be retrained to shoot for a government department, part of which included cleaning rifles. I cleaned the bore and turned the gun round to look down the bore against a light-coloured background and the instructor was annoyed I'd done that. His remark was that under no circumstances do you look down the bore from the muzzle end. Period. I've been doing it that way for 40-odd years and have never heard of this but since then have spoken to other shooters who agree with him. So, since I sometimes walk in front of parked cars I have to ask: Is either of these practices safe? Love the magazine.

Jeffrey Graves, via email

A Thanks for your question Jeffrey, one that sounds like you've stirred a hornet's nest among your shooting colleagues. Shooters who care for their firearms will look down the bore before, during and after cleaning - an absolutely necessary and normal part of the process.

When buying a firearm you always examine the bore to determine the condition of the rifling, presence of rust, leading or

bulging for instance. Furthermore, you look down the bore from the muzzle end especially when it's a revolver or lever action rifle where there's no clear view from the breech.

It sounds like your instructor is conflicted by one of the golden rules of firearm safety: 'Never point a firearm at a person or property'. Your email lacks details of the specific circumstances around this incident however, as a general rule, when a firearm is removed from the 'shooting' environment - being cleaned in your garage, repaired by a gunsmith, demonstrated to a prospective customer in a gunshop or placed in a case in the boot of your car - that firearm should always be in a configuration where it's impossible for a round to be fired. The firearm will be cleared and in a state of being easily identified as safe and there are a number of ways to ensure that. Additionally, there will be no ammunition present.

While the physical action of holding a firearm to your eye might give bystanders a heart attack, it's good practice to make sure you first demonstrate to them the firearm is cleared and made safe and then let them know what you're doing.

Rod Pascoe

• Good answer to a tricky question, Rod. As ever, commonsense should always prevail - Ed.

Q I've noticed advertisements in *Australian Shooter* in recent months promoting firearms designed specifically for women. Can you explain the differences please between men's and women's firearms?

Jenny, Vic

A Well spotted Jenny. There certainly are differences in the dimensions and weight of firearms designed for women and these are often suitable for younger, lighter-framed shooters as well, boys and girls. This has come about as I believe more women are taking an active interest in the shooting sports worldwide, particularly in the US where the market is of such a size it's economically viable to make

factory produced firearms for the ladies' benefit. That, in turn, flows through to Australia which is good news indeed.

While this is a big subject I can answer it simply by saying guns designed for women are invariably shorter in both stock and barrel length to make them lighter and scaled to size. Centrefire rifles are chambered in lighter recoiling but very adequate cartridges like the .223 Remington, .243 Winchester and 7mm-08 Remington. Rifle stocks are usually shorter by an inch or so and the 'drop at comb', 'pitch' and especially 'cant' measurements are usually greater to allow for a woman's bust and narrower shoulders.

This ensures ladies can mount the firearm as comfortably as possible which minimizes recoil and so increases the pleasure and accuracy of their shooting. Having a firearm which fits is even more relevant for women in the world of shotgunning where a lot more shots may be fired in a day, particularly in clay target competitions.

Buy, or at least try any of the guns you've seen advertised for ladies with confidence knowing they're specifically designed to make your whole shooting experience more comfortable and fun. All things being equal in terms of weight and scale of your favourite firearm, there's no reason why women can't shoot every bit as well as men. And they do!

Paul Miller

• For more on this subject, see Gemma Dunn's comprehensive article in Issue 2 of *Australian Women's Shooter* which came with the March magazine.

Q I recently bought a Howa Mini Action in 7.62 x 39 with a 20" barrel, zeroed the rifle in at 50m and shot a half-inch 5-shot group, all good. I went online and all the trajectory figures I looked at for a 123gr bullet say the difference in trajectory between 50m and 100m is negligible - 0.2 of an inch - but I used PPU 123gr rounds and for a 100m zero had to print the bullets two inches high at 50m. Why would that be?

Peter Curr, Qld

A Interesting question Peter. Velocity is likely to be around 2200fps, ballistic coefficient about 0.28 - my calculations indicate 1.5" high at 50m for a 100m zero with around 8" of drop at 200m, these calculations based on a line of sight of 1.5" above bore centreline. The height of the centreline of the sights above the centreline of the bore is one factor that can influence these figures, others include the actual muzzle velocity of the load.

From 50m to 100m a difference in ballistic coefficient would only have a tiny effect. My figures come from a custom 22" barrel - your 20" barrel may be developing less velocity-drop, 100fps and the 200m fall grows to 9". Another factor to look at is how the online trajectory figures were obtained. If they came from a receiver in a machine rest then the bore line is the sight line and the 0.2" figure is highly probable. What this all goes to prove is you can't beat actual real world testing of your firearm to create your own trajectory tables.

Greg Riemer

Q My 7mm Magnum Remington rifle, which has fired about 2000 rounds, has been losing accuracy lately, so I left it with a local gunsmith. He rang to say the rifling in the barrel ahead of the throat was corroded and the barrel would have to be replaced. The barrel is stainless steel and I clean it regularly so how has this corrosion occurred.

Dennis White, via email

A I think your gunsmith would have said the rifling is 'eroded' not 'corroded'. This erosion after about 2000 rounds is not unusual in rifles using Magnum cartridges. These cartridges are loaded with large charges of powder and the cutting action of the high pressure, high temperature gases produced on firing tends to wash away or 'erode' the barrel just forward of the chamber. This action is accelerated if the rifle is fired when the barrel is hot after several shots have been fired.

Barry Wilmot

When hunting magpie geese, heavy loads are in order. A good over-and-under with 3" chambers proven for steel shot and interchangeable chokes is best.

Shedding light on the great shotgun debate

Damien Edwards

To state which style of double-barrelled shotgun is best for all goose, rabbit, duck, hare, skeet, trap and down-the-line shooting is an exercise in futility. There's no such thing as a gun for every season and every reason. I've been using shotguns for more than two decades and to understand the ways and intricacies of the shotgun takes more than a lifetime's experience.

Not a great deal of good work has been written with regard to side-by-side versus over-and-under guns as each has advantages, either real or perceived, for the user. These days, most shooters of sporting clays can be found using the vertical stack barrel gun with its much-vaunted single sighting plane. I may be sticking my neck out, but I reckon it's this feature alone which has made the over-and-under the top choice in trap for more than 60 years.

Shooters who used slide and auto-loaders for this type of work in years gone by could associate with the over-and-under gun in the same way they did with their single barrel repeaters. I'm more a hunter

than a shooter so the bulk of my gunning experiences have been spent afield. I mainly use clays as a means of keeping my eye in during closed bird seasons and have used my side-by-sides for clays with some success. It has to do with familiarity and balance and the advantages I see in European double guns over their US counterparts.

The greatest failing with US shotguns is the Americans never instigated an organised system of proof. People incorrectly assume that because US factories offer such heavy loads the American guns are good and strong, but after many years of using both I can say that no proof law has been a severe detriment to US designs.

To compensate for US shooters' taste for heavy loads, American gunmakers have produced correspondingly heavy guns, adding more steel to the breech and action than is practical or necessary, in turn translating into an unresponsive, bulky and 'numb' feeling gun. Heaviness doesn't always equate to strength - a well-designed smoothbore need not contain as much steel as a bank vault to be strong.

European manufacturers make guns and proof them to stay within a certain limit which only the foolish exceed. The Europeans are therefore able to produce guns which balance well, and none do it better than the British with their superb side-by-sides. Charles Lancaster made some of the best guns in England in the 19th century, producing not only doubles but triple and even quadruple guns. His idea was to get more shot in the air, and in the days prior to the widespread use of the repeater he simply added more barrels. An interesting venture to say the least, but a failed one.

By 1900 the side-by-side had reached the apex of its evolution, anything seen on guns made after the turn of the previous century viewed merely as a refinement of an earlier idea. More than three centuries of innovation had gone into the side-by-side prior to the release of the first moderately successful vertical stack gun around 1908.

By this stage slide and lever-action shotguns, which had appeared more than 20 years previously, were in use and had been readily accepted by the shooting public.



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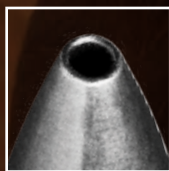
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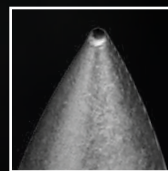
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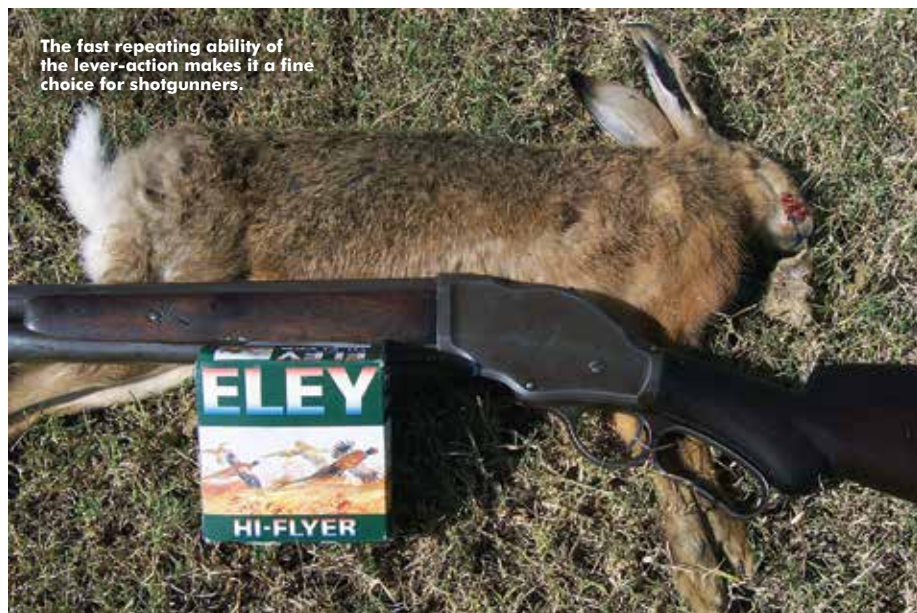
TARGET PROJECTILES

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(.284) (.264) (.243)

The first auto-loading shotgun had been patented in 1900 by John Browning and was beginning to proliferate as well. Black powder shells were still being loaded but the advantages of the newer smokeless powder loads were being realised by modern shooters. What was also discovered was that modern-made guns, over-and-unders included, could easily handle the smokeless loads, whereas relatively new side-by-sides made within the past 10 to 15 years could not.

Their ability to handle smokeless shells was in no way due to their construction, rather the superior metallurgy which was beginning to predominate in the early 1900s. Sadly, even though smokeless proofed side-by-sides were still being made, they had already begun to lose a little ground to the repeaters. The popularity of the over-and-under would be appreciated a few decades later.

My preference is for a side-by-side. I do a lot of shooting competitively but mostly in the field and the classic side-by-side suits my style, though I also own an over-and-under. I find over-and-unders odd things and always fire the top barrel



first. The second or bottom barrel now has the weight of the empty top barrel on it, helping to counteract the effects of muzzle jump if shooting a load in excess of 32g or 1 1/8oz. It makes for a steadier second shot and it's for this reason I occasionally load a slightly heavier charge in the bottom barrel but only fire it if I miss with the top.

In the split second it takes for the shot to miss the target, for me to realise I've missed, calculate the next shot and where the bird will be and for my muscles to swing the gun to where it needs to be, my duck could be a great deal further away. If the bird is a fast low-flying teal, quail or pigeon it just aggravates the problem. A little more

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velocity coupled with a bit more shot and slightly tighter choke usually works as a second barrel option for me. I prefer more velocity than shot in the second barrel, finding it much easier to predict recoil, and its effect, in a side-by-side.

I've analysed my shooting style over the years and know my faults. If I miss my first shot with a vertical barrel gun it's often because I've shot behind or low. That's why I use a faster second barrel load, sometimes in the same shot weight but often in a size larger than I load into the top. I find the side-by-side, especially one fitted with ejectors, to be quick on the reload as both chambers are exposed simultaneously and there's less loading gape.

The over-and-under gun lends itself more easily to the process of automated machine mass production. There are far more brand new over-and-under guns on the market than side-by-sides. Most stack barrel guns come with interchangeable chokes and being able to change your choke boring in 30 seconds really adds ver-

satility to the gun and is a feature which many side-by-sides don't have. Some side-by-sides will be old and some may have short chambers for the 2½" or 2⅝" shell.

There can be little doubt the design of the fore-end on over-and-under guns gives the shooter a secure grip. Perhaps this is the reasoning behind heavy loads - they might kick but at least the shooter can hold on a bit better.

And consider reducing your loads. I do a lot of duck and hare shooting so it's easy to go through up to 100 shells in an afternoon. The weight of a gun will dictate how it will recoil with light or heavy loads and if you must use heavy loads, anything in excess of 32g, you'd do well to pick a heavier gun with longer barrels to help stabilise your swing, much more preferable to slapping a thick recoil pad on the butt.

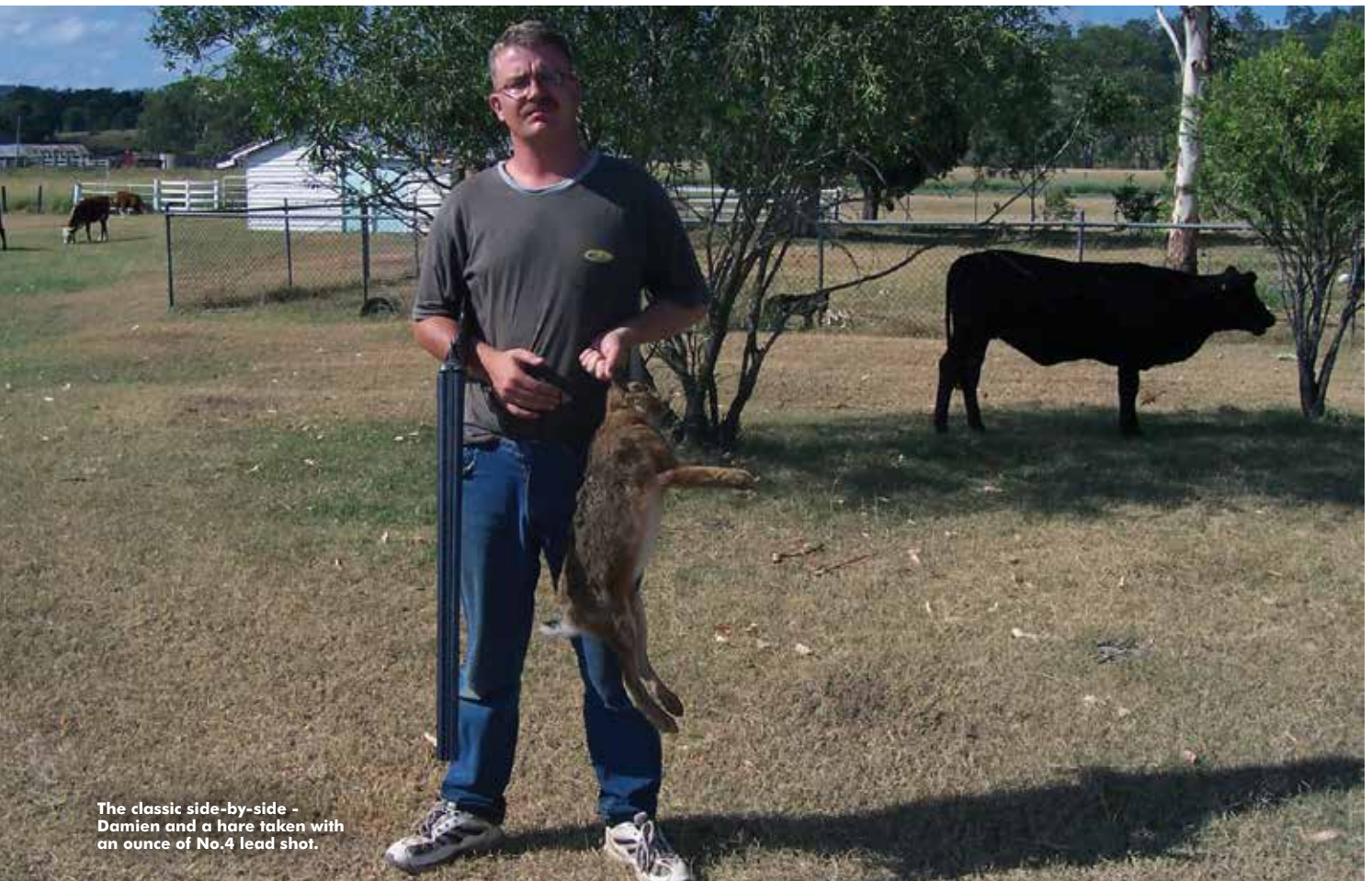
In summary, if you're a one-shotgun person and hope to use it for everything, a model with interchangeable chokes is for you. Try different guns before you buy,

shoulder them all fixing your point of aim on a ceiling fan or wall hanger, close your eyes and do it again. You should be aiming at the same place you were previously and if so that's a good indication of gun fit.

I don't place a lot of credence in centre beads on ribs. Place the butt of the gun on the inside of your elbow and extend your forearm along the stock. If the middle knuckle of your trigger finger reaches the trigger and is comfortable, the gun suits your length of pull.

I'd choose a gun with either 28" or 30" barrels and certainly no longer if choke tubes extend forward of the muzzle. Pistol grips are my preference too, particularly the long, sloping Prince of Wales style.

There's an element of prejudice in shotgunning, which is strange, and experienced shotgunners can be more pedantic than riflemen when it comes to patterning, load testing and development, choke selection and shotgun styling, so it strikes me as bizarre they can be so one-sided when it comes to barrel arrangement. ●



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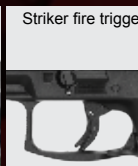
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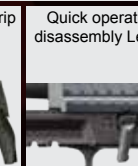
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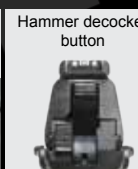
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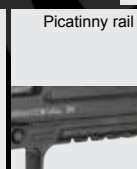
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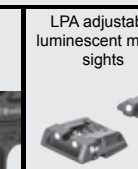
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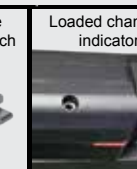
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Understanding your shotshells

Thomas Tabor



Shotshell charge volume will vary considerably depending upon the gauge.

Selecting the proper ammunition for your shotgun is just as important as choosing cartridges for your rifle, the major difference being there are more factors to consider when it comes to shotgun ammo.

While rifle shooters are generally concerned about such things as velocity and bullet type, the shotgunner must think in terms of pattern density, shot size, what material the shot is comprised of and how hard it is, shotshell length, shot string, velocities, choke constriction and how all those things combine to affect shotgun performance.

Choke performance

Like rifles, shotguns sometimes prefer a certain type of ammunition and equally so on occasions, a specific choke may perform better than another. Regardless of whether your shotgun comes from the factory pre-choked or has interchangeable choke tubes, usually they've been imprinted with a word or measurement describing the constriction. But just because that constriction might read 'full' or one of the other designations, you should never assume the pattern will always be reflective of that label.

Every barrel and choke is unique in its performance and the patterning may

change, sometimes dramatically, as the shotshell load is altered. This is particularly the case when comparing shotshells using lead shot with those loaded with steel or one of the other varieties of non-lead shot. For these reasons it's important you pattern your shotgun with the specific ammunition you intend to use.

Patterning

Some gun clubs have equipment set up specifically for the purpose of patterning shotguns. Some of these will have a roll of wide paper that can be pulled down, attached then torn free after being shot. But if you don't have access to a system like this, a piece of cardboard or even butcher's paper may get the job done. In order to achieve best results the patterning surface should be at least a metre square and larger is certainly better.

The distance at which you pattern your loads will be dependent on typical length of your shots and choke constriction you're using, but commonly 40 yards is used. Some shooters will draw a circle around the patterning area in order to count the number of pellets falling within a 30" (76.2cm) circle in order to calculate the

No matter what gauge shotshell you shoot, you need to know what's inside.





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percentage of impacts within that circle. Some even go as far as to quarter that circle then count the number of shot impacts within each of the four quadrants, or draw a secondary smaller 20" (50.8cm) circle in the centre all in an effort to look further into pattern consistency. But if you don't want to go to that extent, a simple evaluation to look for holes in the pattern large enough for a bird to slip through is certainly worthwhile.

