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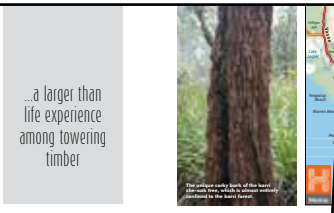
We uniquely consult with environmental experts, farmers, fishers and those charged with protecting Australia's landscape to take an in-depth look at issues affecting Australia's outdoors, along with showcasing beautiful destinations and providing travel tips, reviews and more.

In the valley of the jolly green giants

Thomas Cook

Once upon a time... some 45 million years ago, a magical land in the south-west of Western Australia stood tall as ancient climate change drastically altered the world around it. Hiding its ground to emerge Victorian from a battle that raged for thousands of years, this ancient region is a delicate relationship with its...

...a larger than life experience among towering timber



Lure of chasing pesky porkers entices hunters

But some of the huge animals of the bush are still out there, and they are still being hunted. In the south-west of Western Australia, the hunt for wild pigs is a popular pastime. The hunt is a challenge, and it is a thrill. The hunt is a challenge, and it is a thrill. The hunt is a challenge, and it is a thrill.



from your armchair

An introduction to metal detecting

Paul Barker

A decade or so back, the great outdoors was a place where you could find anything. It was a place where you could find anything. It was a place where you could find anything. It was a place where you could find anything.

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From old coins to gold nuggets, the lure of metal detecting is uncovered



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136 Great Australian Outdoors

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This Issue

June 2020

FIREARMS

- 16 Classy Anschutz doesn't disappoint
- 30 Lucky 13
- 54 CZ takes style to new level
- 62 Fabarm Axis RS12 - as good as it gets

HUNTING

- 42 This won't be pretty! Warthog hunters realise their dream

PRODUCTS

- 48 8x32s the forgotten binoculars
- 59 See the light - The PA5 by Nextorch
- 65 See the bigger picture - ATN day/night binoculars

AND MORE

- 22 Scottie turns video star to push recruitment drive
- 24 Rifle - cartridge - scope - Part One
- 34 Make the most of your trophies
- 60 Dress code? Casual with Colts
- 66 Book review

REGULARS

- 6 President's Message
- 7 Letters
- 7 Insurance Q&A
- 8 Open Season
- 10 Bushcraft & Survival
- 12 Clay Target Q&A
- 14 Top Shots
- 70 SSAA Shop
- 73 Members-only Competitions
- 74 Jumbunna

Australian Shooter

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



Our June cover

The Anschutz 1761 - see page 16

NEXT ISSUE



Mike Papps has spent a lifetime in his chosen sport and Senior Correspondent Rod Pascoe sat with the man to gain an insight into one of the true pioneers of Australian shooting.

In Part Two of our feature on favourite rifle/calibre/scope combinations, regular contributor Con Kapralos outlines his choices and how they've contributed to his success as a deer hunter.

Mark van den Boogaart has returned from a hunting trip to England and brought with him his take on the Remington AWR rifle in .270 Win - "the build quality instilled confidence".



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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Members deserve credit for conduct during virus crisis

Brighter days are on the horizon. Despite the many confusing and contradictory directions during this COVID-19 crisis, I must acknowledge and thank all SSAA members for their patience and cooperation, again demonstrating a real commitment to community responsibility.

Our sport has fared comparatively well through this period compared to many and the restrictions have been more of an annoyance and inconvenience rather than a disaster, despite the fact some prime hunting seasons have been interrupted and competitive engagements postponed.

As travel and hunting restrictions ease and ranges open again, please be understanding of the pressures that range and club administrators are under to meet their regulatory obligations and to keep you safe. Please cooperate and follow their directions as requested. These people are by and large committed volunteers, all doing their best to provide facilities for us.

I trust this down time has given everyone a chance to organise their gear again, ready to get back to business and, importantly, a chance to review their secure storage obligations. Remember that every time a firearm is stolen, legitimate firearms owners come under scrutiny, fairly or not. It is crucial we take our responsibility seriously when it comes to firearms security.

The opportunity to catch up on our reading will have been a blessing to many and I'm sure you'll have noticed the increasingly diverse number of quality topics being included in our SSAA publications

and website to cater to the ever-increasing and discerning membership base we have. Keeping yourself informed is so important and in a world of fleeting internet and social media grabs, the published and written word still prevails and is an enduring source of entertainment, knowledge and reference for the newcomer and experienced member alike, so don't miss the chance to enjoy this part of your association.

Always being progressive and needing to manage the massive amount of information we make available, we are currently undertaking an upgrade of our SSAA website to make your experiences more user-friendly and complete and for breaking news our regular E-alerts and E-newsletters are readily available for members to subscribe to at no cost.

As the current restrictions are steadily eased, you'll see numerous activities promoted at your local branches and ranges. Please support these and become involved. You will find you'll gain so much more from your sport by being more actively involved. The progressive nature of SSAA means there will always be new opportunities and experiences and the near future will be no different, so stay in touch and be part of our positive future.

G. E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



You will find you'll gain so much more from your sport by being more actively involved.

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Rifle article hit the bullseye

I had to write and commend you on a great publication I eagerly anticipate each month and particularly wanted to thank you for the Con Kapralos article 'Get some bang for your buck' in your February magazine.

Articles like these give us a good virtual look at different rifles and loads, which saves shooters a lot of coin. When we buy a car we can test drive it but not so buying a rifle which makes for a bit of a risk. Personally I've wasted a good \$4000 buying rifles I thought would be great, despite thoroughly researching them before purchase. Then there's ammunition to find which brand the rifle enjoys or time and effort in reloading.

Your article will save me considerable dollars if I contemplate another purchase in that calibre and the information gleaned was very informative and saved me time researching those firearms. The article and results were honest, not sugar-coated like many others, and would certainly influence a future purchase.

I know you print reviews on individual rifles but this is the first I've seen where multiple rifles of the same calibre, along with various factory loads, have been compared and I'd love to see more articles like this. Keep up the great work.

Shea Taylor, Qld.

Volunteering a two-way street

In response to the letter 'Private hunters in dreamland' (*Shooter*, March 2020). For years I've been travelling west with a car full of tools, assisting farmers with my skills as a mechanic and have gained new friends and established trust to a point where I now have numerous properties to choose from for hunting.

I'd only take rifles to the property once the farmer had trust in me and was happy for me to thin out the feral pests and as much as I love hunting, I get more of a buzz from the appreciation and hospitality I receive for my voluntary service.

A great way to begin these relationships is by volunteering with programs such as SSAA Farmer Assist, Aussie Helpers or Rural Aid then set aside at least a few days or a week on a property which needs a volunteer. You don't always need a trade or specific skills as sometimes just that extra pair of hands on a farm affected by drought, flood or bushfires is all that's needed to form a great relationship.

As always, utmost respect for the landowner - including a safe and friendly attitude and not turning up with a bunch of mates, dogs etc - is required to establish trust.

Jason Deathe, via email

Take it to the masses

On reading February's edition of *Australian Shooter*, I must comment on two articles in the 'Letters' section. Firstly, well done Jim Nash (Worth a thousand words). More city-dwelling tree-huggers should be exposed to comments like yours. Even today with dedicated conservationist shooters out there every weekend, there's far too much predation by feral pests such as the fox in the picture. Official figures on native bird and animal losses are disgusting and alarming.

Secondly to Don Armitstead (Rifle at the bank). From my own experience as a 16-year-old working in Sydney in 1956, I saved enough cash to walk into Mick Simmons' Haymarket store and buy a lovely second-hand Brno .22. The sales guy threw in a box of ammo and wrapped the lot in brown paper tied with string.

I jumped on a tram to go home and was chatted up by people who asked where I was going to shoot (Crookwell) and encouraged me to make it a lifestyle choice. Try this today? I think not. The next Olympics should include 'Jumping Through Fiery Hoops of Barbed Wire'.

Mike Smith, via email



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q: I've been a SSAA member for several years and look after my insurances myself. Is it worth using SSAA Insurance Brokers?
Susan, via email

A: Of course it is! Firstly, at SSAA General Insurance Brokers (SSAIB) we act in the best interests of our clients. And remember, we're not the insurance company so we work for you. By using us you can save time and money while also ensuring you have the correct and most comprehensive coverage available.

As a brokerage we have access to all the major insurance companies and agencies, so you don't need to contact company after company as we do that for you. This is why using SSAIB makes sense - we either find you a more competitive option or you'll know the deal you have is the best for you.

Another advantage is we manage the entire claims process for you. On your behalf we lodge your claim, talk to call centres, assessors and anyone else involved to ensure you have a fair and

speedy settlement. So it's definitely worth having a fully qualified professional broker handling your general insurance needs. Next time you have a query, call the brokerage (08) 8332 0281 and give us the chance to prove our worth.



Long, dry waiting game finally at an end

The months from December 2019 through to early 2020 certainly tested many regional communities throughout this vast country. The long dry had left a tinderbox of material in the bush which just needed the right wind conditions, temperature and ignition source to create total mayhem and the scenes of mass destruction of both man-made and natural environments left many people devastated. One positive that emerged from this natural disaster was the caring and giving nature of the wider Australian community.

People donated food, clothes, money and time to help both other people and wildlife directly or indirectly affected in rural areas. Countless millions of dollars flowed in from overseas to back numerous 'go fund me' campaigns aimed at supporting affected wildlife.

Some of these campaigns looked to provide funds to support on-ground works but unfortunately others from organisations which exist under the 'animal rights' umbrella may have used people's kindness to create a war chest for their lobbying efforts into the future, something I believe the Federal Government should investigate. Have funds raised for a particular purpose actually been held or spent on other things? Surely, if true, this is both misleading and deceitful behaviour, taking advantage of people's and nature's misfortune.

Now the big dry has ended in many areas the regeneration of paddocks and waterways will bring with it an explosion of wildlife breeding events - some good, some bad - as native species generally flourish in these dry/flood cycles they've lived with for thousands of years. Feral animals now also have the conditions to breed and potentially keep doing so until conditions turn dry again, so what we'll have soon is a need to control wildlife populations.

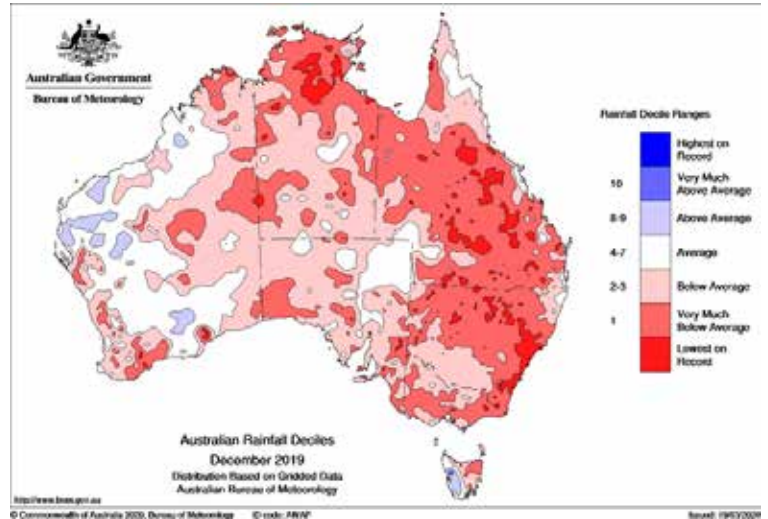
Sure, some farmers may have time but most don't and this is where the community can become involved again and lend a hand. Recreational hunting and/or pest control has a part to play here. When feral critter numbers start to become more than they're wanted by the landholder, it may be time to book in a few extra and more regular hunting and shooting trips.

Remember the national hunting survey released last year found that hunters and shooters have higher overall wellbeing than the general population and the more we shoot and hunt the happier we become. So get out into the field if you can and benefit from what nature's supermarket can provide.

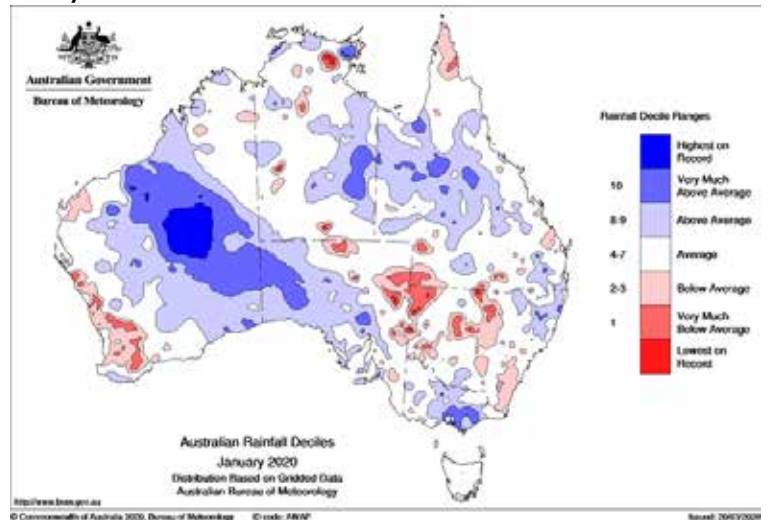
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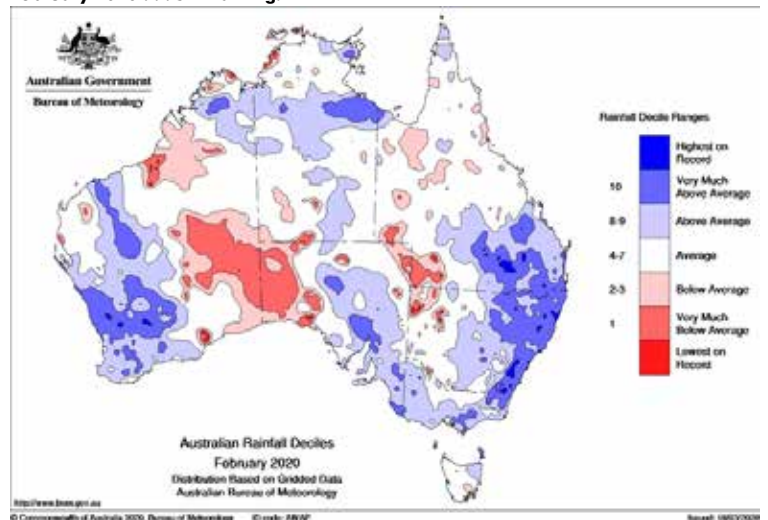
December 2019 . . . the big dry.



January 2020 . . . rain at last.