Dram equivalent

One of the most confusing terms in shotshells is 'dram equivalent'. This is an antiquated term developed as the world of shotgunning began to move away from black powder to smokeless powder. Dram is a weight measurement once used to convey how much black powder was being loaded in the shells or, in the case of muzzleloaders, down the barrel.

Because shooters were used to relating the potency of their loads to how many drams of black powder was being loaded, the term 'dram equivalent' was adopted for the new era of smokeless powder shells. Even today some manufacturers still cling to this outdated method of categorising shells rather than simply displaying the muzzle velocity. For a rough estimate of how dram equivalent relates to actual muzzle velocities the accompanying chart may be helpful.

Dram equivalent v muzzle velocity				
Gauge	Shell length	Dram equiv	Shot wt	Velocity
12	2¾"	2¾ DE	1 1/8oz	1145fps
12	2¾"	3 DE	1 1/8oz	1200fps
12	2¾"	3¼ DE	1 1/8oz	1255fps
12	2¾"	3½ DE	1 ¼oz	1275fps
12	2¾"	3¾ DE	1 ¼oz	1330fps
12	3"	4 DE	1 5/8oz	1280fps
20	2¾"	2½ DE	7/8oz	1210fps
20	2¾"	2¾ DE	1oz	1220fps
20	3"	Mag 3½	1 3/16oz	1295fps

Lead v non-lead shot

I'm old enough to remember when the crackdown on lead shot first came about. Even though there have been great advancements in the various types of non-lead shot, I believe the disadvantages of using these alternatives far outweigh any preconceived advantages.

However, I've accepted the fact that non-lead substitutes are here to stay and where I'm forced to use them by law, I will do so. I don't necessarily have to like it though and whenever I can shoot lead I'll choose that simply because it's more effective.

There are many other shot metals now available like bismuth, tungsten, HEVI-Shot and others. Some have weights and densities approaching that of lead but steel shot (sometimes called iron shot) remains the



most popular option for one simple reason. Steel shotshells, even though considerably more expensive than lead, generally cost less than alternative metals. Too bad gold is so pricey as I could see myself shooting it as a perfect lead substitute.

Steel shot is made through a process called atomisation, which produces shot of various sizes and hardness. In most cases steel shot weighs about one-third less than lead, which results in reducing the killing power and range for hunters by as much as 10 to 20m - and steel takes up more space in the shell.

In order to offset some of the ineffectiveness of the steel, typically shooters increase the size of shot. But doing so means the number of the load pellets is reduced which will result in less pattern density.

Recommended steel alternative shot size	
Lead	Recommended steel alternative
2	BB
4	2
6	3 or 4
8	7



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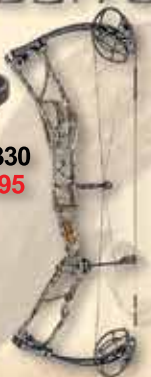
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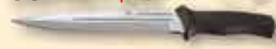
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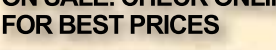
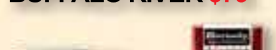
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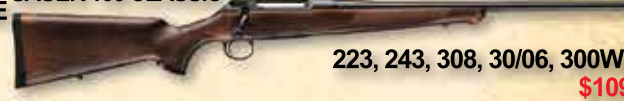
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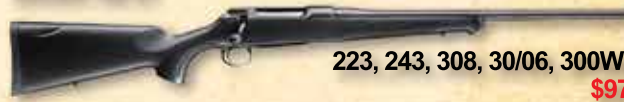
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High brass/low brass

Another factor adding to the confusion of shotshells pertains to the height of the base brass of the shells. Like 'dram equivalent', this too has its roots in the archives of shotgunning history. I suppose in early times when shotshell hulls were evolving from brass to paper it was thought you needed a ring of brass around the base of the shell for reinforcement purposes.

Somehow that led to the idea the higher the brass the more powerful the shell. Most shotshell hulls today are made of plastic and the height of the brass, or in some cases the lack of brass entirely, has nothing to do with the potency of the load.

Hard v soft shot

Trap shooters often like their lead shot to be high in antimony content which makes the lead harder. The basis behind that desire is that hard shot doesn't deform as much while travelling down the barrel and through the constriction of the choke as the softer varieties do. But this can be a good or a bad thing depending on how you look at it. Shot that's perfectly round with no flat or deformed sides will usually fly truer and thereby deliver tighter patterns, while deformed shot often produces more open patterns.

When steel shot first arrived it was so hard it sometimes damaged gun barrels and was even viewed in some quarters as being unsafe in certain firearms. Over the years steel shot has become softer but those metals still aren't as malleable as lead and, as such, have a tendency to yield tighter shot patterns.

In order to counter that influence usu-

ally more open chokes are called for when shooting non-lead shot. To counter this effect some shotshell manufacturers are loading shells with irregular shaped pellets like the new Federal Premium Black Cloud ammunition. In this case the shot has a raised ring around its parameter, giving it the appearance of a tiny flying saucer. While this design helps open up the shot pattern it also increases the killing potential of the shot by inflicting a higher degree of damage to a bird's flesh and bones.

To be successful shooting non-lead shot you must select the shells carefully.



The way I see it

Shotgunning is unlike any other shooting discipline. Where rifle shooters frequently have time to prepare for the shot, the shotgunner is usually pressed for time. Whether shooting clay targets or hunting live birds, in both cases the target is quickly departing the scene and the shooter must in an instant shoulder the firearm, get on the target, calculate the appropriate lead and pull the shot off before the quarry has a chance to escape.

In these instances everything must come together in one fluid movement and if you, your shotgun and ammunition aren't up to the task at hand you may walk away with nothing to show for the effort.

When it comes to the ammunition you shoot there are many things to consider. Whether you buy shells at your local store or load your own, careful consideration must be given to what's inside and how that ammunition will perform in the shotgun you'll be using. ●

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AFP Association renews call for national registry

John Maxwell

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) Association, which represents more than 4000 federal officers across the country, has called for a national firearms registry as a step towards reducing gun crime. But hang on, don't we already have national firearms registration, a central element of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement and progressively rolled out across the nation?

Yes we do, with each state and territory maintaining its own records of firearms and firearms licence holders. But this isn't a very effective national system and the AFP Association and its president Angela Smith make a valid point in highlighting its shortcomings.

"It's a national disgrace that in the 22 years since the Port Arthur tragedy and all the good work that was done at that time to uncover illegal firearms, we still don't have a national register," Ms Smith said. "Each state and territory has its own register and the sharing of information is clunky and problematic."

However, the AFP Association is on less firm ground in claiming a national registry would actually do anything worthwhile about illegal guns, though it would certainly cost a lot of money, employ more public servants and likely add to the inconvenience of licensed shooters.

Quite how this would work the AFP Association doesn't say. At the highest,

the Commonwealth would have to take over the firearms law responsibilities of each state and territory which would likely require a constitutional amendment. At the lower end, and more likely in the long run, are better computer interfaces to improve access to the different registries.

Ms Smith said if we can stop people gaining access to illegal guns it would make it harder for them to carry out drive-by shootings and hold up shops, apparently a reference to a series of gun crimes in the ACT. As well as being home to the federal parliament and national institutions, the nation's capital has recently endured a number of shootings, all apparently stemming from a long-running power struggle between outlaw motorcycle gangs.

Since bikies have routinely demonstrated a worrying ability to acquire guns without the bother of licensing and registration, it's unclear how a national registration system, above and beyond existing state and territory registries, would in any way further hinder their activities.

And the AFP Association isn't alone in pointing out the absence of an effective national firearms registration system. The Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia, the firearms industry representative body, called on state and territory governments to commit to the introduction of a national firearms interface which was now more than 20 years overdue. That would allow

cradle to grave tracking of firearms across jurisdictions, the Foundation said.

The AFP Association has some other ideas about tackling gun crime. It would like to see federal legislation copy provisions of NSW firearms laws which specify a person can only buy ammunition suitable for firearms he or she actually owns. Putting this provision into federal law would achieve precisely nothing, as to achieve the desired effect it would have to be adopted by each state and territory.

And the AFP's national registry proposal attracted some scathing comments on the Canberra community website RiotACT. "This is the most ridiculous thing I've heard of late. We already have state firearms registries. How is adding another layer of bureaucracy to law-abiding firearms owners going to take firearms out of the hands of law-breaking criminals," said one commentator.

Just prior to the federal election the AFP Association made a number of pitches to the various parties, calling for restoration of AFP numbers back to 2013-14 levels and demanding the AFP be a standalone agency, separate from the Department of Home Affairs. To tackle bikie crime in the ACT it called for the ACT government to adopt the type of anti-consorting legislation which has proved effective in other jurisdictions. ●



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Talbot on target! Combined Services

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

When I arrived at the range for this month's shoot my fellow competitors were surprised I wasn't dressed in camouflage or fatigues. After becoming a Single Action cowboy in our February magazine, they thought I'd be dressed as a soldier to suit the Combined Services competition which is based on military and police firearms. While I may not have looked the part this time, I enjoyed my day with the .303s and managed at least one battle scar.

How it works

Combined Services is a rifle and handgun discipline that aims to encourage organised competitive shooting with a view towards a better knowledge of safe handling and proper care of military or service firearms. The discipline encompasses more than a dozen Service Rifle and Service Pistol classes where competitors use original or faithful reproduction rimfire, centrefire and black powder military and other service rifles, carbines, revolvers and self-loading pistols, shot for score at paper targets of different sizes and from various distances and positions.

My competition was rifles rather than pistols and followed the 3-Positional Core match, which is made up of three courses of fire. To begin, competitors take five shots prone at 300m in one minute. Next, the targets are brought in to 200m and competitors take five shots prone and five sitting in two minutes. The final course of fire is five shots standing, five sitting and five prone at 100m in four minutes.

There are quite a few other types of matches shot in Combined Services which demand even more position changes and strict time limits but the main 3P event is more than enough



Big calibres but even bigger targets - luckily they were on wheels.



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Talbot on target! Combined Services

for beginners and is the match used for grading.

While the distances may sound challenging, especially since we'd only be using iron sights, the targets are the largest I've seen. Complete with their own frame built on wheels, targets for the rifle competitions measure 1200 x 1200mm and feature five rings, the inner-ring representing the bullseye and a black aiming spot in the shape of a helmet. There are five rings which include a bullseye and indicate points of five through to two, while hitting anywhere else on the rectangular target counts as a score of one.

Dad's old .303

Some shooters turn to Combined Services to make use of the .303 stored in their parents' safe. After all, many older generation shooters have a Short Magazine Lee-Enfield variant which has no doubt stood the test of time. Accordingly I asked my dad if he had a .303 and, as expected, he did. "I bought the SMLE from a man who for some reason had removed some of the stock to reveal the barrel so he could use it as a target rifle," he said. "I paid \$50 for it years ago and expect it might still be worth \$50 or even \$60!"

While I was more than happy to use dad's SMLE, it had some subtle modifications which would render it ineligible for Combined Services as all rifles must be used as they were issued at time of production.

Combined Services National Discipline Chairman Steve Knight was attracted to the discipline as competitors generally compete



Sam gets acquainted with the .303 rifle.

with the same quality of firearm. "It's not how much you spend to gain an advantage as we're strict that all standard rifles are as-issued," he said.

Competition

When I arrived at the range, discussion was focused on how much money can be saved by reloading. Unlike rounds of .22, .303 ammunition can cost more than \$1 a shot, enough to make even the less technically minded shooter consider reloading if it means saving money. While I'm still a long way from doing this, others assured me I could do it and were more than happy to offer advice. On the day I used store-bought PPU .303 British, which cost \$56 for two boxes of 20 and turned out to be the exact amount needed on the day (10 shots warm-up and 30 in competition).

Next it was time to talk about the vast array of rifles on display. The first detail of shooters featured a Martini Enfield, Swedish Mauser M96, a Number 4 and Springfield 03, a snapshot of rifles from around the world and across different time periods. They also represent different solutions to problems, advances in technology, cultural differences, manufacturing abilities and ongoing refinements for military purposes and it's no surprise many



The long walk to the 300m targets.

Combined Services shooters are keen history buffs. The rifles used tend to be quite heavy and being similar to .303s can kick quite a bit. I have no problem with a gun that kicks having grown up with shotguns, but a regular .22 shooter could be taken by surprise.

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Talbot on target! Combined Services

would make getting settled for five shots in a minute difficult, but this was balanced out by the fact I was using Tony Noble's P14 rifle (later known as the No.3 Mark 1) which had the smoothest trigger pull I've ever used. Tony is Combined Services Captain at SSAA Para and gave me valuable advice on aiming as well as loading throughout the day. I used the P14 for 10 shots prone at 300m as a warm-up (also known as a Deliberate) and for the first course of fire, five shots prone at 300m to start the competition proper.

I managed to hit the inner ring during the warm-up, proving that despite being more than 100 years old the rifle was still more than up to its task, and for the first round of competition scored 14 from a possible 25 (five shots with five the highest score per shot). While I'd have been happy to continue with the P14, the many rifles offered by fellow competitors were too tempting and I moved to the Number 1 Mark 3* SMLE, a rifle that went into service in 1907 and is still used today.

With targets in to 200m we had to get through five shots prone and five sitting/squatting in two minutes. I've had trouble with sitting/squatting positions in the past but on the day I felt pretty good, mostly due to not having to use a scope and being more relaxed in general. I finished in plenty of time and scored 27 from a possible 50, the bigger targets a lot easier to hit.

The iron sights work similar to the Target Pistol sights I addressed at length in April's *Australian Shooter* and just about all sights for that matter. Lining up the front and back sights symmetrically ensures a straight shot, though this proved a little tricky during the standing position of the



300m is a long way away.

final course of fire even though the targets had been brought into 100m.

Despite my lack of balance, the final course of fire turned out to be my best round of the day, all 15 shots hitting the target at least somewhere, which goes a long way to a decent overall score. The 15 hits gave me 53 out of a possible 75 and a final score of 94. To put that in perspective, the Bronze Proficiency Award for Combined Services is for a score between 127 and 134, which I feel I could realistically achieve with a few more shoots and more practice.

Reloading

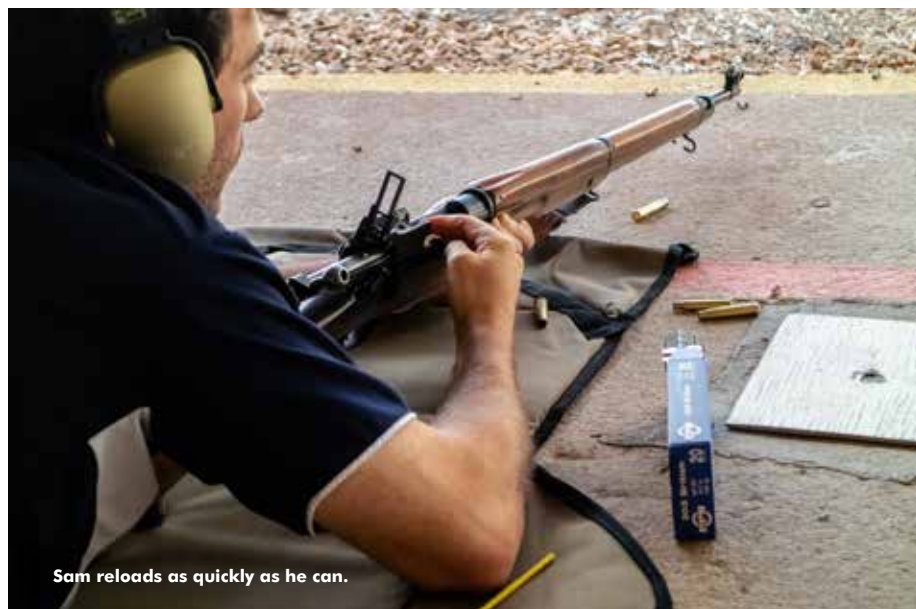
The five shots in each position means a



Tony explains the theory behind aiming.

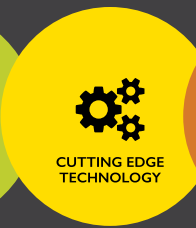
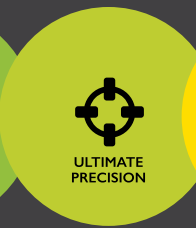


The Number 1 Mark 3* SMLE comes with a number of engravings indicating where each piece was made. MA = Made in Australia, OA = Orange, WA = Wellington and BA = Bathurst.



Sam reloads as quickly as he can.

reload is needed before the next stage and this turned out trickier than expected, especially in the strict time limit. While you can feed one cartridge at a time into the Number 1 Mark 3* SMLE, a faster option is to use chargers which are like a skeleton version of a regular magazine. Instead of being inserted into the rifle, chargers hold the ammunition by the rim which lets you push five rounds down at once. The cartridges are staggered in the chamber which saves vertical space and the stagger of five cartridges also means the charger can be loaded in either direction. Despite being theoretically impossible I did manage a slight jam in my rifle which was quickly rectified. The trick, which I learned eventually, is to push them all down hard in one smooth action with four fingers >



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Talbot on target! Combined Sevices

wrapped over the top, rather than trying to finesse it in with the thumb.

Conclusion

If you're interested in military or firearm history or firearms in general, I can't recommend Combined Services enough. The wealth of knowledge learned at my competition was incredible and my head was spinning with the different modifications various countries had made to rifles, where different parts had been made and the fascinating history service rifles are steeped in. And it's fun to shoot.

From both a history lesson and shooting perspective I had a great time. There are so many different and unique rifles for



Sam sustained some damage shooting in the prone position.



Practising loading and using the chargers.

competitors to choose from while still offering an equal footing for all. I also enjoyed the challenge of using a firearm with some power behind it while moving into different positions on a time limit.

Service rifles are not only historically significant but enjoyable to use and this discipline adds real value to the shooting

sports. Combined Services is a must-try for passionate sporting shooters and if you're still not convinced, ask your parents about the .303 they may have stored away or borrow one and give it a go at the range.

• Page 85: Not just another SMLE



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Sako 85 Black Wolf in .308 Winchester

Con Kapralos



The popularity of long-range shooting in recent years has seen major rifle manufacturers world-wide release some excellent products well suited to the target shooter and hunter alike. Most of these rifles are generally characterised by heavy-contour barrelled actions mated up to any rifle stock the prospective purchaser may require, be it a conventional, fully-adjustable or even chassis-style system. Stalking rifles they're certainly not, geared entirely to shooting from a benchrest or prone position.

Last year Sako of Finland released an exciting new model Black Wolf, offered in a wide range of action and barrel lengths and calibres and featuring a fluted, medium contour barrel mated up to its corresponding Sako 85 action. The stock gives the rifle its identity and is furnished from striking black/grey walnut laminate timber

with inbuilt provisions for adjusting the length-of-pull and comb height.

Sako distributor Beretta Australia supplied the SSAA with a review rifle in .308 Winchester along with the new model Steiner Ranger riflescope in 2.5-10x50 with Sako Optilock rings and bases (see review on page 66).

The rifle

The Black Wolf is a turn-bolt repeating rifle allied to Sako's M85 action coupled with a medium contour fluted barrel, threaded at its muzzle to take compatible accessories. The entire metalwork is matte black which contrasts well with the black/grey walnut laminate stock with its characteristic pistol grip and adjustable provisions for length-of-pull and comb height. It's offered in three action lengths (S, M, L) as well as two barrel lengths in 13 calibres from .22-250

Remington right up to 9.3x62 and two magnum calibres in 7mm Rem Mag and .300 Win Mag.

The receiver

This is the 'S' action (short) and measures 215mm x 35mm with the ejection port (on the right-hand side) coming in at 70mm. The top of the receiver encompasses Sako's trademark dual tapered dovetails which can accommodate an array of scope mounting options but is tailor-made for the Sako Optilock rings and bases.

The left-hand side has an angled scalloped flat which follows the perimeter of the ejection port and bears the maker's name, action size, serial number and proof mark. To the rear is the bolt release button which by pressing when the bolt is drawn back, allows for its removal for cleaning and safe storage. The receiver is finished in matte black, matching the rest of the metalwork.

The bolt

This is of the 'short' action length measuring 70mm x 16mm and the bolt body is the only part of the visible surface that's not matte black, going with a polished steel finish to allow the silky-smooth bolt travel the Sako 85 is known for. The bolt head encompasses triple locking lugs, a claw extractor on the right-hand side and a slot milled into the base which allows the blade ejector to come into play when the bolt is drawn fully back. It's a system that works well, giving positive ejection of fired and unfired cases.