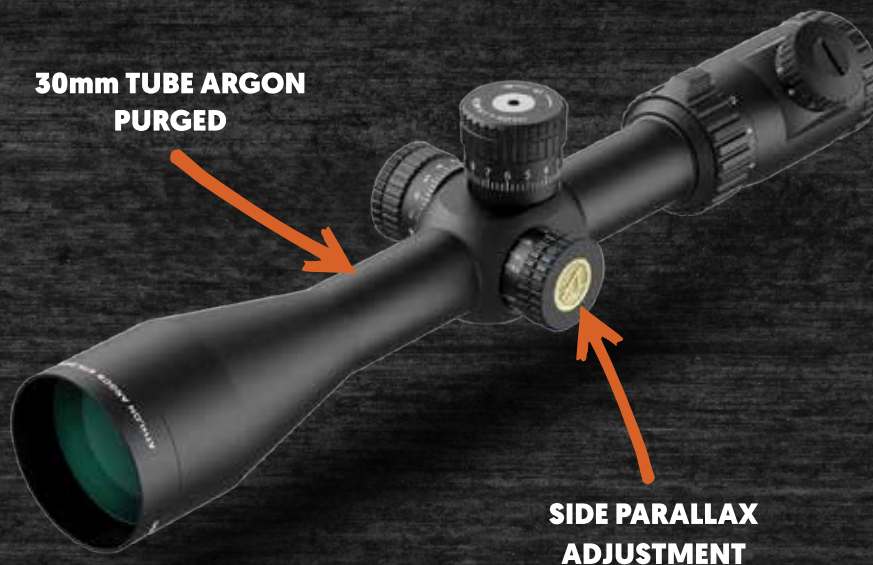
February 2020 . . . still raining.





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There's a cover-up at play here

The recent discussions around face masks reminded me that hunters of both game and other humans were wearing them long before the current furore over their supply. Before I was a teenager - and that wasn't yesterday - I had a favourite red bandana I wore when we played the now politically incorrect game known as 'Cowboys and Indians'. Long after that I became familiar with 'scrim' which I still think was some kind of curtain net dyed green.

The kind to avoid was camouflaged, that is, it was dyed green then splattered with brown paint. No matter what you did to it the brown paint stayed hard and scratchy and was something to be avoided. However, a strip of plain green scrim wound around your neck although initially uncomfortable was quite refreshing on a hot day after being dipped in a stream, and it provided useful camouflage when pulled up to cover most of your face.

It has been interesting to see that although the open-weave sniper veil printed with various disruptive patterns is still available, military surplus and hunting suppliers now have a dozen colours of the 'shemagh' available. There are numerous local names for this large square of light cotton cloth with diagonal checked pattern which has been adopted to great effect by military forces and plenty of hunters.

Although there's a question about colour perception in animals, I've always avoided using red ones in the bush. It takes some getting used to as it can be uncomfortable in hot weather and on cold days warm breath can fog your glasses. In the scrub I usually fold it into a big triangle and wear it under my hat, the tails hanging down within easy reach. These can be thrown over your shoulders when you want a little more camouflage, leaving just a narrow slit through which to view the landscape.

I soon discovered their usefulness when flying. Passengers with the 'flu always seemed to be sitting behind me, believing the tiny seat-back between us was going to prevent their blasting coughs from reaching round and grabbing me. I wore the shemagh as a neck scarf and found that if I threw the tails across my face when they coughed, it helped discourage the contagious passenger behind me. While there has been considerable debate recently about the effectiveness of a cloth face covering, I must say I can't recall contracting another dose of 'flu on a plane, the consensus seeming to be that in the current crisis a cloth 'mask' is better than nothing.

As far as the hunt is concerned, I do like the extra neck protection the shemagh provides in summer - perhaps if we have a very cold winter my mind will be made up. One thing is certain, if you wear it wrapped



around your neck and covering most of your face, it sure does prevent you from touching your face.

My cousin, who's married to a Japanese woman, tells me in that country a face mask is a symbol of civic-mindedness and shows concern for others who don't have the privilege of isolating at home. I live in a very small town where all the locals recognise me whether I'm wearing my signature hat or not. I thought it might be a challenge to wear the shemagh to the Post Office to collect the mail and was quite surprised to find no-one took any notice of me. "That's an improvement," the Postmaster told me - and I'm still not sure he was being complimentary.

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CZ 515

.22 LR | 10 22 WMR | 10



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The CZ 515 is a lever release rifle meaning it is fitted with an automatic bolt stop in the rear position and an ergonomically designed lever for releasing the bolt.

The CZ 515 rifle is supplied in two models, a stylish Hunter with an American style beechwood stock and a modern Tactical model with pistol grip, adjustable stock and picatinny rail as standard.

Both models will be supplied with a 10 round polymer magazine.



TECHNICAL DATA

MODEL	LENGTH	BARREL LENGTH	WEIGHT	CALIBER	MAGAZINE CAPACITY	SUPPLY TYPE	SIGHTS
CZ 515 TACTICAL	839/920 mm	419 mm (16")	2,8 kg	.22 LR (1:36), .22 WMR (1:16)	10	Detachable magazine	No
CZ 515 AMERICAN	1000 mm	525 mm (21")	2,7 kg	.22 LR (1:16), .22 WMR (1:16)	10	Detachable magazine	No

Clay Target Q&A

WITH RUSSELL MARK

Q I recently bought a Sporting Clays shotgun which came with five interchangeable chokes. I intend to shoot a variety of disciplines from Trap, Sporting and Skeet and, of course, plan to use it in the field too. Is there a hard and fast rule as to what distance I should use each choke for?

Eli Pazzan, Vic.

A I'll make the assumption the five chokes you have in your possession are Cylinder, Improved Cylinder, Modified, Improved Modified and Full as these are the most common chokes used on a Sporting Clays shotgun.

There really is no set rule except for closer shots you use the ones closer to Cylinder and the further away you get from your target, head towards a Full choke. That's just common sense but it really depends on what you're using the shotgun for and even what clay target discipline you intend on participating in.

For Trap you're pretty much shooting at 'edge-on' targets all the time. By this I mean you never see the whole thing because Trap targets are spun away, therefore you really only see its width and height as it cuts through the air, but never the whole face or 'belly' of the target as you

often see on a Sporting Clays range.

So what does that mean in regard to choke selection? Well, edge-on targets take more breaking and need more pellets on the clay's surface to pull them apart, therefore a target that's edge-on at 30m in my opinion is ideally suited to an Improved Modified choke, as opposed to a target at the same distance with its full belly showing which would be adequately broken with a Modified choke.

The full belly scenario may only need half as many pellets to actually hit the target to fracture it as, firstly, a full-faced clay is quite easy to break and secondly, and more importantly, the full-faced target has a greater surface area to aim at than an edge-on clay, therefore your more open Modified choke gives a greater margin for error.

To accurately ascertain what choke is right for your shotgun you must work out the correct distance you're shooting targets from. Use a pattern board and make sure you pattern your chokes with the exact ammunition and shot size you intend to use when it counts.

Fire one shot at the board from the desired distance then examine the imprint left by your pellets and check the spacing between pellet strikes. If shooting Trap for example, take a clay target to the board

and look for any gaps in the imprints that would fit the edge of a target through. If so, chances are you need to screw in a tighter choke.

Repeat this exercise with the target showing its full face and you might find the target would not escape. That's the dilemma for a Sporting Clay shooter as often during the same round they'll be faced with a variety of edge-on and belly-faced targets. If in doubt go tighter and if possible, change chokes to best suit the targets you face on each stand.

Field shooters often make the mistake of going too tight with choke selection. If the goal is simply to kill something then often this requires a change of shot size also, but again this should be definitely addressed by using a pattern board.

Just for reference, the five chokes I mentioned can be called by different names. Cylinder means no constriction, Improved Cylinder is often called a quarter choke, Modified is half, Improved Modified is three-quarter and Full is maximum. Good luck with the new shotgun.



Send questions to:
russell@corporateshootingstars.com.au

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Q I recently bought an old hammerless side-lock 12-gauge shotgun and when transferring the registration, asked the gun shop if they knew anything about the marks stamped on the barrel and whether or not it's nitro-proofed. From research I think it was made between 1951 and 1965 and is registered as a 'Bertrand & Fils' double-barrel shotgun with one choked and one non-choked. I found a list of the stamp markings online but am unsure what they mean and whether it will be safe to shoot more modern smokeless ammunition.

Bradley Drysdale, via email

A Antoine Bertrand & Sons, based at Rue Fabry 25, Liege in Belgium was registered between 1881 and 1900 so your gun is much older than you thought. It looks a nice old gun whose barrels appear to be made of drawn steel. The proof marks indicate it's not nitro-proofed and was most likely made some time before 1923 as the 'crown over ELG in an oval' mark was not used after that.

The '12 over G' in a diamond is a black powder proof mark and, as you say, the left-hand barrel is choked (as indicated by the 'choke 17.4/18' which means the muzzle diameter is 0.6mm smaller than the bore.) The gun shop told you the make was 'Bertrand & Fils' (French for Bertrand & Sons) yet the rib is stamped 'A. Bertrand & Son' in English, this latter marking suggesting it's a trade gun meant for export to English-speaking countries like Australia.

Apparently there was also a Joseph Bertrand working as a gun maker in Liege, perhaps one of Antoine's sons, who was forced out of business when the Germans occu-

pied the city in 1914. In any event it seems likely your gun was made close to the turn of the 20th century. As for firing it, you'd need it carefully checked by a gunsmith in my opinion as not being proofed for smokeless powder would possibly make it unsafe with even very soft modern ammo.

Geoff Smith

Q I do quite a bit of my hunting on foot through light to heavy bush and a friend who often accompanies me reckons I don't need binoculars as I should use the scope on my rifle to spot game instead of carrying binoculars and the extra weight they add. What do you think?

Pete Stanton, via email

A I always take a pair of binoculars when I go hunting as well as carrying my rifle with scope attached. I find it's a lot more convenient using binoculars, not only for spotting game but for looking around the surrounding bush and countryside. In my early days I humped large 7x50s or 10x50s which were good but heavy and cumbersome, so I changed to 8x30s and even smaller and lighter 6x30s.

These days I carry a pair of 6x30 perma-focus binoculars which fit nicely into my top shirt pocket via a light strap. They don't get in the way, don't have to be focused and weigh very little - and I still have my rifle with scope ready for shooting.

Barry Wilmot

Q As a newcomer to the .17 Hornady Magnum Rimfire ranks I'd like to hear from experienced HMR shooters about their experience with post-discharge case splits. Initial rounds fired from my CZ 457 resulted in 24 out of 50 case splits of from 4-8mm from the case mouth to back past the shoulder using CCI 17gr polymer tipped. Of 20 rounds of Hornady polymer tipped, only one very minor split right at the case mouth.

It's my information that CCI loads both brands mentioned. Does the CCI brand have a different powder charge or higher weight charge or is the ammo defective? Do I have an over-spec chamber and how can I check my chamber specs? Whatever the problem, I don't believe all these discharges back behind the barrel leads would be doing the chamber any good. Thanks for any advice on this rifle as it's a potentially accurate shooter at this early stage.

Steve Briskey, via email

A Split necks and shoulders in spent .17HMR cases are a fact of life for the cartridge and have been since day one. I've experienced the problem in at least three different rifles and know a lot of other .17HMR users who have as well, so I doubt it's your rifle.

I long ago came to the conclusion is has more to do with the metallurgy of the cases themselves. I expect it's difficult to produce a case that's malleable enough to expand under the pressures of firing yet still have enough neck tension to hold a projectile in the case of loaded ammunition.

This was more or less confirmed by a conversation with Ken Stevens from Nioa who indicated there were problems with properly heat-treating the shoulders and necks of HMR cases as the cases have the priming compound introduced during the neck sizing process. This, combined with the thinness of the cases, neck tension and time has seen cases split not just when fired but also in storage. For the past three years or so the cases have been chemically treated to address the problem and some

of the neck tension problems have been relieved by revamping sizing specifications.

Unfortunately the success of these measures won't be ascertained for some time as most case failures in the past have occurred in ammunition five or six years old. For the time being it would seem to be a case of watch this space. Finally, given the different bullets used by various brand names of ammunition, I'm led to believe they all have slightly different recipes for their loads, which may or may not be another factor in the problem as you've experienced it.

John Dunn

Q I'm looking for information on my 12-gauge over-and-under shotgun, an Angelo Zoli in excellent condition, nicely scrolled with hard chrome barrels, walnut stock with open barrels and no chokes. No one seems to know much about the gun - or Angelo Zoli - and how much it might be worth. It's about 35 years old and I was given it as part payment for work done. It has been registered and is legal. I asked around my local clay target club at Mornington but without success.

Gary Bell, Vic



A Thanks for the question Gary which had me scratching my head. Antonio Zoli is a well-known Italian manufacturer which produces shotguns of excellent quality from sporters to high grade field guns, both over-and-under and side-by-side configuration on request. They're imported in Australia by world class clay target shooters Sox Pilipasidis and his partner Renae Birgan through their Clay & Hunt company in Melbourne.

I'd never heard of Angelo Zoli and assumed you'd mixed up the names until I started researching, from where I discovered Antonio and Angelo Zoli appear to

have been brothers who had a parting of the ways many years ago. Angelo kept making good honest guns like yours until he closed down his operations in 1987.

His guns were regarded as useful firearms and were well made, as yours appears to be. His brother's guns were considered of higher quality and these days often feature on the clay target shooting winners podium in various disciplines. They feel and look a bit like an economical Perrazzi to me - and that's a compliment as Perazzi shotguns are genuinely as good as it gets.

Your gun looks in excellent condition, well fitted and finished. Looking at the sloping height of comb on the stock and sling swivels attached to the under barrel and stock, it's a field model meant for hunting. Those rascally Italians love carrying their guns around the hunting fields with a sling attached and barrels either pointing at the ground or directly upright. Fans of *The Godfather* movies will know what I mean.

Yours is probably worth about \$800-\$900 in its very good condition though spare parts are probably the only issue. Why not keep it and take it field shooting for which it was well designed - I think you'll find it reliable, easy to carry and lots of fun to use.

Paul Miller

Q I've attached pictures of two firearms discovered by a friend, surrendered to police then offered back to us as licensed firearms users and am wondering if you think they'd be worth restoring. There's obvious damage to the pins but otherwise the action is functional and I'm not looking to make a buck off them. I'm yet to own a shotgun and if these could become operational they might be all I need. If the road to a functional firearm would be too costly, I might just keep them as curios. The other one is a lever action rifle in 32 WCF.

Tom Higgs, via email



A There are lots of firearms such as yours which have appeared from the back of a shed or wardrobe and many, unfortunately, have deteriorated through inadequate storage and maintenance. According to the marks I can see in the pictures you provided, your shotgun was made in Belgium sometime between the late 1800s and early 1900s.

As to whether it's worth restoring or not is really up to you. A gunsmith could easily get it to work reliably and safely with little outlay if that's all you want it to do, or you could make it a project and restore it to somewhere near original condition at greater cost. If you planned to sell it I doubt you'd recoup the money you spend on its repair or restoration.

To my untrained eye the shotgun is nothing remarkable or particularly collectable. I couldn't see a nitro proof mark so it may only be suitable for use with black powder cartridges. I suggest you ask a competent gunsmith to confirm this before you think about shooting it with modern ammunition. This may also affect your decision to repair it or not. As to the lever action rifle, I don't have enough information from the photo but it looks like a Winchester 1892 model carbine.

Rod Pascoe



The 1761 set up for testing with Bushnell 3-9x40 Prime scope.