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Sako 85 Black Wolf in .308 Winchester

The bolt handle is a one-piece unit attached to the bolt body and is also matte black as is the steel bolt shroud on the rear of the body. The bolt handle is well profiled, comfortable in the hand and the 60-degree bolt lift ensures quick cycling of the action.

Safety and trigger

The trigger is a single stage unit (optional set trigger available), fully adjustable between 1-2kg and on the test rifle breaks crisply at 1.6kg. The trigger blade is aluminium with a gentle curved profile and ribbed surface allowing positive finger control. The safety mechanism is the Sako Safety System, a two-way affair which locks the trigger and bolt handle simultaneously and a small bolt release button just forward of the safety lever which, when depressed, lets the user load or remove a cartridge from the chamber while the safety is still engaged.

Magazine housing and magazine

The triggerguard and magazine housing is made from a single piece of steel and is neatly inletted into the floor of the stock. The detachable box magazine, made entirely from steel, incorporates Sako's patented Total Control Latch system and sits securely in place, flush with the bottom surfaces. It's by far the best detachable magazine system on a production rifle. It will never fall out accidentally and can be top-loaded through the ejection port in the normal manner as rifles which employ the standard box magazine and spring follower. Capacity in .308 Winchester is five rounds.

The barrel

This is 620mm long and of a heavy-sporter profile akin to a #4 (medium) contour and in .308 Winchester calibre has a one in 11"



The bedding plate in the floor of the laminate stock and recoil lug on the underside of the receiver.

rate of twist with four grooves. It is cold hammer forged, chrome molybdenum in construction, matte blacked to match the rest of the rifle but, more importantly, is fluted. This gives some savings in weight and provides a slightly larger barrel surface area which allows for faster cooling. The muzzle is furnished with a 15x1 threaded section for attachment of accessories, the barrel crown finished with a target-profile.

The stock

The stock on the Black Wolf makes this Sako 85 model stand out from the rest. It's characterised by a well-profiled ergonomic pistol grip, made to completely secure the dominant hand to the stock and provide a rock-solid hold in the process. It also assists in perfect alignment of the index finger to the trigger blade, imperative when shooting



Length-of-pull and comb height are easily adjusted.

targets at longer distances. The stock is made of walnut laminate timber and is predominantly black/grey in colour.

The buttstock has two adjustable provisions which allow for length-of-pull and comb height to be adjusted simply by pressing the square-shaped button and sliding the recoil pad or cheekpiece to the desired position. The fore-end has a wide but rounded profile to use with a benchrest-style bag or bipod which can be attached to one of the two front sling swivel studs. Another sling swivel stud is fitted near the toe of the stock and the adjustable buttplate has a quality sorbothane recoil pad.

Removing the barrelled action from the stock, the clean inletting in the laminate mortise was as expected. A steel plate is screwed into the floor of the laminate stock just forward of the magazine well, to which the Sako recoil lug mates up directly. The steel plate accommodates the recoil lug and provides a bearing surface for the front of the receiver ring to bed upon.

Other than the front bedding plate, the rest of the receiver beds directly upon the laminate and two action screws, one behind the trigger group and one in front of the



The bolt handle is well profiled and comes to the hand nicely.

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Trevor Jenkin
SSAAGiB National Manager

Reminder to self

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A SSAA member advantage



Sako 85 Black Wolf in .308 Winchester

magazine assembly, to secure the barrelled action to the laminate stock. The barrel is free-floating along its entire length. The review rifle in .308 Winchester is 1140mm long, 4.2kg and comes with a T25 Torx wrench, two sling swivels, cocking wrench and comprehensive user manual.

At the range

Accuracy testing was done at the usual 100m with five three-shot groups and a barrel clean between changes in ammunition (see table). Being a new rifle, the barrel was thoroughly cleaned before use to remove any factory preservatives.

The match ammunition brands gave some tidy average group sizes, while the hunting loads also performed well - a stand-out group of 12mm for the Hornady Whitetail was probably a lucky one. I'd say as the barrel bedded in, groups would tighten up and the true accuracy potential would shine through.

Judicious handloads would bring the best out of the medium contour one in 11" twist barrel and would be my choice of ammunition if I was to use the Black Wolf out to 1000m. For this review I only stretched its legs to 300m and shooting some steel plates was entertaining with the correct hold-over dialed in through the new Steiner Ranger 2.5-10x50 scope.

Overview

The Sako 85 Black Wolf is a quality rifle



that marries an excellent laminate stock with a tried and tested barrelled action. With the review rifle weighing almost 5kg with the Steiner Ranger optic fitted, it lends itself to shooting off a rest or in the prone position with the aid of a bipod. As supplied in .308 Winchester its retail price of \$3889 isn't cheap but you have quality in a brand and model that delivers the best with no shortcomings. For more, visit berettaaustralia.com ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Sako, Finland

Model: 85 Black Wolf

Distributor: Beretta Australia

Calibres: Short Action - .308 Winchester (tested), .22-250 Rem, .243 Win, .260 Rem, 7mm-08 Rem
Medium Action - .25-06 Rem, 6.5 x55 SE, .270 Win, .30-06 Spr, 8x57 JS, 9.3x62
Long Action - 7mm Rem Mag, .300 Win Mag

Weight: 4.2kg (bare .308 Win review rifle)

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

Receiver: Sako 85 manually operated bolt action, three locking lugs, control round feed with mechanical ejection. Matte black finish

Barrel: Cold hammer forged, medium contour barrel 620mm with fluting, free floated. Matte black finish. Muzzle threaded 15x1 for accessories

Stock: Black/grey walnut laminate matte oil finished with quick adjustable recoil pad and cheek-piece (length-of-pull and comb height)

Magazine: Short/medium action - five rounds in magazine, one in chamber; long action - four rounds in magazine, one in chamber; detachable two row staggered steel magazine



Accuracy testing: Sako 85 Black Wolf .308 Winchester - groups at 100m

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Average (mm)*
Sako Super Hammerhead 150gr	22	35	27
Hornady Superformance 150gr SST	20	34	25
Federal Premium Gold Medal Berger 165gr	19	26	22
Hornady Match 168gr OTM	16	22	18
Hornady Whitetail 150gr Interlock	12	21	15

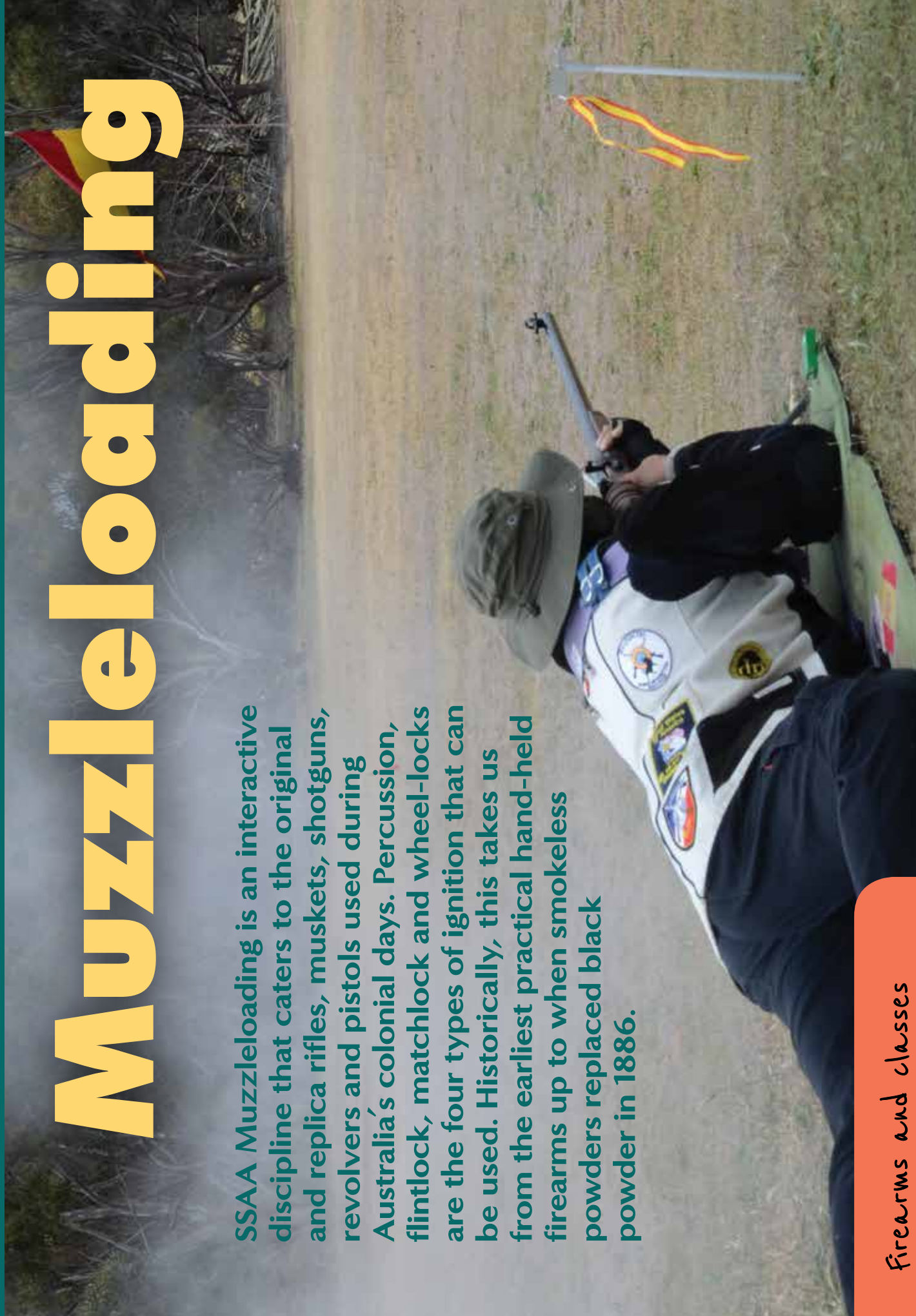
* Average group calculated from five three-shot groups at 100m

Working Gundogs

SSAA Working Gundogs is a shotgun discipline that utilises trained gundogs for hunting and retrieving in the field. Responsible hunters ensure that game is quickly despatched and retrieved over land or water. The gundog has been fulfilling this role for centuries.

Muzzleloading

SSAA Muzzleloading is an interactive discipline that caters to the original and replica rifles, muskets, shotguns, revolvers and pistols used during Australia's colonial days. Percussion, flintlock, matchlock and wheel-locks are the four types of ignition that can be used. Historically, this takes us from the earliest practical hand-held firearms up to when smokeless powders replaced black powder in 1886.



Muzzleloading events cover several classes and sub-sections. Each class of rifle is shot from the offhand, cross-sticks/prone and benchrest positions, but there are also events shot in the kneeling or sitting positions.

Class 1 (Military) comprises original and replica rifles and revolvers that were issued to troops somewhere in the world, such as the .577" Enfields and Colt cap and ball revolvers. Class 2 (Traditional) comprises traditional or civilian-style percussion rifles or pistols loaded with a patch and ball. Class 3 (Open) only requires that the rifle or pistol uses black powder and lead bullets. There are also several Firelock classes and two Shotgun classes.

Targets and scoring

All shooting is done at 50m Pistol targets, with the exception of the smoothbore flintlock musket and matchlock events, which are shot at French 200m targets placed at 50m. Offhand events are shot at 50m, while the prone and benchrest events are shot at 100m. To avoid having a sighting-in period, all Muzzleloading events (except Shotgun) comprise 13 shots fired within 30 minutes. The best 10 scoring shots count.

Getting started

The recommended way to choose which muzzleloader to purchase is to visit your nearest range that has black powder on the program and talk to the shooters and perhaps have a shot with the different firearms. Most Muzzleloading shooters start with a secondhand Class 2 percussion rifle of about .50-calibre that is loaded with patch and ball.





Training

An intensive training program is normally undertaken from the puppy stage. The discipline conducts training, trials and competitions at various levels to improve the abilities of dogs. Novice dogs carry out easier trials, while experienced dogs complete more testing runs.

Subdisciplines

There are four subdisciplines. The Retrieving discipline encourages handlers to work closely to ensure their dog will retrieve game on command. Popular breeds include the Labrador and golden retriever. The dogs are trained to be steady to the shot and to the fall of game, and are tested over land and water.

The Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) discipline caters for utility gundogs. Breeds include the German shorthaired pointer, Epagneul Breton (Brittany) and wirehaired pointer. The aim of HPR field trials are to test handlers and their dogs in competition against each other.

The Spaniel discipline field trials are all action, with the trial being conducted under conditions that reflect a normal day's shooting. Hunting within range of the handler, the spaniel's job is to find and flush game, normally rabbits. The competing spaniel must retrieve shot game for its handler, the most common breed being the working English springer spaniel.

The Pointer and Setter discipline requires working with speed and style in the quest for game birds, specifically stubble quail in Australia. Dogs include the Irish setter, English setter and Pointer. The dogs are expected to back another dog on point and retrieve or point shot game. Dogs may work at a distance from their handlers, but are expected to be under control at all times.

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CALIBRE	
RECEIVER SIZE XS	RECEIVER SIZE XS
<input type="radio"/> 222 REM	<input type="radio"/> 25-06 REM
<input type="radio"/> 223 REM	<input type="radio"/> 270 WIN
<input type="radio"/> 223 REM/12IN	<input type="radio"/> 30-06 SPRG
RECEIVER SIZE SM	<input type="radio"/> 4.5X55 SE
<input type="radio"/> 270 WSM	<input type="radio"/> 7X64
<input type="radio"/> 300 WIN SHORT MAG	<input type="radio"/> 8X57 IS
RECEIVER SIZE S	<input type="radio"/> 9.3X62
<input type="radio"/> 22-250 REM	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 9.3X64 SAKO
<input type="radio"/> 243 WIN	RECEIVER SIZE L
<input type="radio"/> 260 REM	<input type="radio"/> 300 WIN MAG
<input type="radio"/> 308 WIN	<input type="radio"/> 338 WIN
<input type="radio"/> 7MM-08 REM	<input type="radio"/> 375 H&H
	<input type="radio"/> 7MM REM-UMC

STOCK MODEL
<input type="radio"/> ALEXANDER
<input type="radio"/> ALEXANDER LUXURIA
<input type="radio"/> DILLON
<input type="radio"/> SPANGLER
<input type="radio"/> TRUSSARDI

METAL
<input type="radio"/> BLACKENED CARBON STEEL
<input type="radio"/> STAINLESS STEEL

BARREL LENGTH, MM	
<input type="radio"/> 508	<input type="radio"/> 585
<input type="radio"/> 542	<input type="radio"/> 618
<input type="radio"/> 549	

ENGRAVING
<input checked="" type="radio"/> NO ENGRAVING
<input type="radio"/> ACANTHUS LEAF 1
<input type="radio"/> ACANTHUS LEAF 2
<input type="radio"/> AMERICAN SCROLL 1

SIGHTS AND TRIGGER
<input type="radio"/> OPEN SIGHTS
<input checked="" type="radio"/> SINGLE SET TRIGGER

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Game animals are tougher than you think

Ben Unten



Much has been written on the 'correct' calibre selection for various game and by now most of us are aware it's preferable, within reasonable limits, to be over-gunned rather than under-gunned. But not everyone's aware why. In order to ensure a quick and ethical kill you must understand and appreciate that shots taken in the field are often under less than ideal conditions and on animals which can vary greatly in size

within the same species. On the whole, game animals are tough critters.

For the boundaries of this article I've excluded winged game as they command their own in-depth analysis. I've also left out some other domestic/stock-type animals - dogs, cats and horses - and have chosen to focus on the more commonly hunted species in Australia, but most of those have a reasonably similar equivalent listed below.

Rabbits

Recommended calibres start with the .22LR and I've taken plenty of rabbits at shortish ranges with this little cartridge. It's nice and quiet, has almost no recoil and is effective - but has its limitations. I rate its effective range to be around 70m-80m. I know there will be some who'll claim to have shot bunyips at 7000m with a sling shot but for the rest of us who are forced to live in reality, beyond 75m too many rabbits make it back down their burrows after being fatally hit with this calibre. One of the hot .17s may be a better choice for those looking to take bunnies out to longer ranges.

Foxes

Yes I've seen plenty of foxes taken cleanly with rimfires but have also seen them run in excess of 70m 'carrying' a chest shot from a .22LR. The .22 Magnum packs more punch but for me, where practical, I prefer a small centrefire (.204 or .223). I've never seen Reynard make it more than a few metres with a moderately well-placed shot from any centrefire.

Goats

I received some feedback from a new shooter who was thrilled with the performance of his .223 Rem on goats after he dropped two nannies and a kid at shortish ranges over the course of a weekend hunt. But like all animals, goats can vary greatly in size and strength and the longer you shoot, the more likely you are to see game 'carry' that fatal hit, especially tough old billies. I had a first-hand encounter of this when an experienced shooting companion and I were on a goat hunt.

I had my .30-06 and he was using his super accurate .222. I shot a young billy which dropped on the spot and he placed an excellent shot on a larger animal. His goat, though clearly hit hard, made it up over a rise and out of sight. We waited 10 minutes before following, in order to avoid triggering an even greater adrenalin spike in the animal, and followed the blood trail for quite some time, fully expecting to come across the fallen animal any minute. But the trail went cold and we lost it. We eventually found the animal but only with the help of the



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NMD323

Game animals are tougher than you think

dog's nose. It had been hit right through the shoulder but had somehow managed to carry the fatal shot for quite some distance before dropping.

Pigs

Our feral porcine species are almost legendary for their toughness. For me, anything under a .243 just doesn't have the necessary oomph for other than a well-placed shot in ideal conditions. Some of you will remember that spectacular photo capturing the image of a farmer with an enormous pig (rumoured to be 200kg-plus) which was apparently taken with a .22 Mag with one shot behind the ear. But for most hunters most of the time, the brain area of an animal is far too small a target. A heart/lung shot is a more reliable killer and allows for a greater margin of error.

Deer

The same goes for deer. Although the recommended minimum calibre for some species is a .243, we all want the targeted animal to drop instantly for several reasons. In addition to executing a quick, clean and humane kill, we want that confirmation. Whether it be a photo, skull cap, a full mount or just



Note the difference in size between the two rabbits and the hare.



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Game animals are tougher than you think

the meat, it's no good having a space on your wall for the animal you know was fatally hit but not actually recovered. Any of the .30s do an excellent job - .308 or .30-06 - but there are a lot of successful deer hunters who prefer something even larger as their rifle.

Buffalo/scrub bulls

These bovines are as big, strong and tough as they come and weighing somewhere around a tonne, are the most dangerous game animals in Australia. In most texts the recommended minimum calibre is the .30-06 but due to the nature of the hunts (mostly done on foot) you'll want a 'thunder stick' with some serious stopping power appropriate for halting a serious animal - .300 WSM, .375 H&H, .416 Rigby or .458 Lott. You name it, nothing is considered too big for these huge creatures. A buffalo's ability to carry a fatal shot is legendary and most guides will advise you to "keep shooting until the animal is down then put one in the brain box or spine just to be sure, regardless of how dead it looks".

It really is a case of 'horses for courses.' Never set yourself up basing your calibre selection on the best-case scenario - when I'm hunting I prefer to go with the 'prepare for the worst, hope for the best' approach. On the last hunt on the final day of my South African safari, a waterbuck (estimated 400kg-plus live weight) literally presented me with the 'south end of a north-bound animal'. I'd taken a .243 and .30-06 on the trip and was relieved I had elected to carry the '30 ought 6' on this occasion. The round entered through one of the hams and we later found it had penetrated almost 2m through the entire length of the animal to eventually lodge behind the skin of brisket. The trophy on my wall speaks to the effectiveness of this stoutly-constructed round driven at sufficient velocity.

Footnote: The calibres mentioned here are all dependent on the shooter's ability to handle the recoil and place a shot into the vitals of the intended target. ●



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The camera mounted to a tree - note the use of a stick to angle it.

Stealth Cam GXW Wireless

Daniel O'Dea

Trail cameras have been around for some time and like most modern technologies continue to develop and improve. *Australian Shooter* was given one of the latest offerings from US company Stealth Cam, distributed here by Tasco Australia.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, a trail camera is literally a camera that can be set up along a trail to record images or video of passing wildlife. The unit generally comprises a small camouflaged box that holds the camera, batteries and a sensor to provide a self-contained package that can be set up in a tree, or wherever practical, to automatically operate when triggered by movement. As cameras are designed to blend in with natural surroundings, they've also found a home in the security and surveillance field as a cheap option for farmers and landowners to see what's going on in their absence.