Classy Anschutz doesn't disappoint

Senior Correspondent John Dunn

As someone who places great faith in first impressions, I'd have been bitterly disappointed if the Anschutz 1761 hadn't lived up to the bling it projected when I took it out the packaging. In my hands was a rifle with all the hallmarks of quality - classic good looks of blued steel and walnut exuding that understated air of elegance only European makers seem to do properly. Before I even put the rifle to my shoulder I felt I was going to enjoy this review. I was right.

Anschutz Model 1761 rimfire

Anschutz began production in 1856 and the name has become synonymous with innovative, eminent firearms, especially their rimfire rifles which are internationally renowned for their construction,

workmanship and precision accuracy, notably in biathlon shooting.

The Model 1761 is a new series of rimfires designed for shooters and hunters - the next generation of an already legendary brand - representing years of research and development. There are two rifles in the series, the Classic and the Thumbhole. Appearance wise they're significantly different but both are based on a common action, calibres available being .17HMR, .22LR and .22WMR. The rifle supplied for review by Nioa was a Classic in .22LR.

Receiver and barrel

The receiver is made from a solid billet of chromoly steel with flat sides and bottom, the latter having an integral recoil lug at the front, the top domed with an 11mm

dovetail for scope mounting. The review rifle arrived with a Picatinny rail attached, secured to the dovetail by a trio of grub screws pushing against the top of the receiver, the rear screw doing double duty as a recoil lug in a cross-cut slot at the rear of the dovetail.

On the left of the receiver is a spring-loaded bolt stop, the tail functioning as a bolt guide in conjunction with a slot in the bolt body. Receiver wall thickness is 4mm so there can be no doubt about the strength of the action. An L-shaped slot on the right accommodates the bolt handle, a rebate for the side lever safety and usual ejection port.

The bottom has a port for the magazine well and a recess towards the rear to assist the trigger group, it's also drilled and



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Classy Anschutz doesn't disappoint



Pistol grip with its laser cut panels of chequering.

tapped to accept Torx head action screws, the first time these have been used on an Anschutz rifle. The receiver ring is precision bored to take the shank of the barrel in a tight, slip fit, the barrel accurately located by a short pin in the shank mating with a slot in the front of the receiver ring.

Inside the ring is a virtual V-block mounting system made up of two shallow C-shaped locking clamps housed in recesses in the bottom of the ring, internal curve of the clamps exactly matching the shank diameter. Screws through the bottom flat of the receiver are wound up to push each clamp against the shank and hold the barrel in place, a simple but precise way of locking everything together while still allowing barrel interchanges.

The precision barrels are available in two lengths - 457mm (18") with muzzle threaded 1/2"x20 UNF for a suppressor and 515mm (20.3") for the plain, unthreaded barrel - the review rifle fitted with the latter. Barrel diameter is 22mm at the knox form and 19mm at the muzzle which has a relatively flat, slightly angled crown. When the rifle is assembled the barrel floats, both barrel and receiver boasting an attractive matte black finish with no signs of machining or polishing marks.

Bolt

Like the receiver, the three-part bolt is something of a departure from the rimfire bolts we've become used to, the bolt face recessed with an extractor similar to but smaller than the one used in the Match 54 bolt. The extractor uses an internal spring and plunger arrangement instead of the more common, external C-shaped spring that wraps around the top hemisphere of the bolt face body, the underside having a square rail which rides in a guide at the rear of the magazine well recess. A lug on the side of the bolt guide provides ejection when the bolt is pulled back.

The short bolt handle with oversize knob sits in the centre of the bolt and has three equidistant locking lugs around its circumference which give it a lift of 60 degrees. Its central location delivers a shorter overall bolt length, allowing the use of a lightweight firing pin and single-spring striker system installed in the tail of the bolt.

A small roller bearing in the cocking piece sits between the striker and firing pin, reducing the force required to cock the bolt and allowing a stronger spring to be used. The bolt operates smoothly and quickly and cocks on opening, a red-banded pin protruding from the tail giving an indication of the status that's visual and tactile.

Centre locking bolt with lugs set at 120 degrees to each other to provide a 60-degree lift. Notice protruding cocking indicator at rear of bolt.



Recessed bolt face.

Trigger

The trigger group sits in a recess in the bottom of the receiver where it's held in place by a couple of transverse roll pins. The 5061 trigger is single stage with adjustment for weight of pull and travel and has an adjustment range of 800g to 1.2kg, arriving with the weight factory set at 1kg. The sears are hardened and lapped to provide fast and clean release.

A warning on the left of the trigger group housing advises adjustments should only be made by a qualified gunsmith. The group includes a lever safety catch on the right that's fast, easy and silent to operate, the



Component parts of the 1761.



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Classy Anschutz doesn't disappoint

safety locking the trigger but allowing the bolt to be opened if required.

Triggerguard and well

The black polymer, combination trigger-guard and magazine well sits in the belly of the rifle where it's retained by the action screws.

Magazine

This has a black polymer base with stainless steel housing which holds five cartridges in a single stack. A spring-loaded magazine latch is located inside the front bow of the triggerguard and when the latch is pushed forward the magazine drops directly into the hand.

Stock

This is arguably the most striking feature of the 1761, the appeal being it's made in a classic style from a quality piece of walnut. Internally the action mortise and barrel channel are cleanly cut and lacquer sealed to keep out moisture. There are no bedding pads, the marks indicating the receiver sits flat and square as it arrives from the factory, though it would be easy to bed the action should the need arise.

Externally the stock is straight-grained with a semi-gloss lacquer finish that's understated in line with the Classic designation of the rifle. Two-piece panels of laser-cut chequering are provided on the pistol grip and forearm, the gap between the panels offering a distinctive look which makes the chequering feel more raised than it is.

The buttstock has a straight comb and is fitted with a soft, non-slip recoil absorbing pad, the U-shaped forearm tapering gently upwards from the belly to a simple, rounded fore-end which needs no embellishment. QD sling swivel bases are included.

Range testing

For testing, Nioa supplied a 3-9x40



Trigger group and safety is secured in the receiver bottom by roll pins. The plastic lever forward of the trigger is the magazine release.

Bushnell Prime scope and a set of Leupold PRW2 1" steel rings to suit Weaver-style rails. Bushnell has been part of the US optics world for more than 65 years, always offering good quality items at affordable prices. The 3-9 provided is more scope than an unreformed rabbit hunter like me needs on a rimfire but probably not enough for competitive rimfire shooters. For review purpose I expect it was a good choice and set up on the 1761 it gave no grounds for complaint.

The table lists the ammunition I put through the rifle and results obtained with each at 50m, the average taken from 5x5 shot groups. As with any other rimfire the points of impact of the various ammunition types varied considerably, highlighting the need to resight a rifle whenever ammunition is changed.

In the paddock

I enjoyed a couple of morning rabbit hunts with the Anschutz. Accuracy was excellent, it's easy to carry around the hills and provided I did my bit, it delivered rabbits on the ground every time. The best hunt yielded five bunnies for the freezer, three of them shot offhand out to around 45m, the other two taken at 50m and 70m off a field rest.

Overview

There's a lot to like about the 1761. It feels good, hefts nicely and functioning was flawless throughout testing. I especially enjoyed the oversize bolt knob and the trigger as it came from the factory, no adjustments necessary. I expect the model will see more range work than rabbit shooting but wherever it's used it will give a good account of itself - it really is one classy rimfire. ●



The 5-shot magazine has a stainless box with polymer base.