Most trail cameras are digital and record to a typical camera Flash or SD card. After

being in the field for the required time the owner removes or downloads the data on the card to view the images and/or video. Some units have remote cable or Wi-Fi connections for downloading or have a display screen on the unit itself.

The model for review was the Stealth Cam GXW Wireless which, as the name suggests, features a complete wireless capacity adding a whole new dynamic in that it allows both images and video to be uploaded directly to your smartphone or similar device. The system works off the international GSM (3G) network, so requires a data SIM card to be installed as with your phone, iPad or tablet and is operated by downloading an App to your favoured device. Once set up you can communicate directly with the camera to upload new images or sync to change settings, from video to still imagery for instance. The key to the system is connectivity - you need a signal but with an ever-expanding mobile network many rural areas now enjoy such coverage.

While I'm not totally ignorant of such matters I'd far from consider myself a 'tech head', so I was interested to see how I'd go setting up the camera. To be honest, looking at the instructions and website which lists the various features and settings, it appeared a bit daunting. In the end I figured the Stealth Cam GWX Wireless was no different to your phone or modern camera in that there are plenty of features you may never use or fully understand but they're there if you wish to delve into the technical side.

To start there are three main items you need that aren't included at sale, a data SIM card, an SD (memory) card and lots of AA batteries (the camera takes 12). I was able to gain an extra data SIM on my Telstra account which shares my existing phone data allowance for \$5 a month, though different plans are available so there's choice as to how you manage that. The SD card is the standard type you can pick up at a camera or electronics store and I



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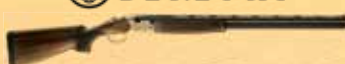
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Nightforce ATACR 7-35x56 FFP	\$4505



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Nightforce SHV 3-10x42	\$1130
Nightforce SHV 4-14x56	\$1245
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Nightforce SHV 5-20x56	\$1495
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just 587 grams \$2245



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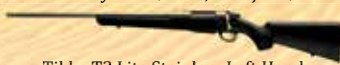
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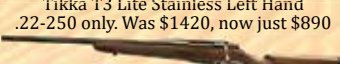
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S&B Classic 6x42 A4 or A7 reticle
\$1190

Stealth Cam GXW Wireless

bagged a value pack of good alkaline AA batteries. There's a handy quick start video on the Stealth Cam website - basically you download the App on your device, set up an account, make sure the latest firmware is installed from the website then run through a procedure for the cellular network, similar to what might be required when you set up a new mobile phone.

I managed it myself which some might say leaves 98 per cent of our readers in good shape to do the same! If I had any criticism it might be that while instructions, both in the manual and website video adequately cover setting up the camera, there's not much of anything on how to actually operate it. For instance, where best to mount it, how to aim it, distance and angles, basic operation stuff. It turned out most of this was pretty self-explanatory but I'd have been keen to see more in that area.

The operating settings include both programs and custom modes for how you want it to work. Issues like how many images you need to take over what time-frame when triggered, if in video mode how long it will record and so on. You can select when and how often it uploads to your device, be it instantly, hourly or once or twice a day and you can set what time this happens. Things like image size, which affects how much data you use, can also be set. You can limit data usage to avoid going over your monthly allowance and possibly running up a bill in extreme use cases.

All these settings also affect battery use. If taking lengthy videos and uploading instantly you'll be chewing through batteries at a rapid rate. Effectively you can select an operating mode that best suits your needs while balancing against battery efficiency. Still on batteries, for extended use or semi-permanent installations the camera has a plug for a cable connection to a 12-volt battery. Stealth Cam even offers a package that includes the camera, cable, rechargeable 12-volt battery and even a small solar panel to keep the battery charged.

The App allows you to connect to more than one camera, so you can have them set up at various locations. You can even name the cameras, say by location, and have this information appear at the bottom of the image. At the same time you can have grid coordinates recorded - each image logs the time, date and temperature the instant the image is taken.

For an extended period I had the camera set up at the farm at the front of my shed on a support post. I thought it would be interesting to capture any wildlife that ventured into the yard and was surprised



Two roos put on a boxing match just a metre or so away.



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Stealth Cam GXW Wireless



The Stealth Cam GXW is powered by 12 AA batteries.

to find it was triggered every time a vehicle passed my front gate 30-40m away. To conserve batteries I set it to upload images once a day, so each morning for a month I had the Stealth Cam alert appear on my iPad which, when swiped, would select the App and download the previous day's images. These most commonly provided a record of the comings and goings of vehicles on the access road through my property and while it wasn't my intention, it was reassuring to have a record of passing activity from the farm and could give peace of mind for those with security concerns.

The camera comes with a strap of generous length to attach it to a tree or post and has provision for a cable lock that, when installed, secures the camera from removal or access to the control panel door.

It seemed it would take a random image of apparently nothing. It took me a while but finally I noticed it wasn't nothing but a resident magpie that had taken to sitting atop the carport and swooping down to catch insects. On occasions I'd see the whole bird or just a wing tip disappearing off the edge of the image.

Finally, I gave the camera a run on a sapling facing one of my more remote dams and was amazed at the results as over a two-week period it caught the comings and goings of wildlife both native and feral. Pictures showed the morning visits of three little pigs, night time arrivals of a large



A resident magpie regularly triggered the camera. Arrows show time, date, temperature and camera name which you can input.



The chase is on - magpie v myna in aerial combat.

boar as well as the regular wanderings of a passing fox, wombat, wallaby, kangaroos and birds too numerous to report.

From a hunting perspective a trail camera can be a great tool especially for the time-poor who might not attain the scouting periods in the field they'd like. By setting up the camera along a game trail, dam, feeding area or fence crossing they can monitor movement remotely. You might find your targeted quarry has a routine and

passes the camera at a particular time, thus cutting out some of the guesswork as to when best make your stand. From a pest and stock protection aspect the same rings true - you might just recognise that dog visiting your sheep at night.

Stealth Cam has a comprehensive website with a great photo gallery showing some amazing stills and video footage captured with the product. Visit stealthcam.com or tsaoutdoors.com.au ●



This bulky boar was a regular visitor between 10pm and 2am.



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New from Steiner

Ranger 2.5-10x50mm hunting riflescope

Con Kapralos



The Steiner Optik Ranger riflescope series was designed primarily with the hunter in mind. Beretta Australia, which is continually proactive in meeting the needs of the Australian hunter, identified a gap in the Ranger line-up which needed addressing.

Traditionally the stalwart of hunting options, in variable magnification, has been the venerable 3-9x specification riflescope and many manufacturers continue to produce scopes on this three-times magnification level. But the modern hunter has started calling for a slightly different scope based on a 30mm main tube but on a more versatile four-times scale with increased light-gathering capability - hence a 50mm objective lens diameter. Enter the Ranger 2.5-10x50mm riflescope specification.

Wide, bright, short

The new offering shares its main attributes with the rest of the Ranger line-up in that it delivers a short construction scope with

a wide field of view. Paired with High-Contrast Optics which are capable in low light of giving light transmission of more than 90 per cent, its lightweight, shockproof and appealing layout gives the user fantastic value and unfailing performance on which ever firearm they choose. The proven four-times zoom range employed lets hunters match this optic to their favourite rifle.

The review scope arrived in attractive cardboard packaging with the Steiner Optik/Ranger logo and 4A-I reticle displayed on top, as well as a picture of the scope on one side and all four in the Ranger class side-by-side on the other.

All scopes in the Ranger line-up share some common features of a 30mm main tube, the 4A-I illuminated red dot reticle and High-Contrast Optics. Added to that the scopes are covered by Steiner Optik's Heritage Warranty for the life of the product, giving peace of mind to hunters in the knowledge the makers will look after them in the event of any problems.

Ranger 2.5-10x50 in detail

This new scope is squarely aimed at the hunter who demands a high-performing optic for general hunting and stalking. It's constructed on a one-piece tube made from the same aerospace grade aluminium as the entire Ranger line and has a 30mm main tube and hard anodised matte black finish.

The objective tube diameter is 57.5mm with an effective objective lens diameter of 50-32mm. The ocular diameter is 44.3mm. Being primarily a general hunting/stalking optic it measures 319mm and weighs 640g. Optically it's identical to the rest of the Ranger series in that it uses the same quality, fully multi-coated lenses (High-Contrast Optics), matching 4A-I red dot reticle in the second focal plane, extreme rugged and weather-proofing design and nitrogen purging and filling.

It retains the generous 90mm eye relief common across the Ranger line as well as an adjustable dioptre dial at the end of the ocular housing. The windage and elevations



The capped windage and elevation turrets.



The 50mm objective lens assists greatly with increased light-gathering.



Moving the settings is easily done with the adjustment ring.

turrets are of a low-profile, capped 'hunter-style' design making precise point-of-impact changes easy to effect.

Adjustment for windage and elevation is 1cm per click at 100m and these were simple to feel and audible in the process. The dials can be reset to a zero mark but don't possess a zero-stop, after all this is a hunting riflescope, not a long-range target one. The 4A-I red dot reticle is the ideal hunting reticle, the layout uncomplicated with no hold-over hash marks for mil-dots anywhere. Data is provided which gives the reticle subtensions (in cms at 100m) at minimum and maximum magnification, should the user require this.

The provision of an illuminated centre dot makes use in lowlight easy, and even in bright light the user can increase the intensity of the red dot or, as I did, use it without the red dot illumination. The illumination is powered by a single lithium-ion button battery housed in the body of the dial and there are 11 levels of reticle illumination, five for day-time and six for night-time with an 'off' position between each level.

At the range

The Steiner Optik Ranger 2.5-10x50 was supplied for testing with the Sako 85 Black Wolf in .308 Winchester (see page 44). While the scope is a general purpose hunting/stalking optic, the Black Wolf leans towards being a medium to long-range target/hunting rifle made to be shot prone or off a rest.

For accuracy testing the Ranger 2.5-10x50 performed brilliantly, all images bright, clear and with edge-to-edge sharpness and clarity as expected. Field of view out to 300m, the distance at which testing was done, proved excellent. I did perform a tracking test at 100m, moving the point-of-impact around a target frame and all adjustments were precise and repeatable with the initial and final shots overlapping. For a general hunting/stalking optic where

300m is a long shot, the Ranger 2.5-10x50 with the 4A-I reticle would have to be the perfect choice.

Conclusion

The addition of the 2.5-10x50mm specification to the Ranger line-up is an excellent move by Steiner Optik and Beretta Holdings, as I'm sure it will be embraced world-wide as a top-notch hunting optic for all light conditions.

Discerning hunters are turning to riflescopes with at least a four-times magnification range and illuminated reticle suited solely for any light condition. The Ranger 2.5-10x50 with the 4A-I reticle is certainly one to look at if you're in the market for a quality hunting riflescope and retails for \$1685. More at berettaaustralia.com.au ●



The ocular assembly features a fast diopter focus.

Specifications

Objective tube diameter	30mm
Effective objective diameter	50-32mm
Weight	640g
Length	319mm
Exit pupil	12-5mm
Field of view at 100m	14.7-3.7m
Eye relief	90mm
Diopter setting	-3 to +2
Parallax free	100m
Reticle	4A-I (illuminated)
Reticle position	Second focal plane
Reticle adjustment per click at 100m	1cm
Maximum elevation/windage at 100m	210cm/210cm
Centre tube diameter	30mm
Ocular diameter	44.3mm
Water pressure proof	Up to 2m
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Steiner Nitrogen-Pressure-System	Yes
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Warranty	Steiner Heritage Warranty (for the life of the product)



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Feds guilty of 'massaging' the numbers

John Maxwell

The Feds have once again been tripped up presenting dodgy information on numbers of firearms seized coming into Australia.

Australian Border Force (ABF) has admitted a claimed figure of more than 2000 detections of 'undeclared firearms' in 2017-18 actually meant 2011 undeclared firearms, parts and accessories.

In evidence to a Senate Estimates committee hearing on April 4, ABF commissioner Michael Outram cited the good work done by the agency over the previous year. In his opening statement before facing questions from Senators, he noted events in Christchurch had understandably brought the issue of firearms restrictions into focus.

"Australia has a strong legislative framework in place surrounding firearms, and the ABF manages the legitimate import and export of firearms across our border including through engagement, of course, with importers and traders," he said.

"We also conduct enforcement operations to detect and seize undeclared firearms at the border. Together with the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, the Australian Federal Police and state and territory police, we play an important part in our system of managing firearms and also work closely with international partners."

So far so good. Then he declared: "In the

last financial year we made more than 2000 detections of undeclared firearms and have highly skilled officers who are supported by intelligence and trace detection capabilities, including detector dogs and X-ray technology."

Now there's no argument over the skill of ABF officers and their capabilities but there is about that statement of "more than 2000 detections of undeclared firearms". Any lay person hearing that would surely think 'good on them' for keeping more than 2000 dangerous guns off our streets. But in this area the Feds have form. New Liberal Democrat Senator Duncan Spender promptly issued a media statement declaring the 2000 figure 'highly dubious'.

He said his predecessor, former LDP Senator David Leyonhjelm - with the encouragement of the SSAA - had established that ABF was including firearms parts in its gun seizure figures "with barely any functioning firearms seized". That stemmed from a media statement issued by then Justice Minister Michael Keenan in 2017, saying the National Anti-Gang Squad had "laid more than 3100 charges nationally and seized more than 5600 illegal firearms" since 2013.

That was widely reported in the media, with federal authorities praised for shackling biker gangs through this massive haul. The SSAA wasn't convinced though, and after repeated inquiries to the minister's office,

ABF and Australian Federal Police, the real story emerged. Overwhelmingly what were seized were firearms parts, not functioning firearms, and of those, 4785 were bound for Australia but seized by authorities in the US. That included just six functioning firearms, described as automatic assault rifles, and a much larger number of handgun and rifle frames and parts.

Firearm frames aren't trivial, being the foundation component, and whoever was seeking to smuggle them into Australia wasn't planning to sell them legally for use by sporting shooters. But to be a functioning firearm many additional parts are needed and it's questionable to describe frames in a manner that suggests they're functioning firearms, even more so for items such as magazines.

So what of the 2011 undeclared firearms, parts and accessories seized last financial year? "A further breakdown of this figure is not publicly available," ABF said, adding that this figure was publicly reported in the 2017-18 Department of Home Affairs annual report.

The seizure of handgun frames, magazines and unspecified firearm frames in January demonstrate the good work of ABF and AFP officers. The AFP media release and images clearly show these were not complete firearms and weren't described as such, but were intended to be had the importation succeeded. ●

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Safer Australia

Pro Hart (1928-2006)

In light of the recent tragedy in Christchurch, the state of Australian politics and the blatant inappropriate opportunism of the anti-gun lobby, it seems an apt time to revisit Pro Hart's painting *Safer Australia*.

Commissioned by the SSAA more than two decades ago, the painting was in reference to then-Prime Minister John Howard's knee-jerk reaction to the Port Arthur murders. The Outback scene depicts law-abiding firearm owners 'shooting' responsibly on a rural range with sling shots and bows and arrows while criminals, immune to the new laws, battle police using illegal firearms. Pro's work clearly reflected the ineffectiveness of Australia's gun laws on crime - a reality that sadly hasn't changed in 23 years.

Pro Hart, a proud SSAA member and pistol shooter, died in 2006. If he were still alive today there's no doubt he'd have plenty of 'ammunition' for similar works. One of Australia's most well-known and beloved artists, his work was admired and owned by kings, queens, presidents and prime ministers alike. His talent knew no bounds.

Despite world-wide acclaim, success and wealth, Pro chose to remain in the small NSW town of Broken Hill where he was born. He had a creative spirit that saw him experiment with 'performance art' before most other artists - he was known to drop paint from hot air balloons, create ice sculptures and even use a cannon to plaster paint on a canvas.

Prints of *Safer Australia* are exclusive to the SSAA and are a collector's item, especially for the sporting shooter. Originally \$60, SSAA members can now own a piece of history and share in Pro Hart's love of the shooting sports for only \$39.95 including postage. Visit onlineshop.ssaa.org.au for your copy today (limited supply). ●



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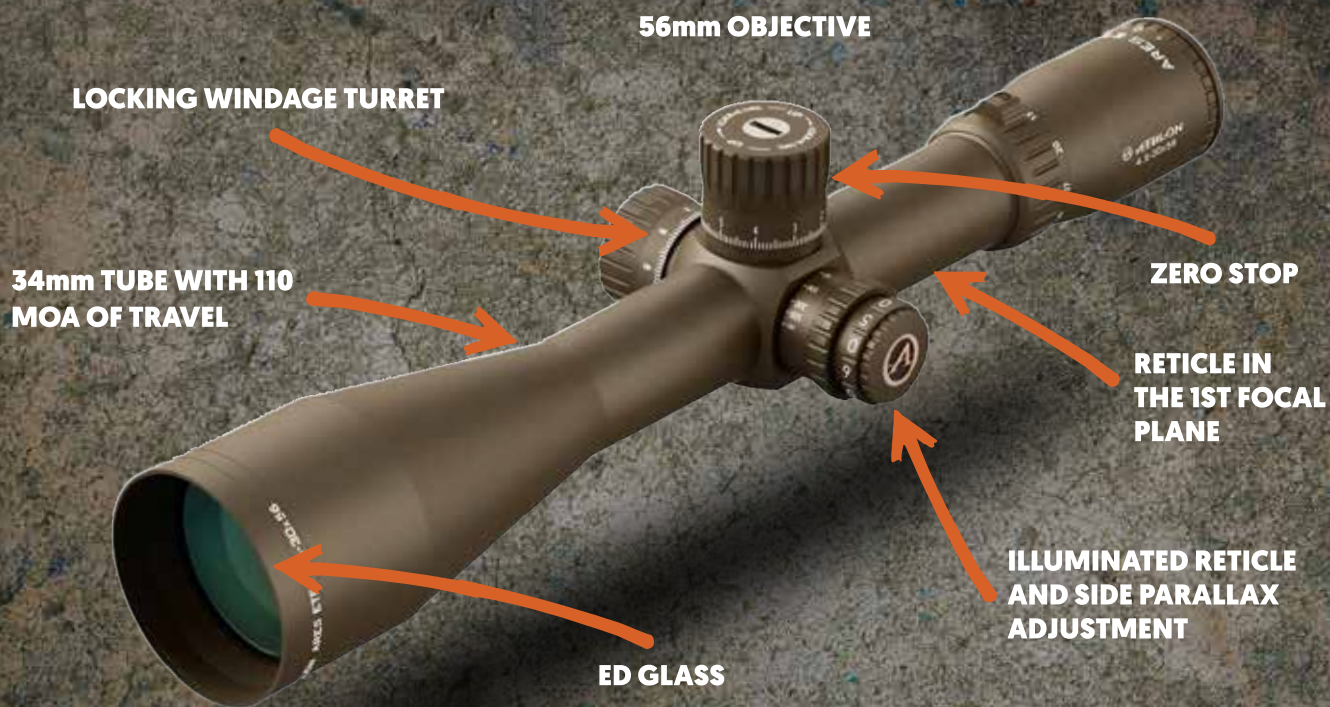
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Fabarm's Black Elos N2 Sporter a winner

John McDougall



Since visiting the Fabarm factory in Brescia more than 20 years ago, I'm constantly amazed by the forward thinking they employ in not only the design of their shotguns but the manufacture of them. For instance, the Tribore barrel system Fabarm introduced 15 years ago has only recently been adopted by the largest gunmaker in Italy. And since the barrels and patterns they produce are the crux of any shotgun, to my way of thinking Fabarm have been ahead of the game for years with not only the Tribore design but the way in which patterns from Tribore barrels punish targets.

Their latest advance with the introduction of a 97mm elliptical choke tube system instead of shorter, conventional parallel choke tube systems used by most

gunmakers world-wide, has Fabarm again leading the way in leaps and bounds in barrel technology with great patterns which are hard-hitting as well.

The shotgun on test here is Fabarm's Elos N2 Black Sporting which sees a return to black, non-reflective receivers ideal for sporting clays enthusiasts who also enjoy waterfowl hunting, as the gun has a non-reflective surface to avoid glints from the sun. The gun is also superior proofed to 1630 bar, well above what's required for steel shot proofing for High Performance loads, another example of Fabarm leading the way in technology.

The barrels

Measuring just under 760mm or 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ ", the barrels are well finished with a deep

lustrous, non-reflective blue. I've seen the barrels hand finished in the manufacturing process where they're treated with 1200 grit emery for a non-reflective finish rather than polished, something preferred by the hunter. Atop the barrels is a ventilated rib slightly tapered from 10mm at the chamber end to 8mm at the muzzle.