Table 1: Anschutz 1761 Classic - accuracy at 50m

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Ave
Fed Prem Hunter Match	16	22	19
Federal Champion	24	38	27
CCI Standard Velocity	15	22	18
CCI Mini-Mag	19	22	21
SK Flatnose Match	20	23	21
SK Rifle Match	15	15	15
SK Standard Plus	15	18	16
Eley High Velocity HP	13	15	14
Eley Match	18	19	18.5
Winchester Xpert	20	25	22
Winchester Subsonic	22	35	25
RWS Subsonic	21	35	27



Picatinny rail slides over the dovetail on the top of the receiver and is secured by three grub screws, the rear one doing double duty as a recoil stop.

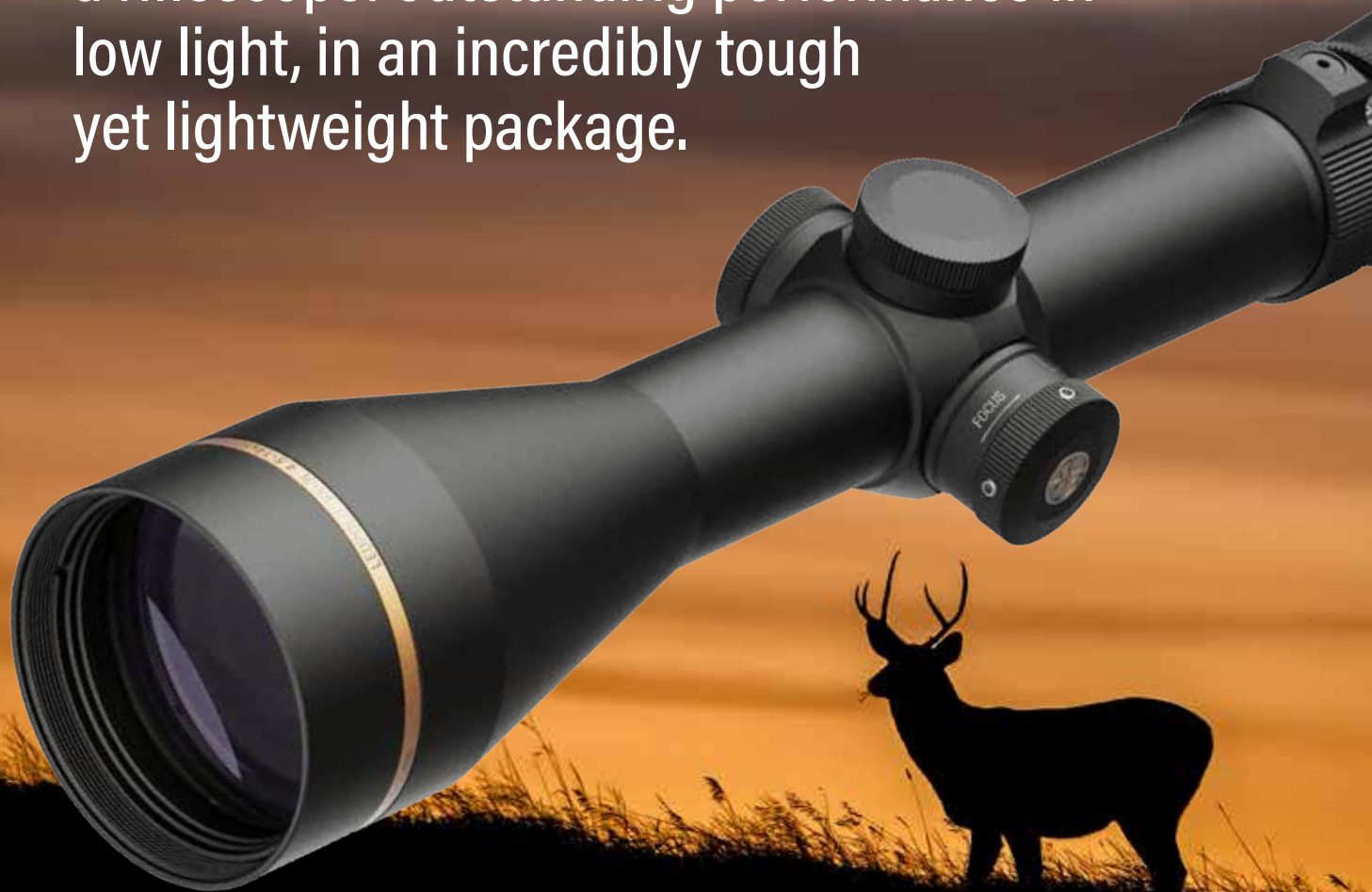
Specifications

Make	Anschutz
Model	1761 Classic
Action	Bolt-action
Bolt	Three-piece, centrally located bolt handle with oversize knob, 60-degree lift.
Trigger	Single stage 5061, adjustable for weight and travel
Safety	Side lever, right-hand side
Barrel length	457mm with threaded muzzle, 515mm without
Calibres/Twist	.17HMR/9", .22LR/16.6" (tested), .22WMF/15.8"
Sights	None. 11mm dovetail on receiver. Picatinny rail also supplied
Magazine	Single stack 5-round detachable
Stock	Classic style, walnut with lacquered finish. Thumbhole stock available
Length of pull	36cm
Weight	2.89kg bare
Overall length	96cm
Distributor	Nioa
RRP	Around \$2200



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Scottie turns video star to push recruitment drive

As the SSAA marches towards its landmark 200,000th member, it's good to know we have some inspirational figures joining the recruitment push. Canberra Trap shooter Scottie Brydon, a former world Para champion, is also a SSAA ambassador who was thrilled to feature in a promotional video highlighting the benefits of giving recreational shooting a go.

The video was put together by SSAA Senior Correspondent Rod Pascoe and features Scottie in one of his favourite places - shooting targets at the range. Scottie takes time out from his international schedule to press home the message about the great work being done by the SSAA and how shooting is an all-inclusive sport which people of all abilities, from novice to title contender, can enjoy.

"It was the first time I'd done anything like this and it was lots of fun," said Scottie. "Any time the SSAA asks me to do something I'm more than happy to help. It will be a great day when the Association reaches that 200,000 members mark."

Scottie's also pushing ahead with his own personal crusade to back up his work with

the Association. "I'm aiming to organise some 'come and try' days at my local club in Canberra involving shotguns, pistols and shooting in general," he said. "I'm looking to help out at grass roots level on the domestic front and would like to develop the sport - the clubs in Melbourne and Queensland I visit are always so accommodating to Para shooters."

For Scottie, who'll be 34 this month, the long-term goal is still to take part in a Paralympic event but for Para shooting to reach that stage there needs to be a total of 32 countries in the mix. "We're gradually getting there," he said, "but we need more countries participating. At the moment there are 22 but when I started out there were only 12."

Meanwhile, due to coronavirus travel restrictions Scottie has seen his international schedule severely curtailed. He was due to compete at a World Cup event in Al Ain near Dubai in March but worldwide health concerns meant the meeting was cancelled. Then he was looking forward to a trip to Germany in May for another World Cup round in Hanover when that one suffered the same fate.

Hopefully the World Para Championships in Lonato, Italy in September will be given the all-clear and it will be business as usual as that's where Scottie won the title in 2018. He's had to adopt a philosophical view of the disruptions to his 2020 agenda but says domestic competitions will help keep him active.

With that in mind he shot at the National Championships in Newcastle in January and while the various divisions didn't include a Para category, Scottie was confident enough to give it a go. "I shot reasonably well in torrential rain and of course it wasn't just myself who suffered because of the conditions," he said. "I was a few targets in front of the rest of the Para shooters so was pretty happy with that but I was a fair way down in the open division."

With that willingness to try his hand when things aren't going exactly according to plan, Scottie exudes a commendable attitude. And it's that sporting spirit which is on show as Scottie leads the rally cry to edge us ever closer to that magical 200,000 membership mark. ●

You can watch the video on SSAA TV at ssaa.org.au



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PROMINAR

Top trio never let me down



We've put some of our regular contributors on the spot and challenged them to nominate their favourite combination of rifle, cartridge and scope. **Daniel O'Dea** gets the series under way

Rifle: Sako 75

Cartridge: .300 Weatherby Magnum

Scope: Swarovski 3-10x42

When asked to nominate my favourite rifle/cartridge/scope set-up, the immediate thought was 'what exactly for' as, depending on the application, my preferences are many and varied. My choice for an afternoon stroll rolling bunnies would not be my pick for filling roo tags off the truck, when hunting buffalo I'd be reaching for something else and if I want to ring steel at 600m-plus there's yet another option.

Heaven forbid I ever have to go to war or fight the zombie apocalypse as that would be a completely different story and if I put my mind to it I could nominate a favourite for each of those missions and more. After all, shooting's a bit like golf - technically you could get round with just a putter and a couple of irons but you'd prefer a full bag of clubs.

Indeed, to give a proper answer I felt I had to define the question so I'll assume it's for hunting a full spectrum of game and go with the old 'one-gun man' theory. The question that's been argued over many a campfire is: If you could only have one rifle and scope for everything, what would it be and in what calibre? Lastly, I figured it has to be something I own rather than a virtual construction.

My initial thought calibre-wise was the .308 Winchester, my first real centrefire rifle. Starting with a CMC Mountaineer (Howa 1500) aged 15 or 16, I've owned many .308s over the years and they all served me well.

I still have several but favourite is my Weatherby Mark V Ultra Lightweight which I acquired when they launched it about 20 years ago. With its soda straw full length

26" barrel, fluted bolt and composite stock it weighed not much more than 5½lbs and cost me a bomb - I had to trade a swag of other rifles in order to afford it.

I scoped it with a Swarovski 6x36A my dad bought by accident when I was a boy. He was in Europe on business and I'd made him promise to buy me a scope for my birthday. He completely forgot when he phoned before flying home and after I reminded him he had the taxi driver detour via a gunshop and bought the first scope they showed him with a plex reticle, which I'd requested.

Luckily for me, not so for dad, he completely mixed up the foreign exchange rate and was halfway home before realising he'd spent a week's wages on my gift (it also launched my love affair with Swarovski and other high-quality European glass).



Daniel's favourite Sako 75/.300 Weatherby/Swarovski combo with range card for the TDS reticle and 180gr factory ammo.

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Top trio never let me down

I still have that scope but later made the package all-American with a Leupold VX-3 in 2.5-8x36, a compact variable more suited to the intended use. It was my go-to pig gun – I'd walk around Cape York all day carrying that Weatherby in one hand and I ran it on 150gr Speer soft-point boat-tail projectiles before moving to Hornady 150gr SSTs.

The load never changed - 48gr of Winchester 748 for about 2800fps and Federal 215 Magnum to really get that ball powder rocking - a stout load but recoil never bothered me in the field. But the Weatherby as my No.1 gun? No. There's another rifle in the safe I also take up the Cape as my working spare in case I have a chance at a bull, a Ruger M77 Mk1 in .338 Winchester Magnum. It's a sentimental piece I bought from my old shooting buddy and mentor, the late Merv Williams from Orange.

Merv bought it to shoot buffaloes in the Territory but was a true one-gun man or, more accurately, one-calibre man - the 30/06 Springfield. He had many rifles but inevitably would reach for just one, 'Betsy', his old Ruger M77 Mk1 30/06 on its second barrel and that's what he shot his buffaloes with. He sold me the Ruger .338 Win Mag, scoped with a Leupold VX-3 2.5-8x36, about 200 rounds of factory 200gr Power Point ammo and enough projectiles to last a lifetime, all for a bargain price.

With my little .308 Winchester any pig hit between the shoulder and ear would drop like lightning while the .338 Win Mag would take them down from any angle - just the job when a big boar was heading north at a rate of knots with his rear end the only target. The same rings true for another sentimental favourite - my Remington 700 in 8mm Remington Magnum.

Almost forgotten, the 8mm Remington Magnum in its day was the quintessential



Daniel and trophy bull tahr taken with his Sako 75/.300 Weatherby/Swarovski combo.

400-yard elk rifle. My Remington 700 was gifted to me by a mate who left the sport in 1996 and couldn't bear the thought of handing it in for the crusher. He wanted it to go to a good home so it was registered with whatever else I could keep and I've had it ever since.

It has a 3-9x40 Leupold on it which is plenty of scope for a rifle that spits 220gr projectiles like a laser. With a maximum 79gr of the long obsolete Winchester 785 and Remington 9½ Magnum primers, 220gr Hornady projectiles are travelling at 2900fps, going faster than the 150s out the .308. I've taken monster Kimberley boars with it including one running straight away at long range across a plain and more recently in the Territory it was easily up to the task on a couple of solid scrub bulls. Either of those magnums would do for anything that walks this continent and 90 per cent of game on the planet. But I have

yet another contender. When younger and fitter I was off to New Zealand for tahrs and chamois and was considering what to take. I wanted a little more reach than my 30/06 Sako 75 deer rifle and was leaning towards one of my magnums. I was shooting Clay Target DTL competition at Orange Gun Club and spending time with friends between stages.

Good mate Greg Coleman was a sales rep for Berretta Australia at the time and was busy on the phone flogging his wares. I was peering over his shoulder at a stock list opened at the page displaying the current Sako 75 inventory when I spotted a unicorn, a Sako 75 blued Hunter in .300 Weatherby Magnum. I asked and discovered it was a cancelled special order. It wasn't a standard calibre offering in Australia so I decided I had to have it for my tahr hunt.

I ordered it along with a set of Sako Optilock rings and bases and mounted up a Swarovski 3-10x42 AV Habicht. Importantly, the Swarovski had the (then) new TDS ballistic reticle system, basically a reticle featuring crosshair subtensions.

You could log on to the Swarovski website, type in the calibre specifications and it would produce a range card giving you the zero distance for each reticle subtension, then you could print the range card. I did exactly that, laminated it and carried it in my top pocket (today it's all on an app).

The trip was fast approaching and I didn't have time to do any load development so I ponied up for some Weatherby 180gr Hornady Interlock factory loads, sighted it in and printed out a range card from the Swarovski website.

Soon after, I was hunting in the Dobson



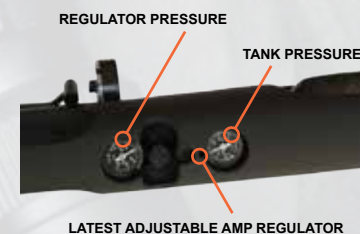
The Swarovski 3-10x42 AV Habicht scope is compact and well balanced on the long action Sako 75 receiver.

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Energy	.177 (4.5) 24J - 18 ft/lbs .22 (5.5) 41J - 30 ft/lbs .25 (6.35) 60J - 45 ft/lbs .30 (7.62) 110J - 82 ft/lbs
Power output can be tuned higher or lower if needed.	
Fill pressure	250 BAR - 3600 Psi
Weight	3 - 3.5 kg



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Top trio never let me down

Valley on NZ's South Island and while crossing the snow fence at 800m, we were heading towards some distant dots on the mountainside the spotting scope had confirmed as likely prey. Four hours later we were so high up the tussock had ceased and nothing grew on the exposed rocks except moss and lichen.

From there my sights were levelled on a group of tahrs even further up the mountain and my guide Gerald called it a tad under 500m with his Leica rangefinder. There I was with my range card telling me the third subtension down on the TDS reticle was zero for 480m yet the first shot sailed over.