A white trap-like barrel sight was fitted to the muzzle and a smaller brass bead sight just short of halfway from the breech to avoid canting the gun when mounted. This is a small detail but an important one as the shooter can instantly check their gun mount is correct. The ventilations on the top rib coincide with ventilations on the two side ribs, finishing the barrel set well. Ventilating all of these allows the barrels to cool quicker and lightens them slightly to balance the gun.

As mentioned, the 97mm elliptical choke tubes, a completely new generation, are installed at the muzzle and T-piece choke tube spanner supplied for installation and removal. (A film of grease on the surface of your choke tubes is advised when installing them and there are many good brands around).

The T-piece spanner is used to nip the tubes tight to ensure they don't work loose, a process always undertaken with the gun unloaded. The design of the collar is excellent with the choke constrictions easy to read about the collar once the tubes are installed as well as on the sides of the tubes for quick identification.

At the breech or chamber end the one-piece ejectors are strongly made and their timing perfect, with fired shells thrown well clear of the breech. Chambered for



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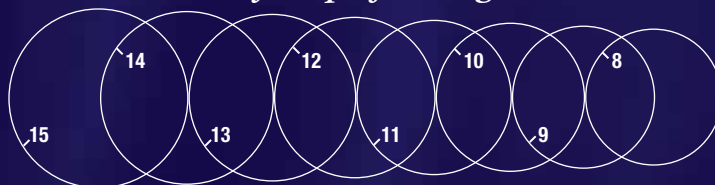
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Fabarm's Black Elos N2 Sporter a winner

76mm (3") cartridges and proofed to 1630 bar meant the Elos N2 Black was well suited to all HP steel shot loadings in the 3" configuration. The 1630 bar is superior to the 1370 bar required by CIP for High Performance steel shot loads and Fabarm have gone beyond, making a gun second to none in the proof stakes.

Jointing, the connection of the barrels to the action, is achieved via a bifurcated lug system with recesses on the barrel that mate with lugs in the barrel walls to joint the barrels into the receiver. To further strengthen the barrel set and monobloc from the hammering of HP steel shot and other high pressure loads, there are four lumps on the bottom of the monobloc that hold the barrels in the receiver floor to prevent backward and forward movement. This is a method used by other Italian manufacturers and gives an extra strong action that will last a while before needing 'tightening'.

The receiver

Made from forged chromium-molybdenum steel, the rounded edges of the Elos N2 Black are quite stylish, the white and orange enamelled inserts well designed and contrasted nicely with the black action background. A little cubist etching about the shoulder of the receiver and matched along the fore-end border complements the receiver design. The top lever is ergonomically designed to operate comfortably with the thumb and with just the right amount of pressure it releases the barrels from the standing face in readiness for loading. It sits right of centre to allow for wear over years of service.



Notice the solid one-piece ejectors and trapezoid bit to the rear bottom of the monobloc.



The fore-end is released from the barrels via this button catch.

The barrel selector-cum-safety catch is located on the top tang, just behind the top lever. It's positive in its operation and has one orange dot signifying the bottom barrel is fired first and two dots for the top barrel to be fired first, rather than 'U' or 'O'. The barrel selector can only be operated once the safety catch has returned to the safe position. Design of the trigger-guard is generous and caters to shooters of different finger sizes, the triggerfoot nicely raked, comfortable to the touch and adjustable for finger length.

The stock and fore-end

These were made from nicely grained Turkish walnut with a twist, the adjustable comb insert with Fabarm Micro-Metric 3D system coated with a tough polycarbonate-like finish. At a glance it almost looked like the comb had been covered with leather, as found on some traditional English guns, but it was walnut coated with a durable plastic. The Micro-Metric 3D system is fairly straightforward with the comb removed, Allen keys supplied to make adjustments based on shape of face.

Chequering at the pistol grip is about 18 lines per inch with a palmswell built into it for a right-handed shooter to improve gun control. I was pleased to see a significant and very comfortable recoil pad fitted, especially for use with Remington Hyper-Velocity HP steel shot loads travelling at 1700fps. Normal 28-gram clay target loads were well tamed by the weight of the gun at 3.5kg (7lb 11oz).

Internal design of the fore-end is innovative too, with a system to tension the



Design and colouring of the receiver was excellent.



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Fabarm's Black Elos N2 Sporter a winner

locking mechanism that attaches the walnut wood fore-end to the barrels, all instructions included in a comprehensive manual. The fore-end has a tulip or Schnabel front and rather than a lever to release it, a button is pressed so it can be lifted forward before rotating to free it from the barrel set.

In the field

Shooting the Fabarm Elos N2 Black Sporting was a pleasure as it smashed targets beyond recognition, the patterns produced from the elliptical or hyperbolic chokes just sensational. I was amazed at how much harder the pellets hit steel pattern plates - they were completely flattened compared to results I've seen from traditionally choked guns with standard barrels.

The weight is about right for a Sporter at just under 8lb and balance ideal for a smooth swing, recoil tamed by the over-boring in the barrels via the Tribore



The 97mm Hyperbolic choke tubes lead the field in technology.



The Micro-Metric 3D system with plastic-coated comb removed.



The pistol grip is nicely raked and well covered in chequering.

system. Overall the gun performed as well as it looked and comes with all accessories including gun socks, a well-documented instruction booklet and ABS plastic case. Price is around \$2870 which includes a three-year warranty. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Fabarm, Brescia, Italy

Distributor: Raytrade, Melbourne

Model: Fabarm Elos N2 Black Sporting (12-gauge)

Overall length: 1219mm (48")

Barrel length: 758mm (29⁷/₈")

Overall weight: 3.5kg (7lb 11oz)

Barrel weight: 1.49kg (3lb 4oz)

Bore and chamber: 12-gauge Tribore chambered for 76mm (3") cartridges and superior proofed to 1630 bar

Chokes: Improved Cylinder (short), Modified (medium), Improved Modified (long), Full (extreme)

Trigger pulls: Under barrel 1.6kg/3.5lb, over barrel 1.75kg/3.6lb

Stock dimensions: Length of pull 385mm ± 5mm/15¹/₄", drop at comb adjustable, drop at heel adjustable

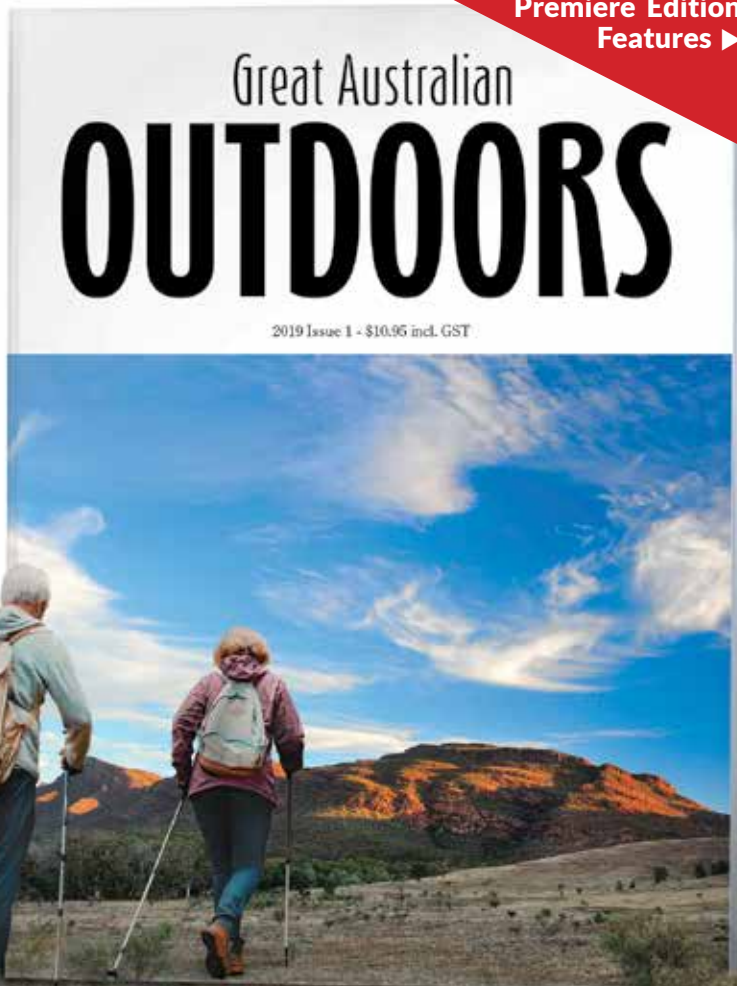
Warranty: Three years

Price: Cased and supplied with all accessories, gun socks, choke tubes, Allen keys and instruction booklet: around \$2870

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Branko Giljevic

attention to detail

Sam Garro



Branko with completed Custom Mauser M98 cal 7x64mm.

Stylish bulino engraving on the Custom Mauser M98.

Branko Giljevic is a self-taught artisan, skilled in fine knifemaking and metal engraving, turning out pieces embellished with scroll work, figurines, game animal scenes, characters such as family members or iconic personalities or whatever subject matter presents itself.

He follows in the footsteps of other master craftsmen I've had the privilege to interview - Bill Swann, Bob DeVries and Ross Waghorn - in the field of gunsmithing and stockmaking, and I found it surprising to learn that, apart from Bob having completed a course in Fitter and Turner and Toolmaking, they're essentially all self-taught.

All were driven by a tenacity to succeed in their chosen sphere. They were self-reliant with no higher education as such but turned to books, research and information from whatever source available to become the professionals they are today.

This is the route Branko has taken. To turn out such detailed work he must also have a good artistic eye and steady hands, as some of his work is so intricate and detailed it's virtually photographic images imprinted on metal. In order to achieve the required fine lines, curves and difficult angles he had to design and build his own miniature tools, lathes and presses, something only a tool-maker would be proficient in.

Before photography, engraving was used to reproduce all manner of symbols, writings, pictures, scenes and other themes on various objects made of gold, silver, copper, brass, bronze and later steel. It was also used to embellish valued items from jewellery to firearms, knives and swords and create a more aesthetically pleasing appearance.

While archaeological findings show metal engraving was practised centuries ago under different cultures, the golden age of European engraving was from about 1470 to 1530, with steel engraving introduced in 1792 by American inventor Jacob Perkins (1766-1849) for banknote printing.

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Branko Giljevic - attention to detail

Today, some of the most prestigious and expensive rifles and shotguns such as James Purdey & Son, Holland & Holland, Westley Richards, Rigby and Krieghoff showcase incredible ornate engraving and scroll work. Superlative is just one word that comes to mind.

Branko lives in a rural retreat in the high-country of East Gippsland, Victoria, prime sambar territory where he can peacefully focus on his work and draw inspiration from nature and local game animals for his knife-making and engraving. It's also a place he can hunt sambar, his favourite deer species, and fish in pristine mountain creeks and rivers.

In the 1980s, outside a supervisory job he held with the local council, he involved himself in gun restoration including rust blueing. His work was so exacting that a customer one day requested he apply his



skills to making a one-off hunting knife. The knife was so appealing that word of mouth quickly spread and from there he launched a lifetime career in knifemaking and engraving. His drive for excellence has never diminished and over the years he has turned out world-class knives that have collected numerous accolades.

"You only become a 'master' after continuous manufacturing over many years, applying different or new techniques, continuously learning from various sources and it's mostly achieved through hands-on application," said Branko.

"To achieve such status involves hard work, long hours, patience and determination - there are no short-cuts and money can't buy experience or talent. The benefit of getting older in this profession is you continue to learn, improve and get to complete further works."

Branko's deer hunting activities have also inspired him to make better hunting knives, imprinted with the sambar logo. His impressive high-grade knives have mainly

gone to admiring collectors from varying backgrounds with other working knives to hunters for skinning, meat retrieval and caping.

While money made from the knives is essential to ensure his continuation and maintain a sustainable living, as a true artisan what he values most and drives him to do better is a customer's acknowledgment of his work. He's so confident in the excellence, construction and workings of his knives that he provides a signed collector's Authenticity Certificate, lifetime warranty and free sharpening service.

Yet his mastery and success hasn't come without physical and mental sacrifice. Stooped over his bench day after day for years and peering through laboratory-type microscopes, one for sharpening and one for engraving, his hands, shoulders, neck and eyes have been affected by the enduring effort. Finely detailed small pieces are especially demanding, requiring the upmost focus and concentration as one tiny slip can mean a complete restart and many

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hours lost. To achieve the self-imposed standard of perfection for particular works, similar to other artisans of his ilk, he has had to design and make tools not available from suppliers.

Branko's upper range of knives is varied and diverse for hunting, skinning, fishing, chef and tactical, his folders highly regarded as some of the best in the world with many shipped to overseas collectors. Today he mostly makes law compliant classic lock-back knives in large or small size and in three different versions - classic lock-back, frame lock-back and take-down.

Unlike other knives on offer his are made from hardened bush-bearings, bronze shims to exacting tolerances, and can be fully disassembled for total servicing and exchanging parts. He can personalise artwork using scrimshaw and scene engraving in bulino in accordance with customer requirement and affordability.

To better appreciate the demanding bulino process, it involves using a microscope to effect contour line cuts and dots like pixel metal removing and every engraver executes the process a little differently according to individual style. Where some accomplished engravers remove 200 dots in a square millimetre, Branko removes 500 dots at the rate of 3-5 dots per second under a 30 power microscope, particularly in relation to portraits. To achieve the required result, the tool end itself is honed into a diamond shape measuring an incredible 0.08mm at the tip. It's a time-consuming process wherein the closer the dots, the darker the contrast and the sparser the lighter, so minute that a bulino scene can contain more detail than a photograph.



His most recent challenge involved engraving a rifle, a first for Branko. He was commissioned to beautify and engrave the receiver, mounts and rings, triggerguard, pistol grip cap and bolt handle as well as the shroud on a Custom Mauser M98 Cal 7x64mm to reflect the maker Bob DeVries and stock by Ross Waghorn.

This was really an acknowledgment of all three artisans and after the final blueing process the rifle will be ready to sight in at the range and, once the bullets satisfactorily print on paper, will be shouldered to take out on its first deer hunt.

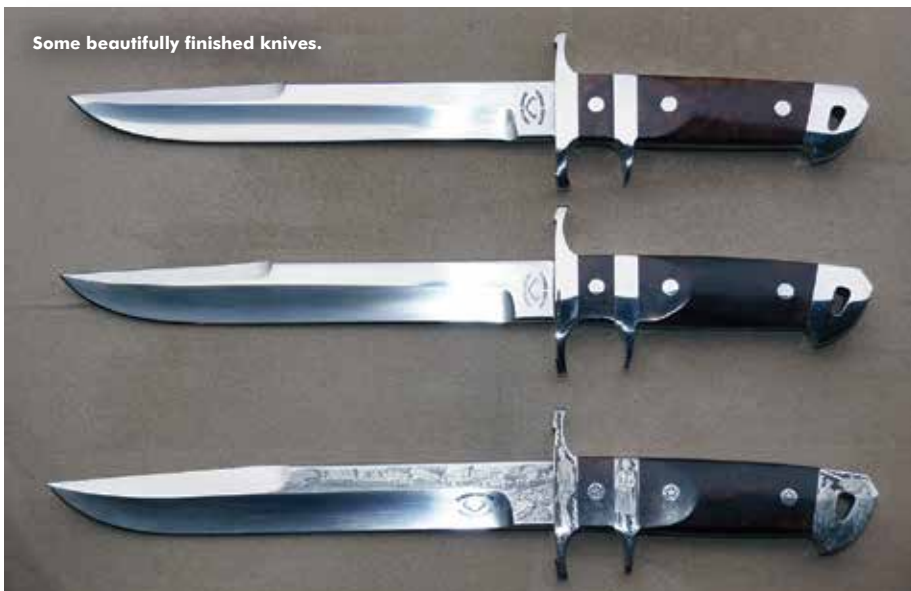
The whole process from beginning to end - similar to other custom build projects that

start, stop and start again - has taken about four years with the barrel, action and parts over the last eight months of the process residing with the engraver who spent 120 hours applying American scroll, most appropriate and fitting for this rifle.

The outcome, as can be seen in the photos, attests to Branko's ability and workmanship - beautiful and exacting. Yes, it took a while, but the end product was well worth the wait and has resulted in a real 'hand-me-down' piece of art.

Even though he has worked mainly on knives and to a lesser extent personalised jewellery, now that Branko has completed the rifle engraving he's so pleased with the outcome he is looking forward to further firearm and related engraving projects.

The passion within just keeps him wanting to do more. As for the owner, his expectations have been surpassed tenfold. Visit sambarcustomknives.com



Fond memories of fixed power scopes

John Hill



A selection of
fixed power
scopes, mainly 6x.

If memory serves, the first sporting telescopic sight I ever saw was a Field with 2.5x magnification, a short-looking affair, possibly a seven-eighths tube with small lenses at each end. The reticle adjustments were exposed, it didn't appear too weatherproof and the spring-loaded 'clicks' were external.

Like many early scopes the reticle adjustments actually moved the reticle instead of the image, so unless the scope was mounted with great care the intersection of the cross-hairs would be nowhere near central in the field of view when the sight was zeroed.

I thought at the time I'd have a lot less trouble with the peep-sight already fitted to my rimfire rifle rather than trying to attach the Field, as there was no convenient way of mounting it. Undaunted, my father went to the trouble of making a side mount for

the Field and mounted it on his Stitz single-shot .22.

The old Stitz with its tele-sight and some subsonic ammunition was used to shoot rabbits at fairly close range. Unfortunately dad was too old to do much hunting as his walking ability was limited and I'm sure he took more satisfaction from the difficult task of mounting the scope than he did from using it.

The Stitz has long gone to its final resting place but I still have a box of dad's subsonics in my ammo locker. As for the Field scope it just seemed to disappear. It would make a good collector's item if it was still around but you never realise these things until they're thrown out and by then it's too late.

That Field sight made such a lasting negative impression on me that when reasonably priced Japanese telescopic

sights arrived in the early 1960s they passed me by. I continued to use my trusty peep-sight and it wasn't until I looked through a mate's 4x28 scope I realised how much better an optical sight was. So I spent big, bought a new Krico 10-shot .22 and fitted it with a Bushnell Banner 4x32 scope - a combination that turned out to be extremely good for hunting rabbits. The Bushnell Banner was, and still is, excellent value among mid-price riflescopes.

Later, when I 'went centrefire', Bushnell Banner 6x32 scopes seemed to be a good choice at the time. There were variable power scopes in the initial Banner series but the ones I checked out didn't hold zero throughout the power range - a common complaint with many early variables. That convinced me to stay with fixed powers which I did for a long time. Even though several of my rifles are now fitted

with variable powered scopes, and their additional magnification is useful, all my remaining fixed powers are still functioning and mounted on other rifles.

I originally chose fixed powers over variables for several reasons, one being the previously mentioned zero problem. Secondly, the image sharpness (resolution) of most variables was nowhere near as good, particularly on high magnification settings, as similar priced fixed powers. And lastly, fixed power scopes are completely fiddle-proof - your mate can't 'accidentally' alter the magnification setting as there's none to alter.

Please note I'm referring to scopes of 40 or more years ago. Then, as now, quality varied with price but there's one thing can be said for the more recent crop of mid-priced variables - they've improved immensely over the years, optically and mechanically. Even the cheap ones today aren't too bad.

Some shooters seem to adjust the power ring of their variable scope for almost every shot they take in the field. The variables I use however, are left on whatever setting I consider appropriate for a particular rifle and are rarely altered.

You could say I'm still using fixed power scopes. Most are set at no more than 8x which seems to be a good compromise between a reasonable field of view and image brightness, the exception being the scope on my target rimfire which is set at 10x. While high magnifications may suit target shooters and various forms of long-range shooting, 6x and 8x scopes will cover a lot of hunting situations as too much magnification can be a disadvantage.

It's becoming difficult now to buy fixed



This Leupold 7.5x40 AO is a very useful fixed power scope.

power scopes in the 8, 10 and 12x ranges. There are a few 4x and 6x about but generally speaking the supply of fixed powers is limited as they're becoming less and less commonplace. It would seem any scope without a wide magnification range, illuminated mil-dot or similar type reticle and large diameter objective lens just isn't worth owning.

Yet I find I'm at no great disadvantage with my 6x and 8x scopes, one of which is a Leupold I've had for more than 40 years. Over that period it has been on many different rifles from rimfires to a .222 Remington and the little 6x36 has suited all those rifles quite well.

One of the best fixed powers I ever owned was a Leupold 7.5x40 adjustable objective. Actually I had two of them and one is still on the .17 Ackley Hornet which now belongs to my son. He's had little

reason to replace the scope with a variable as the Leupold suits the rifle perfectly. The other scope went when I sold a rifle, which I admit was a silly thing to do. Why Leupold chose to make a 7.5x scope and not an 8x is anyone's guess but they were top quality.

Some may disagree but I believe a 6x scope with a relatively fine cross-hair can be just as effective for medium-range small game work as a more powerful scope with thicker cross-hair. It's the amount of target obscured by the reticle's aiming point that matters, not necessarily the magnification power of the scope. My two 6x scopes have fairly fine cross-hairs which cover less target area than some of my variables, even when set on 8 or 9x.

One of my .22 Hornets and Martini .218 Bee wear 6x scopes and, despite my age and deteriorating eyesight, I can usually shoot five-shot MOA groups at 100m with

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Fond memories of fixed power scopes

either of these rifles when aiming from a bench. No doubt those groups would tighten up a bit with higher magnification scopes and a shooter with better eyesight.

Yet the sighting arrangements for these rifles are more than adequate to head-shoot rabbits out to the useful ranges of either rifle. What's more, both scopes are neat in size, light in weight and seem well suited to the rifles they're on. Admittedly these two fixed powers are of good quality and have excellent resolution.

Many gunshops trade-in riflescopes in order to sell new ones and often have a box full of old scopes 'out the back'. While some of these trade-ins are fairly ordinary there could be the odd good one at the bottom of a box. If you're shooting on a budget then a low-cost secondhand fixed power scope could be a cost-effective alternative to buying new. For not too much outlay you can often buy a sound, useable fixed power scope, even if it has a gloss finish and a few minor scratches.

But regardless of my fondness for fixed power scopes I'm forced to recognise the current trend with manufacturers is to steer away from them. In fact, the move has already been made and more and more variables, complete with as many bells and whistles that can be packed into them, are



An ultra-lightweight Martini rifle with a 6x Tasco scope.

being made, the reason being this is what most shooters want.

I'm not against change and do have a few good variables that can be screwed up to 12x which helps when your eyesight starts to deteriorate. That said a neat, lightweight fixed power seems to be more appropriate sighting equipment for some of the small-calibre, small-game rifles in my gun safe. ●



John Hill's inherited subsonics.



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The .303 and 150gr Hornady is a great combination for large boars.

It's not just another SMLE

Chris Redlich

As the headline suggests this isn't about an old clunker .303-calibre rifle. I own a full wood Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) No.1 MkIII rifle but this is an overview of a rifle I specifically bought for the purpose of deer hunting more than a decade ago. I'd just started my pursuit of deer and the property I organised to hunt on was home to a healthy population of fallow deer. This was an estate that charged to hunt and one of the conditions was the hunter must have a rifle of no less than .270 calibre. Fair enough, but as I only had a .243 worthy of using on deer I'd better find myself something a little heavier to add to the safe.

In the beginning

Browsing through a gunshop one Saturday morning, a secondhand rifle immediately caught my eye. At a glance it looked like all the other timber-stocked hunting rifles beside it. What stood out was the 10-shot magazine consistent with an SMLE, affectionately pronounced 'Smelly' .303 calibre rifle. On inspection it had a nice timber sporting stock of typical two-piece design with a Monte Carlo rear and raised cheek-piece, including recoil pad, black fore-end

tip with white line spacers, pistol grip cap and hand-cut chequering. I was impressed.

This was a genuine .303 sporting rifle not one of the usual cut-down full wood versions and felt much nicer to shoulder than its military brother. If somebody asked what kind of timber the furniture was made of I wouldn't know, at a guess beechwood or possibly English walnut as these were common on English-made stocks at the time. It came with Hilver scope rings and bridge mount drilled and tapped to the top of the receiver. Apparently these mounts were a standard fit for this rifle. In the rings sat an old battered Tasco scope which I'm sure was added to make the rifle more complete but it wasn't fit for use. A deposit was paid, I applied for a permit then returned to pick up my new hunting rifle.

A little history

My SMLE is built on the No.4 MkI action, the No.4 receiver slightly beefed up compared to my old No.1 MkIII action. This is evident by the distinct square-shaped left-hand side of the receiver, instead of the smaller No.1 cylindrical style. These actions were regarded as stronger and later successfully chambered for the higher

pressure 7.62x51 NATO cartridge. No.4 sniping rifles in 7.62mm were used by the British Army for decades after World War II.

From the limited information available I discovered the Whitworth Rifle Company were under the corporate umbrella of Parker-Hale. A surplus of No.4 rifles at the end of WWII meant a market for cheaper hunting rifles was possible by converting these military barrelled actions into sporters. Parker-Hale made fine sporting rifles based on a Mauser M98 design. So as not to confuse Parker-Hale rifles with SMLE sporters, Whitworth hunting rifles came into being. Although the receiver is stamped with the year 1943 as manufacture, the complete rifle package was probably made in the 1960s or '70s.

My No.4 sporter is compact and well balanced with the shorter 510mm barrel. Stamped along the top of the barrel is 'Whitworth Rifle Company Manchester England' and because it's a cut-down version of the military barrel there's no change to the standard left-hand twist of one in 10". I removed the stock and was surprised to find the previous owner had the receiver epoxy-bedded to the stock and

It's not just another SMLE

the barrel floated, probably a contributing factor to the superb accuracy of this old .303. The sales assistant did mention the rifle was used for target shooting and the modifications reflected that.

I ditched the awful scope and mounted a Pecar 6x with single fine cross-hairs to the Hilver mounts. I wasn't happy with the high mounting position due to the thickness of the bridge mount and height of the rings so had the receiver drilled and tapped, with a Millet base fastened to it and I sat the Pecar in a pair of ultra-low Leupold rings. German Pecar riflescopes were nice in their day but unspectacular when compared to modern scopes. But with a steel tube it's a great match for the steel on the No.4 and has never let me down.

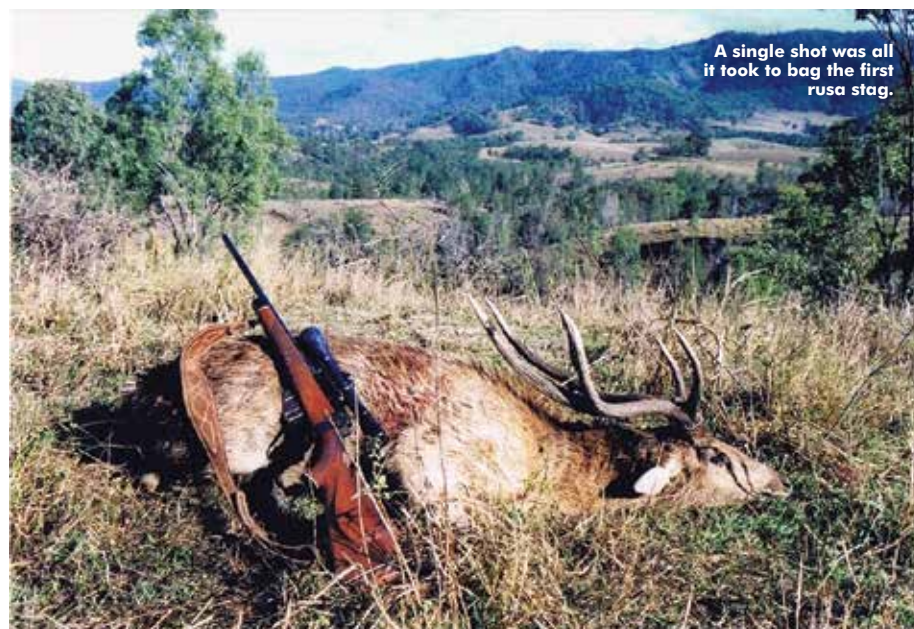
In the early days I put up with the original heavy two-stage trigger and became used to it. After acquiring other hunting rifles with lighter adjustable triggers I grew frustrated with the pull weight and creep of the trigger, and after some research and advice have succeeded in making it a lighter let-off by filing and polishing the trigger sears and cocking piece on the bolt. It's recommended a gunsmith do this as two-stage triggers for some may take getting used to.

Load development

Loads for the rifle have been easy and I've stuck with 150gr projectiles. The 150gr Sierra Pro-Hunters were the mainstay of my hunting rounds for years and responsible for the humane despatch of many feral animals. More recently I loaded 150gr Hornady InterBonds behind the same powder supply as the Sierras, 45 grains of



A young wild dog stopped in its tracks by the No.4.



A single shot was all it took to bag the first rusa stag.

ADI AR2208, and used these effectively on wild dogs.

On paper the Sierras and Hornadys achieved the same accuracy but with different points of impact which puzzled me as I thought same weight projectiles would perform similarly on paper. A few years ago my wife bought me a Shooting Chrony chronograph which I use on trial handloads. To my surprise the Hornadys were travelling a lot faster than the Sierras, about 150fps difference between them.

I found the Sierras measured .311" and the Hornadys .312" and can only assume the marginal difference was responsible for creating higher pressure thus higher velocity and higher point of impact on paper targets. The brass behind the slower Sierras also lasted a lot longer than the Hornadys which turned out to be a head-spacing issue, not unfamiliar with an SMLE, the visible signs of case head stretching on

the brass base ultimately leading to case head separation. This can also be attributed to the rear locking action but headspacing can be fixed easily on an SMLE by fitting a new bolt head of marginally larger size (ten-thousands of an inch).

After researching load data from a reputable source I changed powder from ADI AR2208 to AR2206H, loads of 44 grains of AR2206H making a huge difference to velocity at 2660fps and giving an extra 300fps advantage with no detriment to accuracy.

This load was settled on after working up from the minimum and actually exceeds listed maximums but with no visible signs of high pressure. I concluded that as this rifle has a shorter barrel of 510mm, pressures are down compared with the longer 620mm barrel the printed loads had been tested on.

Hunting with the SMLE

I'd been offered the property to hunt fallow deer previously and now had an acceptable rifle - it was time to open the No.4s hunting account. The property manager insisted on a sighting-in process at 100m and treated the old .303 with some scepticism which vanished when I produced a sub-MOA three-shot group straight out of the bag. Next morning I took to the hills for my first-ever deer hunting trip which became a steep learning curve as I discovered free-range deer just don't want to be found, unlike the feral pigs and goats I was used to. My time spent was unproductive deer-wise but I was learning lots about them.

My fortune changed on day two though.



Chris's cousin Bill used his .303 to down these pigs on a western hunt.

Making my way through a gully and over a rise into some thick native cypress I saw deer at the edge of the tree line and coming my way. I crouched and placed the crosshairs on the lead doe, the gap down to 30m as I squeezed the trigger and in front of me lay my first deer, a large-bodied mature fallow doe. I radioed the property manager who helped with photos and dressing the deer and I had my first portable fridge full of venison.

The remaining days were used to make a dent in the local pig population, including one that walked up on me and two taken in twilight with a shot each at 150m. They all dropped on the spot and I was very happy with my sporter SMLE.

Summary

Over the next few years the .303 traded places on hunting trips with my then 7mm-08 Remington. I have full confidence in this rifle and its accuracy and continue to use it regularly for pig hunting. Realistically, the old No.4 sporter with a shorter barrel and 10-shot magazine is the closest thing to what some manufacturers now call a 'scout' gun - it's not just another SMLE, it's a great sporting rifle with plenty of history. And it never disappoints. ●

• Page 36: Talbot on Target! - Combined Services

Need somewhere to hunt?

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Visit farmerassist.com.au for more details on the release and status of the program.

Bullet trajectory

debunking the myths

Brad Allen



At longer ranges, slow-moving pistol bullets have a very curved trajectory.

Over the years I've heard some fanciful explanations relating to bullet trajectory arcs. Some even came from people with firearms backgrounds who should know better but who accepted as gospel what they'd been told and always believed, however inaccurate.

A couple of years ago I was talking about firearms with a young work colleague (we'll call him Nigel) who'd served in the Army Reserve. He explained his understanding of bullet trajectory stating that when the projectile leaves the muzzle of the rifle it flies flat for a short distance before starting to climb into a trajectory arc, up through the line of sight, eventually starting its downward curve several hundred metres downrange.

Knowing this to be totally incorrect I told him his theory was flawed. He laughed and said he knew he was right as he'd learned this in the Reserve. I assured him he had possibly misunderstood what he'd been taught as it was totally against the laws of physics for a bullet, or any projectile, to behave in that manner. And I could prove it.

Luckily, Nigel was a bow shooter and I used this as an analogy in my explanation. When I asked what would happen if he shot an arrow from his bow that was perfectly level to the ground at the time of release, he agreed the arrow would fly straight, quickly lose speed and height and ultimately nosedive.

I asked: "So how do you hit distant targets?" "Aim the arrow up a bit and lob it on to the target," was the reply. "So you agree the arrow is affected by air friction, which causes it to lose velocity before gravity assists in pulling it towards the ground, so you have to aim higher to get the arrow to the target?" "That's right," he said.

How does artillery fire work to shoot shells as far as they do? "They aim the barrel up at a steep angle to lob shells on to the target," said Nigel. So why do bullets magically start to rise after exiting a level barrel instead of being affected by the same forces as other projectiles? After all, bullets, shells, arrows or even javelins are nothing more than different kinds of projectiles. At this point I was met with a look of realisation from Nigel that what he'd previously believed to be true was incorrect, as the 'magic bullet' theory had been discredited by scientific fact and logic.

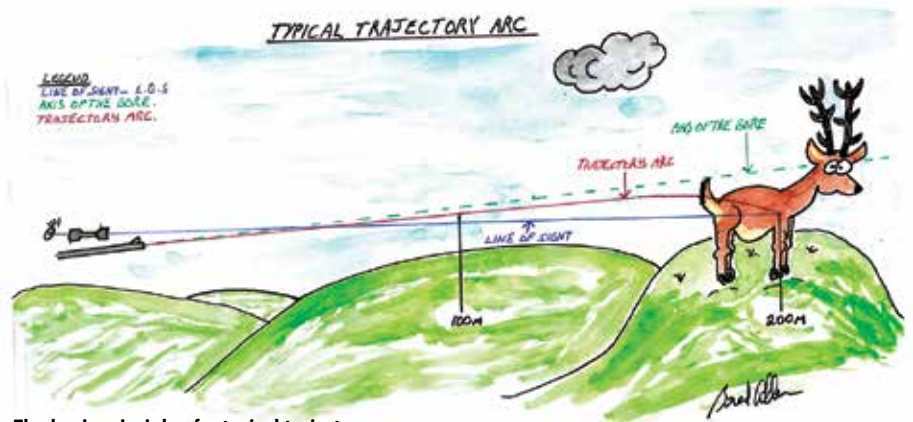
If we conduct the same experiment with a rifle, by holding the barrel perfectly level on firing, the bullet will only appear to travel flat for a short time before starting its downward journey drawn by air friction and gravity, before hitting the ground. As soon as any projectile leaves the muzzle there's no more force exerted on the base of the bullet (as there is inside the barrel) by the expanding gas from the gunpowder, to accelerate that projectile. The bullet is subjected to the effects of air friction and gravity which combine to slow it and drag it down. Simply put, it can't do anything else.

The all-important trajectory curve we rely on to attain the necessary distance for a shot can only be achieved by angling the barrel upwards from level, to fire the projectile up through our line of sight. At this point there's a straight line from our eye through the rear-sight to the front-sight (or scope) to the target. In relation to this straight line of sight, the barrel is now pointing slightly upwards. This angle will be of varying degrees depending on many factors but mostly on what distance we need the specific firearm to be zeroed.

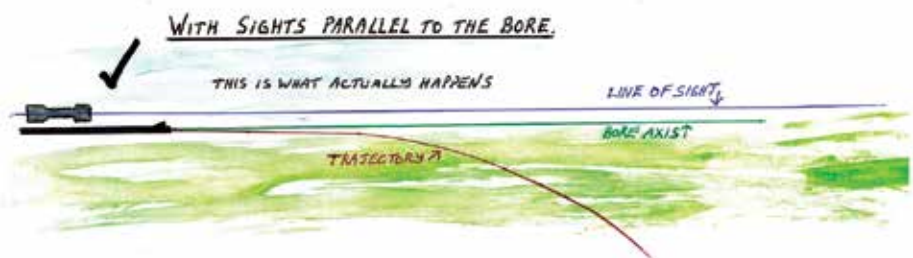
Upon leaving the muzzle, the projectile appears to travel straight in relation to the axis of the barrel for a short distance before air friction and gravity do their bit (in actual fact, the bullet starts to slow and drop away from the axis of the bore almost immediately).

As the bore is now angled slightly upwards in relation to our sight plane, the bullet will first intersect the line of sight at some point (perhaps 30 to 50m depending on your rifle's zero) from the muzzle, then continue its trajectory arc above our line of sight before again intersecting that line of sight as it slows down assisted by air friction and gravity, on its path back to earth (hopefully the target).

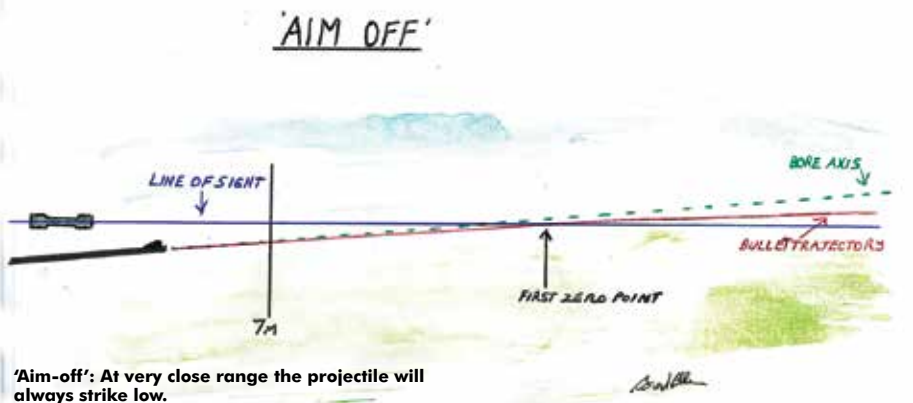
The problem we have in convincing the novice shooter of this theory is that it's almost impossible to observe that the rifle's sights and axis of the barrel are not really



The basic principle of a typical trajectory arc.



The true story when rifle sights and bore axis are parallel.



'Aim-off': At very close range the projectile will always strike low.

parallel, due to the short sight radius and length of the barrel. It's a bit easier to see on an old SMLE .303 if we set the rear-sight to its maximum zero of 2000 yards. At this point the rear-sight sits extremely high and it can be easily seen the axis of the barrel is now pointing up at an angle in relation to the level sight plane.

Recently, while shooting in a Handgun

Metallic Silhouette competition at my local SSA range, it was relatively easy to observe the trajectory arc in action. I was spotting shots downrange at 150m and 200m for my mate Bill who was shooting a Ruger Super Blackhawk .44 Magnum. As I stood behind him I could see the sunlight glinting on the base of the relatively slow-moving pistol projectiles as they angled

Bullet trajectory - debunking the myths

upwards through his line of sight then back down and occasionally on to the target.

On the other hand, if our rifle is sighted for the normal 100m or 200m zero and we're then presented with an extremely close shot, another problem arises where our shots will hit much lower than our rifle's zero.

If we consider putting down an injured animal at 7m we need to 'aim-off' to achieve our objective. My Ruger .223 with Leupold scope is sighted-in to be on point of aim at 150 yards. Consequently it shoots about 40mm low at 7m (the distance between the centre of the rifle's bore to the centre of the scope sight) which in some cases can cause either a missed shot on a small target or can place the bullet lower than required, possibly through the animal's jaw instead of the brain which is a very undesirable outcome.

Our 'aim-off' or point of aim in this instance needs to be 40mm higher than where we need the bullet to impact, remembering the bullet won't intersect our line of sight until about 30 to 50m out depending on calibre and sight settings. This situation is exacerbated in the AR family of rifles when the centre of the sights/optics are even higher above the rifle's bore at about 75mm. Remember, the higher the scope/sights above the bore, the more 'aim-off' error will occur at close range.

A couple of years ago my son Morgan missed a close shot at a piglet under 10m after already shooting the sow and one of her other young. While taking photos I heard the piglet approaching us through the bush to where he appeared less than 10m away. Morgan lined him up through



the Leupold 2-7 scope on his Steyr 30-06 for a chest shot and promptly shot about 50mm low, hitting the ground just under the piglet's body causing it to quickly retreat. In the heat of the moment I'd neglected to tell Morgan to aim slightly higher to allow for the correct 'aim-off' and his shot accordingly went low.

Whether we shoot a bow, pistol, rifle or artillery the principles are the same. To gain the distance we need to make the projectile hit the target we must angle the bullet upwards through our sight plane to achieve a trajectory arc sufficient to deliver the projectile on to the target at any given distance.

There are no bullets that shoot flat for a short distance before magically starting to rise after exiting the barrel of any firearm (defying gravity and air friction) as such a scenario is against the laws of physics. The distance we need can only be achieved by angling the axis of the barrel slightly upwards in relation to the line of sight to achieve the trajectory arc. Understanding the basics of bullet trajectory arcs is another step towards enhancing our enjoyment of owning and using firearms. ●



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



SSAA SHOT EXPO
ssaashotexpo.org.au

Spika - Command Knife Range

Spika has taken the beloved Bowie and sticker knives and created the Command range of knives, sporting a custom dog nose grip handle with their trademark Spika orange accents and branding. These accents are by design and for purpose ensuring that if dropped these knives can be easily spotted, the dog nose grip and extra large hilts giving the user reassurance it will remain in their grasp.

The Command Bowie has multiple applications in the field with the top curved section used to help remove skin from a carcass while the longer straight edge can be used to carve meat. The Command sticker features blood grooves, angled tip and tapered top side edge, this blade designed for pig hunters.

All Command knives come with a protective nylon sheath with belt loop and secure press stud belt clip and drainage points.

The full range of Spika knives will be on display and available for purchase at the SSAA SHOT Expo, Visit us at Stand 120. If you want to learn more about the Spika knife range visit knives.spika.com.au for more information.

knives.spika.com.au



Forge 10x42 binoculars a new era for Bushnell

North American correspondent Thomas Tabor

Bushnell has been a leader in the optics field for decades. During that long production tenure the company has garnered a stellar reputation worldwide based largely on the ability to offer reliability and long-lasting accessories which frequently carry price tags far less than their competition. However, recently something happened internally at Bushnell that kick-started a whole new generation of fine optic options, like nothing I've witnessed before.

I became aware of unique developments when the United Parcel Service delivered a large package from Bushnell. Not expecting anything, my curiosity got the better of me as I tore into the box and found a distinctive style of invitation. Nestled between thick layers of foam rubber was a single plate of thick glass which contained a personalised request to attend an exclusive unveiling of what Bushnell called "a revolutionary new line of optics". The event was to take place at the 2018 US SHOT Show in Las Vegas but the invite lacked much else in the form of details and specifics.

When I arrived at the designated meeting place I was escorted behind closed doors

along with a few other media people to view new products. Immediately we were awestruck by the sheer magnitude of the selection, including a vast collection of freshly designed riflescopes, spotting scopes, binoculars, rangefinders and various other shooting-related items. But before the summit was under way all in attendance were cautioned that none of the information we were to receive was to become public for at least four months.

Such conventions never provide enough time or opportunity to fully evaluate items like these. So once the presentation had concluded I placed an order for a couple of the Forge optics then waited a full eight months before the first of them arrived - Bushnell's Forge 10x42mm binoculars.

The Forge bino line-up

One of the new binocular lines presented was the Forge. Currently there are four binocular forms available within that series, the smallest of which I'd describe as a mini model - the 10x30 Roof Prism ED Prime. The distinctive design allows the binoculars to be folded together, making them compact enough to fit the breast pocket of most

shirts. It's a great feature that helps eliminate the usual flopping back and forth when being used in the field.

There are also more traditional-sized binoculars in the Forge range including two Roof Prism ED Prime models in either 8x42 or 10x42 and a 15x56 Abbe Koenig Prism ED Prime version. But for this project I chose what I believed the most versatile type - the 10x42 - for testing and evaluation.

Features

All Forge binoculars come with a set of similar, important characteristics. These include a protective coating referred to as the EXO Barrier, which bonds to the exterior lenses to repel water, oil, dust and debris. This coating is used to ensure the clearest possible view through the lenses, even in torrential rain. The lenses also receive an anti-reflection application the company calls its Ultra Wide Band Coating, which helps provide the brightest possible image quality.

And for further enhancement all the prisms come with a PC-3 Phase Coating intended to increase the resolution and

Forge 10x42 binoculars - a new era for Bushnell

contrast to the highest possible degree. Environmentally friendly lead-free glass is used on all lenses and each of the Forge offerings comes in a waterproof construction. And like all the Bushnell line of products they're backed by the company's Ironclad Warranty and engineered for a lifetime of use.

Both the 8x42 and 10x42 models are the same length at 170mm (6.7") and close to the same weight, the 10x42 reportedly weighing the least at 0.86kg (30.4oz) and the 8x42 coming in at 0.87kg (30.8oz). For comparison purposes, the pocket-fitting 10x30 measures 122mm (4.8") and weighs 0.39kg (13.7oz) while the considerably larger 15x56 weighs 1.45kg (51oz) and has a length of 226mm (8.9").

The test 10x42

The Forge binos have a highly attractive and eye-appealing styling. The unique colouration of brown with accents of black sets these units apart from all others. But aside from the pleasing outward appearance there are many other favourable features about the Forge 10x42.

These binoculars come supplied with a rigid clamshell-style case that provides a high degree of protection, particularly when travelling and during storage. There were also two styles of straps provided, one of which I particularly liked due to it being heavily padded where it typically contacts the user's neck. The other simpler strap was better suited to the clamshell carrying case.

Also included is a full shoulder harness with the Bushnell logo 'circle B' printed on the back. A harness like this works well when you're facing long days in the field, by holding the binoculars tight against the chest and distributing the weight better than a normal carrying strap.

For further protection from dust and debris a silk-like sack is included. Covers are also provided for both sets of lenses. The eyepiece lens cap unit can be attached to the carrying strap for security and the front lens caps have been designed to hinge downward but remain attached to body of the binoculars. All the lens cover caps can



The whole Bushnell 10x42 kit.

be easily removed if needed. The eyecups can be raised or lowered to accommodate either eyeglass wearers or not. A diopter ring is present only on the right barrel to be used to sharpen the focus. Before that adjustment can be made you must pull up on the diopter ring to unlock the dial. Once adjusted, the ring is pushed back down, locking the setting in place. I particularly liked this feature which is lacking on many other binoculars.

The entire Forge 10x42 unit came textured with small elevated dots to ensure a secure grip even under wet conditions. There were indents where the user's thumbs would normally be positioned against each tube and horizontal ridges along each side further add to its overall non-slip construction.

The way I see it

The clarity was good throughout. While binoculars aren't frequently called on to view things at short distance, sometimes that ability can come in handy. In this case I could bring an object into perfect focus as close as 2m away. I also found the focus knob to be conveniently positioned, allowing me to bring the view into quick and easy focus while keeping my eye on the target through the lens. The overall clarity and resolution was extremely good and the light enhancement abilities excellent.

At dusk I took the Forge 10x42 out and scanned the area for deer. None were visible with the naked eye but when I lifted up the Forge binoculars, a herd of about a

dozen animals was brought into clear view about 400m away. I then lowered the binos and tried to locate the deer again but they were invisible. Clearly this is testament to the Bushnell Forge binoculars' abilities for light transmission and a huge benefit for hunters.

I find all larger magnification high-quality binoculars seem to be on the heavy side and that includes the Bushnell Forge 10x42, but I didn't feel they were any heavier than most others. I found the ergonomics to be good, making them comfortable and practical for field use.

There are more expensive binoculars on the market which in some cases may provide slightly better performance overall, but I believe it would be difficult to find this degree of eminence for a comparable price. And as far as my personal inherent abilities go, I'm not sure I'd even be capable of accurately distinguishing between those minor differences. Bushnell may just have unearthed the perfect compromise in this case between quality and price. ●



Specifications

Manufacturer: Bushnell
Model: 10x42 Roof Prism ED Prime PC3 DiElectric
Length: 170mm (6.7")
Weight: 0.86kg (30.4oz)
Colour: Brown with black accents
RRP: \$699

All set for an appy day in the field

Don Caswell

I have a variety of game calls, both manual and electronic, most designed for bringing in predators which in my neck of the woods are mainly wild dogs. Responding to a call from a local farmer who was having trouble from said dogs, I visited the area and hatched a hunting plan.

Normally I stalk prospective country sites or sit and call from good spots with a wide expanse of view. However, given the lie of the land and position of the farmer's neighbours, I'd be shooting down the length of a narrow, cleared laneway for drainage between two cane paddocks. It was the perfect place to use a remote caller and decoy as I lay in ambush just inside the wall of cane.

I had two different remote decoy callers, neither of which I'd used for a while, and both had succumbed to use, abuse and battery leakage. I needed a new decoy caller in a hurry and a bit of web surfing drew me to the iHunt App by Ruger, which I downloaded free.

On eBay I bought the iHunt XSB Bluetooth decoy speaker from a local seller, it cost about \$120 and was delivered within days. I was slightly surprised as from the photos I expected it to be smaller. The speaker (pictured) is about the size and shape of an army helmet, moulded and coloured to look like a rock. It has a wide, flat base and can sit with good stability on uneven ground. There's a small red beacon light on top so you can find it in the dark

and, remembering predators don't have colour vision especially in the red-orange scale, you're at no disadvantage with the light on.

There's also a socket on top to take the tiny decoy twirler which twitches and jiggles a bit of fluff that looks like a tuft of rabbit fur. I was testing the device on the kitchen bench when my wife came in, looked askance at my new toy and declared: "What is that?" I lied and replied: "My new hunting cap!"

Now there's a bit of history around my choice of interesting headwear down the years and it's more a reflection of my past sins than my wife's gullibility that she took that as fact, shook her head and walked away in disbelief.

The app was a free download and came with a reasonable selection of gratis game calls but for \$10 I took the option to download all 750 calls. Most of those would never be of use to me but I was curious to hear a mixture of the calls of North American game animals. In the quiet of the night I could test the cattle and neighbours' response to all manner of exotic howls, screeches and bellows. The 110dB speaker output, powered by three D-cell batteries, ensured those calls travelled far and wide on the night air and I could hear most of the dogs within a kilometre barking in response. There are other options for smaller speakers if you don't want the combined decoy speaker.

The iHunt App comes with a host of

Ruger's iHunt decoy speaker that's driven from a free mobile phone app.



other interesting features including diurnal tables that indicate the best hunting and fishing times in your location, something I intend to investigate more thoroughly. I've taken the iHunt decoy speaker on a few hunts and it will enjoy a lot more use going forward. Having used other types of decoys and speakers I've no doubt it will help me make contact with the killer wild dogs I hunt and I also intend giving it a run on foxes and feral cats when the opportunity arises. ●

SSAA backing for new ambassador



Canberra's Scottie Brydon will prolong his international shooting career after being contracted as a SSAA ambassador to promote the shooting sports. The SG-S wheelchair shooter is passionate about Olympic Trap and success at various competitions worldwide has seen him rise to number two in the world rankings as well as topping the Commonwealth ladder.

The 32-year-old has shot in three international paraplegic Olympic Trap events

and holds the world record for the highest qualifying score of 110/125. Other highlights include taking top spot in the Para Trap Shoots World Championships in Lonato, Italy last October. That followed a record-breaking performance at the Para World Cup in Chateauroux, France and next up for Scottie is a World Cup event in Croatia next month before appearing closer to home at a World Championship meet in Sydney in October.

He's hoping the SSAA's support will help

cement his place among the upper echelon of disabled paraplegic shooters. Scottie competes in the PT1 event, Class SG-S which caters to athletes with poor balance and/or trunk stability, operating from a wheelchair in a standard seated position. Athletes have an impairment in the lower limb(s) but no functional limitation in the upper body.

Scottie's shooting career began in his home town of Cobar, NSW before he made the move to Canberra to be closer to competition and training facilities and since relocating he's noticed a significant improvement in his average scores.

He also receives backing from Beretta who supplied him with the 692 Trap gun he uses in competition. On his long haul to Europe last year he made time to visit the Beretta headquarters in Brescia which was the perfect finale to a hectic schedule.

Keeping pace with the world's best shooters can be a costly business so Scottie's grateful to the SSAA for their helping hand. "I'm delighted with the SSAA partnership," he said. "This will help with flights, accommodation, overseas trips, ammunition and training equipment.

"And supporting a paraplegic athlete such as myself is a great way for the SSAA to promote and be recognised for its support of disabled athletes." ●

Up periscope! Fun shoot for our new recruits

Anzac Day had added significance this year for the Rocky River Pistol Club of South Australia as it marked their affiliation with the SSAA - officially designated as S38. Based at Wongyarra in the Southern Flinders Ranges, the RRPC originated in the late 1960s and has enjoyed a recent resurgence in its numbers.

Arguably the club's most successful member was Ken Walter, who joined in 1970 and went on to qualify for the SA State team in 1978 before competing at the World Championships in Caracas in 1982 and shooting in two Olympic Games qualifiers, missing selection on one occasion by just two points.

For more than 30 years the RRPC's February Open Shoot regularly attracted close to 100 competitors as did its hugely popular annual Western Action competition, a feat in itself as the far-flung club's membership never exceeded 30.

At the 40th annual Laura Folk Fair on the banks of the Rocky River in April this year, the RRPC hosted the SSAA's mobile

air rifle range which led to a significant turnout at the club's open day the following weekend, resulting in a healthy interest in both the club itself and the shooting sports in general (new members are now in the offing).

The RRPC shoots Standard, Rapid Fire, Free, Service, Centrefire and Sport Pistol as well as 25m and 50m Black Powder Pistol and a Black Powder rifle competition. Air pistol is also available on the indoor range attached to the clubrooms and members are in the process of completing a range which will allow competition in the disciplines of metallic silhouette in .22 Rimfire Rifle and Pistol, IHMSA Field Pistol and Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette in both rimfire and centrefire.

In true Anzac spirit the club launched a day with a difference this year when it staged a .310 Cadet Rifle competition using periscopes, an event now planned as an annual on the Sunday following Anzac Day.

With only two rifles equipped with periscopes competitors had to wait their turn, but all who shot agreed the event was



definitely one worth pursuing. Course of fire at 50m was five rounds at a paper target and five at 'enemy helmet' silhouettes then repeat for a possible maximum score of 110.

It was clear that using a periscope is indeed challenging and shooters gained an understanding of how demanding it must have been under enemy fire. The club plans to conduct a review of the competition with no doubt changes and 'rules' introduced for next time, the event open to all SSAA member clubs. ●

SSAA Victoria 2019 AGM notice



2019 Annual General Meeting and postal ballot

The AGM will be held from 2pm to 4pm
Sunday, September 22, 2019 at the Hotel
Bruce County, 445 Blackburn Rd, Mount
Waverley, 3149.

Nominations to fill three Board vacancies will
open May 28, 2019 and close June 28, 2019.
Nominations to be posted to **Returning Officer
SSAA (Victoria), PO Box 336, Nth Melbourne,
Vic, 3051;** or delivered to **88 Miller St, West
Melbourne;** or emailed to **frank@ybg.com.au**

Results of the postal ballot, which opens July
29, 2019 and closes August 30, 2019, will be
announced at the 2019 AGM.

Financial accounts for the year ending April
2019 will be available at ssaavic.com.au prior
to the meeting or upon written request.

For details contact the State Office on 03 8892
2777, or email state_office@ssaavic.com.au.

By order of R. Farmer
Company Secretary, SSAA Victoria

SSAA Member Alert

Members are reminded that if you are using member-
ship of the SSAA as your genuine reason for your fire-
arms licence, you must ensure you renew your SSAA
membership in time. Please be aware that state and
territory police firearms registries regularly cross-check
firearm licences and your member status. To support
your genuine reason and keep your firearms licence
and to make sure that SSAA can support you, make
sure you renew your SSAA membership.

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OR 0412 561 243

Gun & Knife Show List

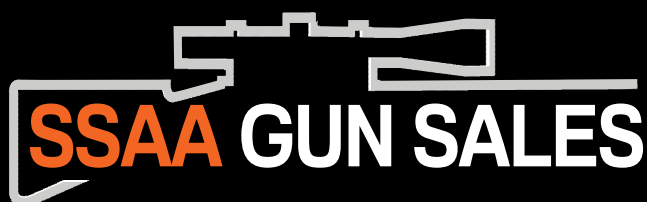
2019

June 15-16	Gympie Showgrounds, Gympie	Gympie Arms and Collectables Fair	Gordon McRae 0428 865 205
July 6-7	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
July 13-14	Ballarat Sports & Events Centre, Wendouree, Ballarat	Eureka Arms and Militaria Fair	Nick Smith 03 5342 4433 or ballaratarms.com.au
July 20-21	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria etc	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
August 3-4		Sydney Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
August 10-11	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
August 24-25	Bendigo Major League MultiSports Complex, Golden Square	36th Annual Arms & Collectibles Show	Greg Penna 0427 400 930 or gccabendigo@gmail.com
September 7-8	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	330+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles & more	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 14-15	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	info@waarmsandarmour.com.au
September 21-22	Maitland Federation Centre, Maitland	Hunter Valley Arms Fair	huntervalleyarmsfair.com.au
October 5-6	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
October 7		NSW South Coast Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
October 19-20	Melbourne Showgrounds	SSAA Shot Expo	ssaashotexpo.org.au
October 26	Illawarra Sports Stadium, Berkeley	Illawarra Outdoor & Adventure Expo	Chris Sainsbury 0448 129 932 or ssaashotexpo@gmail.com
November 3-4		Adelaide Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
November 9-10	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
December 2		Canberra Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com

2020

September 12-13	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	info@waarmsandarmour.com.au
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Persons wishing to purchase any firearm that requires a licence from any arms fair in NSW should apply for a Permit to Acquire at least six weeks before the fair. For reasons beyond the control of show organisers, some of the above dates may be changed. It is advisable to check the show dates before travelling.



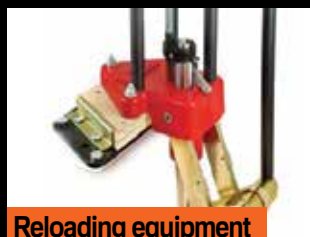
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SSAA Membership Office, PO Box 282, Plumpton, NSW 2761

Phone 02 8805 3900 Fax 02 9832 9377 Email mem@ssaa.org.au

ABN 95 050 209 688

NEW ☐ RENEWAL ☐ Have you been a member before? Yes/No

Membership No.



**ALL
APPLICANTS
PLEASE
READ AND SIGN**

This application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I undertake to do all in my power to preserve the good image of the sport and the Association. I understand that members breaking the Code of Conduct may be subject to suspension or expulsion. The Code can be found at ssaa.org.au/code

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Refund Policy: Subject to Australian law, membership fees are not refundable, nor can they be transferred.

SSAA Inc. collects personal information of members. The information you provide on this form will be disclosed to the state or territory branch of the SSAA to which your membership application relates. A copy of SSAA Inc's privacy policy can be found at ssaa.org.au/privacy. You can obtain access to your personal information by writing to: SSAA, PO Box 2520, Unley SA 5061.

Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Miss Ms Mrs or Preferred SSAA Branch

First name

Middle name

Last name

Residential address

Town/suburb

State Postcode

Postal address (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

Town/suburb

State Postcode

Phone (Home) (Work)

(Mobile) (Fax)

Email

Date of birth Male ☐ Female ☐

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND SPECIAL OFFERS

Each membership category (apart from Family Member) includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter magazine per year.

Add four issues of the Hunter magazine per year

<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	<input type="checkbox"/> \$119	Adult (over 18 years)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$125	<input type="checkbox"/> \$154	Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, valid until next membership renewal.
<input type="checkbox"/> \$68	<input type="checkbox"/> \$97	Additional Family Member (No magazine) Applies to each additional person over 18 residing at the same address as a full-subscription Adult member,
<input type="checkbox"/> \$103	<input type="checkbox"/> \$132	Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, valid until next membership renewal.
<input type="checkbox"/> \$68	<input type="checkbox"/> \$97	Pensioner Available on production or photocopy of both sides of your Australian Concession Card.
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<input type="checkbox"/> \$450		5-year Adult Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1800		Member for Life Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.
<input type="checkbox"/> \$173	<input type="checkbox"/> \$233	Overseas Available to members living overseas.
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$54	Junior (under 18 years) Parent's or guardian's signature



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William Olufson

Communications Officer Sam Talbot

S SAA member William Olufson recently made the leap from the sub-juniors ranks to juniors, meaning he has gone from being one of the oldest in his category to one of the youngest and facing competitors up to three years older than himself. Luckily it takes a lot to faze the young Queensland, least of all a little extra shooting competition and, far from being intimidated, William, 15, is thriving on the challenge.

The firearms he uses include a .22LR, .223 and .308 rifle as well as a side-by-side shotgun and .22 Ruger handgun and while he enjoys the different challenges each firearm brings, one in particular stands out for him.

"The .223 is my favourite. It has a bit of kick which makes it fun to shoot normally, but especially during the rapid-fire part of Field Rifle competitions," said William. "I like shooting because it's a fun and competitive sport. I've had some friends come along and try shooting for the first time and they all had a lot of fun too."

And helping create that atmosphere are a host of people working at SSAA Brisbane and in particular the Brisbane Junior Target Shooters Section. "I've been lucky to have had several people help me improve over the years," said William. "My parents of course, Fred the shooting captain for silhouette and the team at Belmont Air Rifle Juniors have all helped."

Among the awards William has picked up are the end of year Brisbane Junior Target

Shooters title in 2017 and, more recently, a gold medal at the 2018 Field Rifle state championships at the Warwick branch, presented by Queensland Field Rifle chairman Greg Riemer.

It seems William has all the support and resources a young shooter needs to flourish, making his aim of going to the Youth Olympics for Air Rifle or 3P all the more likely. And by way of inspiration in achieving that goal, William was lucky enough to meet Australian shooter Thomas Grice when he shot in the Men's Trap event at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Outside of shooting William is a passionate fisherman, his favourite location being Cape York where he has reeled in several impressive catches. But it's not all outdoors for William who has been building robots for more than four years and even travelled to the US to take part in a competition.

So it's no surprise he hopes to eventually work in the technology arena and in computer coding. "I'm interested in websites and servers and that sort of thing and plan to keep doing more with robots, at least for now," he said.

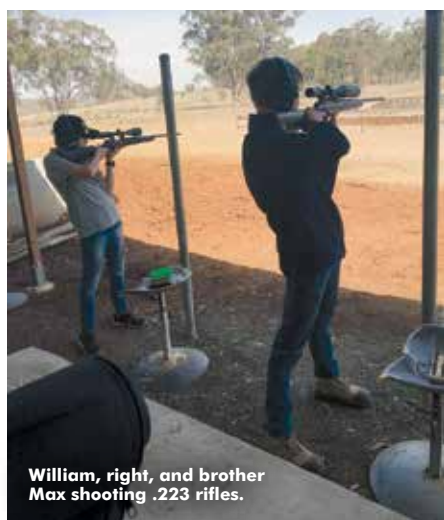
In life and in shooting, persistence and an unflappable attitude are key. Having already proven these qualities in shooting we have no reason to doubt William's future success, though we hope he doesn't mix shooting with robots - those two are probably best kept separate.



William goes fishing whenever he can.



Winning the end of year Brisbane Junior Target Shooters Section shoot in 2017.



William, right, and brother Max shooting .223 rifles.



Max, Thomas Grice and William.



Receiving the gold medal from Greg Riemer at the 2018 Queensland Field Rifle state championships.

Sponsor a JUNIOR



Photo: Nicholas Loakim

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

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

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Has the junior been a member before? Yes/No

Membership No.

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

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

First name Middle name Last name

Home address P/C.....

Date of birth Phone.....

Email

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Details of sponsoring member

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

Membership No.

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National

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

February 1-July 31, 2019

All clubs/branches

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

Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships

February 1-November 30, 2019

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

National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition

June 1-August 31, 2019

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

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

June 1-Nov 30, 2019

All clubs/branches

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

SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships

June 8-10, 2019

SSAA Batemans Bay Deep Creek Shooting Complex, NSW

Program: Thursday, June 6 bench draw available. Friday, 10am practice and flag set-up. Saturday, 9am Light Gun. Sunday, 9am Heavy Gun. Monday,

9am Rimfire. Nominations: Close June 1. Fees: \$50 per class, juniors half-price, can be paid on arrival. Nominations to stateflyshoot@gmail.com or Anthony 0418 406 698.

Rules: Current SSAA Fly Shoot rule book (maximum calibre on complex is 8mm). Prizes: Gold, silver, bronze for aggregate each class. Gold for Small Group and High Scoring Target each class. Gold, silver, bronze for 2-Gun Centrefire, 2-Gun Centrefire/Rimfire and 3-Gun. Gold, silver, bronze for juniors U-15 and 15-18. Facilities: Catering by SSAA Batemans Bay Club all weekend, camping \$5 per night, hot showers, toilets, cooking facilities and power. Contact: stateflyshoot@gmail.com, Anthony Hall 0418 406 698 or Bryson Payne 02 4471 3135. Full details on website.

SSAA Air Rifle Field Target National Championships

June 21-23, 2019

SSAA Qld Millmerran Complex, Gore Hwy, Captains Mountain, Qld Friday, June 21: Practice. Saturday: 100-shot (2x50) Open Air Rifle Field Target. Sunday: 1x50-shot Open Springer Air Rifle Field Target. Contact: Chris Dale 0418 255 874 or fieldtarget@ssaa.org.au. Please see website for full details.

SSAA Combined Services National Postal Competition

July 1-September 23, 2019

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

National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships

October 4-7, 2019

SSAA Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW Program: Friday, October 4: 8am Light Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Saturday, 8am: Heavy Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Sunday/Monday: 8am IRB 50m. Nominations: \$50 a day, juniors half price (pre-registration required by September 25). Rules: SSAA rule book No.9 and IRB rule book. Prizes: National medals as per rule books. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, barbecue. Camping on range (advise beforehand). Free breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee. Dinner for small fee. Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billinghurst 0418 478 160.

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

October 17-20, 2019

Micket Creek Shooting Complex, Brandt Rd, Berrimah, NT Program: Thursday, October 19: Practice. Friday: Pistols and rifles.

Saturday: Rifles. Sunday: Rifles. Nominations: All pistol events \$50, all rifle \$60, individual \$15, all \$100. Rules: SSAA Combined Services Rulebook No.4. Prizes: As per program. Contact: treasurerssaant@bigpond.com or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au. Full details on website.

New South Wales

SSAA NSW Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB State Championships

June 7-10, 2019

SSAA Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW

Program: June 6 practice, June 7 Light Rimfire, June 8 Heavy Rimfire, June 9-10 IRB. Nominations: \$50 per day, juniors half price. Rules: SSAA National. Prizes: Medals all events including juniors. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, barbecue. Camping on range (please advise). Free breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee. Dinner for a small fee. Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billinghurst 0418 478 160.

Queensland

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No. 2

April 1-July 31, 2019

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

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3

May 1-August 31, 2019

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

SSAA Qld Lever Action Rifle Silhouette State Championships

June 7-9, 2019

SSAA Brisbane, 292 Mt Petrie Rd, Belmont, Qld Program - Friday, June 7: Sight-in from 10am. June 8: 100m Smallbore

Lever Silhouette, 100m CF Pistol Cartridge Silhouette. June 9: 200m CF Lever Action Silhouette. Range open 8am daily, competition starts 9am. Nominations: Adults \$10 per event, juniors \$5, fees due by June 3, forms at www.ssaabris.org.au, nominations by email bookings@ssaabris.org.au. Facilities: Camping \$8 per person per night, hot showers and toilets, dormitory rooms \$12 per person per night, \$20 for linen if needed, snack bar Saturday and Sunday lunch. Contact 07 3395 0911 or bookings@ssaabris.org.au

SSAA Qld 4-Gun Benchrest State Championships

June 7-10, 2019

SSAA Springsure Range, Qld Program: Thursday, June 6: Practice; Friday: Unlimited; Saturday: 100 and 200yd Light; Sunday: 100 and 200yd Heavy; Monday: 100 and 200yd Sporter. Nominations: \$40 per class to be received by May 26. Rules: As per SSAA rule book. Facilities: Canteen, barbecue tea on Saturday, camping at range \$40 per site for weekend. Contact: Roger Marshall 07 4984 1144 or 0429 841 205.

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4

August 1-November 30, 2019

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

SSAA Qld Target Pistol 'Bullseye' State Championships

August 9-11, 2019

SSAA Bundaberg Branch Program: Open to all SSAA members. Events: Any Rimfire Pistol 900 Match, Standard Smallbore Pistol, Distinguished Revolver, Rimfire Mayleigh Match, Any Centrefire Pistol 900 Match, M9 Match (Beretta 92). Rules: As per SSAA Target Pistol Guide to NRA Pistol Rules and Target Pistol Overview of NRA Pistol Rules. Nominations: \$6 per event to maximum \$30, juniors half price - to be received by July 27. Prizes: State medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade, 1800 Aggregate and 6-Gun Aggregate. Facilities: Camping at range, drinks throughout competition, barbecue lunch Sat/Sun and dinner Saturday. Contact: Kendall Summers 0403 727 770 or targetpistol@ssaaqld.org.au; Graham Lucke 0412 308 810 or nominations@ssaabundaberg.org.au

SSAA Qld IHMSA Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships

August 23-25, 2019

SSAA Bundaberg Pistol Range,
Isis Hwy, Qld

Program: Small Bore (100m):

Production, Revolver, Standing, Unlimited Any Sights; Big Bore (200m): Production, Revolver, Standing, Unlimited Any Sights; Field Pistol (100m): Field Pistol Production, Field Pistol Production Any Sights. Discipline meeting after shooting on Saturday. Nominations: \$10 per event to maximum \$80, juniors half price. Rules: Official IHMSA rule book. Prizes: State medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade in all events. Facilities: Camping at range, hot showers, some power available. Contact: John Harding 0428 136 527 or jnharding@bigpond.com

SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships

August 31-September 1, 2019

SSAA Bowen,

Roddy Hughes Rd, Bowen, Qld
Program: Friday, August 30: 9am practice; Saturday: 9am Open Lever Action match, 40 rounds; Sunday: 9am Classic Calibre match, 40 rounds. State discipline meeting after completion of Open match. Branch delegates must have letter of accreditation from executive.

Nominations: \$35 one match, \$60 both, juniors half price. Form at ssaa.org.au/leveraction, send by August 19 to Allan McDonald asjmc2@gmail.com. Facilities: Canteen open during matches, breakfast/lunch \$10, dinner Friday/Saturday \$15. Camping at range with water, showers, toilets. Pets welcome. Contact: Allan McDonald 0428 790 940 asjmc2@gmail.com; Kerry Guinea (State Discipline Chair) 0409 262 966 leveraction@ssaaqld.org.au

Police Service Match - Law Enforcement Activities

October 5-6, 2019

QPPC Range, Old Cleveland Rd,
Belmont, Qld

Program: This is an individual event, no teams. Shooters may choose revolver or semi-auto in one of the NRA PPC divisions of Open, Distinguished or Duty. Shooters are not compelled to compete against a higher level of equipment. Nominations: Belmont site user levy applies, nomination fee \$5. Rules: SSAA Standard Rules, SSAA LEAD Police Service Match Rules. Facilities: QPPC has basic facilities, others at QRA compound. QRA accepts bookings for motel or barrack-style accommodation, several accommodation options nearby. Contact: Bob Pierce 0427 172 277. See website for full details.

Western Australia

SSAA WA NRA and Air Rifle State Championships

June 8-9, 2019

SSAA Port Bouvard, Dawesville, WA

Program: Saturday, June 8: Scoped 10m Air Rifle Precision 8am registration; 8.45am practice; 9.20am briefing; 9.30am match. Scoped 3-Positional 10m Air Rifle 11.30am registration and practice; 12.05pm briefing; 12 matches. Sunday, June 9: NRA 3x40 Small Bore 8am registration; 8.30am practice; 9.05am briefing; 9.15am matches. Nominations: \$10 per event, \$25 all three. Post to Port Bouvard Pistol & Small Bore Rifle Club, PO Box 363, Mandurah, WA 6210. Email secretary@portbouvardpc.com.au. Rules: SSAA Scoped Air Rifle and NRA rule book. Prizes: Medals for first three in each grade per event, certificates for position win plus points towards WVA Hall of Fame. Facilities: Canteen, light lunch free for competitors both days. Contact: Ronnie Pope 0459 545 374 or fieldrifle@ssaa.org.au

SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

July 11-15, 2019

Hedland Sporting Shooters,

Port Hedland, WA

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

ACT

SSAA ACT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

June 8-10, 2019

SSAA Majura, Hector McIntosh Grove,
Majura, ACT

Program: Saturday, June 8 Rimfire and Air Rifle. Sunday: Centrefire. Monday: Rimfire Hunting Rifle, Centrefire Hunting Rifle. Nominations: Dave Home 02 6231 2837 or 0423 043 663 or Mark Lovell 0401 867 839. Prizes: Trophies all grades including juniors, two-gun and teams. Facilities: Camping on range \$10 per person per night, canteen for the weekend. Contact: Mark Lovell 0401 867 830 or mnl1@live.com.au. See website for full details.

SSAA Official Calendar

INTERNATIONAL

August 19-24, 2019

12th MLAIC World Long Range Muzzleloading Championships

Bisley, England

Kim Atkinson 27honesysuckle@msn.com.au

NATIONAL

Feb 1-July 31, 2019

National Junior Rimfire Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

All clubs/branches

juniorsports@ssaa.org.au

Feb 1-Nov 30, 2019

Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships

National event

Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com

June 1-August 31, 2019

National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition

All clubs/branches

toblerkathy@gmail.com

June 1-Nov 30, 2019

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

Batemans Bay Shooting Complex, NSW

juniorsports@ssaa.org.au

June 8-10, 2019

SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships

Millmerran Complex, Captains Mountain, Qld

stateflyshoot@gmail.com or 0418 406 698

June 21-23, 2019

SSAA Air Rifle Field Target National Championships

Postal shoot

0418 255 874 fieldtarget@ssaa.org.au

July 1-Sept. 23, 2019

Combined Services National Postal Competition

Springvale and Eagle Park Ranges, Vic

0428 876 991 or combinedservices@ssaa.org.au

July 12-14, 2019

SSAA National Junior Challenge

Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW

0417 510 002 or j9.taylor55@gmail.com

October 4-7, 2019

National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships

Micket Creek Shooting Complex, NT

0429 335 389 or 0418 478 160

October 17-20, 2019

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

treasurerssaant@bigpond.com

or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au

STATE

April 1-July 31, 2019

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.2

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA

Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

May 1-August 31, 2019

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3

SSAA Brisbane, Qld

Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

June 1-2, 2019

SSAA WA Lever Action State Championships

SSAA Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW

leveraction@ssaawa.org.au

June 7-9, 2019

SSAA Qld Lever Action Rifle Silhouette State Championships

SSAA Springsure Range

07 3395 0911 or bookings@ssaabris.org.au

June 7-10, 2019

SSAA NSW Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB State Championships

SSAA Port Bouvard, Dawesville, WA

Kim 0429 335 389 or David 0418 478 160

June 7-10, 2019

SSAA Qld Target Pistol 'Bulseye' State Championships

Majura Range, Majura, ACT

Ronnie Pope 0459 545 374 or fieldrifle@ssaa.org.au

June 8-9, 2019

SSAA WA NRA and Air Rifle State Championships

Port Hedland, WA

0401 867 839 or mnl1@live.com.au

June 8-10, 2019

SSAA ACT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

SSAA Bundaberg Branch

0407 440 431 or clas@ssaawa.org.au

July 11-15, 2019

SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, NSW

Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

August 1-Nov 30, 2019

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4

SSAA Bundaberg Pistol Range

0403 727 770 or targetpistol@ssaaqld.org.au

August 9-11, 2019

SSAA Qld Target Pistol 'Bulseye' State Championships

SSAA Bowen, Qld

David 0418 478 160 or Ray 0408 649 126

August 17-18, 2019

SSAA Bananacoast Centrefire Championships

QPPC Range, Belmont, Qld

0428 136 527 or jnharding@bigpond.com

August 23-25, 2019

SSAA Qld IHMSA Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships

SSAA Bowen, Qld

0428 790 940 or asjmc2@gmail.com

August 31-Sept 1, 2019

SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships

Police Service Match Qld State Championships

Bob Pierce 0427 172 277

October 5-6, 2019

Police Service Match Qld State Championships



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SVG003 - Large
SVG004 - XL
SVG005 - 2XL
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CJG005 - 2XL

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CJB003 - Large
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CJB005 - 2XL

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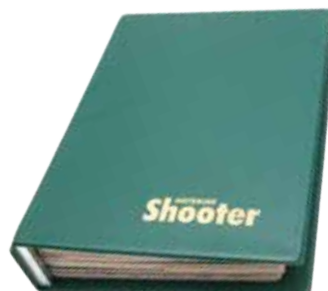


CBW004
Distressed Leaf



CBW005
Oz Flag

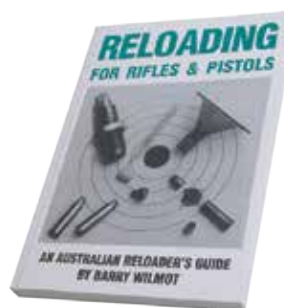
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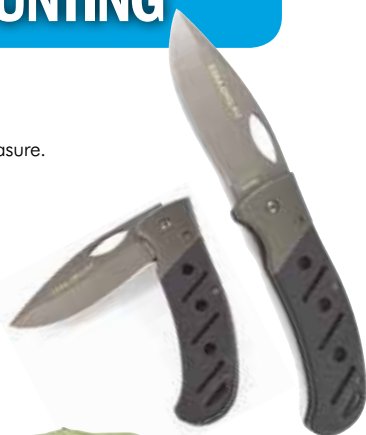
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For your chance to win one of these competitions, write your name, address, phone number and membership number on a piece of paper and place it inside an envelope, along with the name of the competition on the front of the envelope, as shown in the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

(Name of competition)
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Australian Shooter April 2019

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Flipping Jack .22 Reactive
Steel Target**

Jessy-Lee Mathieson, Qld

**April Best
Shots Mug**

Mark Hancock, NSW

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In search of the right deer

On a cool March morning the bush was as dry as cornflakes and twice as crunchy, meaning a quiet stalk up the gully line was more ambition than practicality. The game trail was scattered with summer leaves and sticks and even a deer couldn't have walked it quietly. I could hear the dog padding along behind me and given she treads more softly than I do, I was undoubtedly creating a racket despite my best efforts not to.

The sign along the edge of the clear country indicated at least four deer had fed on the dry summer grass overnight. The gully we were working had long been their preferred travel route so I'd no doubt they were there somewhere. Even so, the sign in the bush had been sporadic, the ground generally too hard to take and hold the marks of passing deer.

On a log across the trail I stopped and sat down for a break. The dog pushed past, walked to the edge of the slope, bobbed her head a couple of times as she sniffed the air then stared intently across the gully to a scrub-covered face only a sambar could love. The hackles on her back flared as she whined softly, alerting me to a deer she knew was there but couldn't see.

A couple of minutes of hard looking through the binoculars showed me nothing. The dog insisted the deer was still there but it wasn't until a stick snapped in

the shadows we had a location to focus our attention on.

The horizontal line of the deer's back gave it away, suddenly so obvious I had to wonder how I hadn't seen it before. Though I couldn't see its head the body shape indicated a stag, that fact confirmed when it took a step forward and turned towards me to stare through a dappled screen of coprosma scrub. While his antlers were

confusion as to how long his antlers were.

He had nice brow tines and reasonable beams so I took a punt he'd be a good one and shot him through what was showing of his right shoulder. One of the animals that crashed away when the rifle went off was a good stag, unlike the one I'd shot - he was a youngster, big on potential but short on quality due to his tender years. I felt like a murderer even though I was complying

with the landholder's instructions to shoot every deer I could.

The sambar across the way wouldn't have the same problems. This morning I carried no rifle on what was essentially a reconnaissance run. There was a wallow further up the gully I wanted to set a camera over - that's what we'd walked in for - and though the stag was a pleasant distraction there was still a way to go.

The deer turned away as I stood up, his leaving marked by little more than a tremble in the tops of the scrub

or the soft snap of an occasional stick. We stood and waited until everything had gone quiet then pushed on up the hill.

The wallow was dry, much as I'd expected, but pressed into the softer ground around its edges were the marks of two deer, one of them the big stag of yore I reckoned, the other set slightly smaller and perhaps the stag we'd seen on the way in. The camera and time will tell and with a bit of luck I might even find the right deer.



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