Back then rangefinders had no adjustment feature for true ballistics. I was shooting steeply uphill so although line of sight was near 500m the horizontal distance was less. I reassessed and ended up taking the biggest bull of the group - that old bull ran 13½" and 13¾" with 9½" bases and scored 45¾ Douglas Points.

As I own several, the Sako 75 series has long been my favourite bolt-action rifle as the Sako build quality has always been outstanding. That .300 Weatherby gave me 70mm three-shot groups at 300m on its first outing. The Monte Carlo stock design with cheekrest and generous palmwell to the pistol grip always felt just right for me and the three-lugged bolt gives a short bolt throw for quick follow-up shots. The feed from the 75s detachable magazine is always smooth and reliable and I like the drop free on release feature of the Sako 75 over the later 85, where you have to push up on the magazine before it releases.

The Swarovski 3-10x42 AV Habicht was perfect for both rifle and calibre, especially with the TDS ballistic reticle. It takes a fair bit of guesswork out of long-range hunting and if you know the range it only leaves the wind to contend with.

As Sako are to rifles, Swarovski are to optics, although in a race with Zeiss it



Sharp chequering, ample palmwell and finishing touches like the Sako pistol grip end cap add appeal to traditional timber oiled stock.

would likely be a dead heat. A 3-10x is all the power you could ever need in a hunting scope. Although I have other higher-end Swarovskis with 30mm tubes and 50mm objective lens, the more compact 1" AV range are lighter and still offer outstanding optics.

The .300 Weatherby Magnum factory ammo with 180gr projectiles sighted in at 300 yards (270m) and starting out at around 3200fps puts you about 3" (75mm) high at 100 yards (90m), much the same at 200 yards (180m) and just 9" (225mm) low at 400 yards (360m). Even out at 500 yards it drops not much over half a metre so even without a fancy scope, on a deer-sized target, you could still hold backline fire out to 400 yards and land a shot in the kill zone.

Closer in, just hold where you want to hit. You have 4200 ft-lb of energy at the muzzle and retain more than 2000 ft-lb all the way past 500 yards and there's little that wouldn't succumb to a well-placed

shot from a .300 Weatherby. So of all my favourites in the safe, if I had to single out just one it would have to be my Sako 75 in .300 Weatherby Magnum with a Swarovski 3-10x42 scope. ●



Daniel and chamois taken with his Sako 75/.300 Weatherby/Swarovski combo.



Roy Weatherby developed his .300 Magnum in 1944 and Daniel has some vintage Tiger boxes in his collection. Marketing made some big claims for the times but the product lived up to the hype.



.300 Weatherby Magnum, 180gr Hornady Interlock Factory rounds with printed and laminated Swarovski TDS range card for Daniel's Sako 75.

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Lucky 13

John Dunn concludes his look back at a baker's dozen of Stevens single-shot rifles



Stevens Little Scout No.14.

The tip-up and Favorite rifles along with shotguns took the Stevens name to the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries but the company is also famous as the most prolific maker of boys' rifles across the globe. As their name suggests they were made for boys and as such were generally small and lightweight, the majority chambered for the .22LR cartridge. They had to be safe, easy to use and shoot accurately, even if only at gallery ranges.

During the heyday of the boys' rifle trade, Stevens produced 16 distinct models. Some like the Favorite had variations so the final Stevens boys' rifle count goes well into the twenties and on that basis the few I have in my collection are a tiny proportion of those available.

Little Scout No.14

Made from 1906-1910 the .22 calibre Little Scout No.14 was one of the slighter Stevens rifles. Weighing just 1.13kg (2½lb)

it was built on a rolling block-type action housed in a malleable iron frame fitted into a mortice in the stock. The tapered round barrel was 45.7cm (18") long, slip-fitted into the frame where it was secured by a screw from the underside. Sights consisted of a German silver knife edge front and an open rear, the name of the rifle stamped on top of the barrel.

The rifle could be taken down by removing a thumb screw through the forearm of the stock which was made from a flat piece of oiled walnut board, 19mm thick with top and bottom edges rounded off for comfort and fitted with a blued steel buttplate and triggerguard. The overall length was a scant 82.8cm (32.6") and when the rifle was introduced in 1906 the asking price was \$2.25. When it was discontinued in 1910 that hadn't changed.

Little Scout No.14½

Various advertised as "a real rifle with a real rifle barrel", "a real rifle despite the

price" and "the ideal boys' rifle", the Little Scout No.14½ became the most popular boys' rifle Stevens built. Introduced in 1910 at \$3, it remained in production until 1932-33 and while no assembly records exist, it has been suggested up to half a million of these tiny rifles may have been made.

It had a blued 50.5cm (20") round barrel fitted with a bright metal blade fore sight and flat top open rear with name and number of the model stamped on the barrel. The rear section of the barrel sat in the open top of the frame where it was secured by a take-down screw from underneath.

The colour case-hardened frame housed a rolling block-type action opened and closed by a thumb lever on the right of the frame. The two-piece stock was walnut, the buttstock secured to the frame by a through-bolt running lengthwise. The rifle weighed 1.2kg (2¾lb) and had an overall length of 86.3cm (34").

Despite its popularity the action wasn't a strong one. When high-velocity, smokeless



Stevens Little Scout No.14½.

Stevens Marksman No.12.



Marksman No.12
action open showing
similarities to the
Maynard patent rifle it
was based on.



powder .22LR cartridges were introduced around 1930, it was found the rifle didn't handle the increased pressures well, possibly one of the reasons it was discontinued in 1932.

Marksman No.12

This rifle was introduced in 1912. Built on a Maynard style, lever operated tip-up action - Stevens owned the Maynard patent at the time - the Marksman was marketed as one of the strongest and safest. The frame was blued and initially the rifle had a round 50.8cm (20") barrel fitted with a metal bead fore sight and flat top open rear, available calibres being .22, .25 and .32 rimfire. In 1924 barrel length was increased to 55.8cm (22"), the name and number of the rifle stamped on the left of the frame.

The two-piece stock was walnut, attached to the frame by a bolt lengthwise through the buttstock which was fitted with a hard rubber buttplate, overall length 91.4cm (36") and weight 1.8kg (4lb). In 1912 it cost \$4.25 which by 1920 had risen to \$8.75. Stevens described it as "of full dimensions suitable for adults as well as boys" and "ideal for the man or boy desiring a full-size extremely accurate single-shot rifle at a moderate price".

In 1913 a Marksman variant was offered with a 66cm (26") .44 calibre smooth bore barrel. Designated the '44-gauge Stevens Shotgun No.101' it was chambered for the centrefire .44 Extra Long, .44/40 Shot and .44 Game-Getter cartridges. According to

period advertising it was "for experienced sportsmen - for boys, for ladies - a splendid light gun for small birds at 20-25 yards". It was priced at \$5 and discontinued in 1933. Noted US single-shot authority Frank de Haas regarded the Marksman No.12 as one of the best single-shot boys' rifles Stevens ever made.

Crack Shot No.26

This little rifle was designed for Stevens by George S. Lewis. Patented in 1912 (No. 1059477) it was introduced to the shooting public the following year. A falling block rifle, it was actuated by an under lever that doubled as a triggerguard, the open-topped blued frame using the same take-down



Crack Shot action open.



Stevens Crack Shot No.26.



Stevens Ideal No.44
rifle in standard rimfire
configuration.

system as the Little Scout No.14½ with the take-down screw, sights and two-piece stock on both rifles interchangeable.

Initially the blued round barrel was 45.7cm (18") long, lengthened to 50.8cm (20") in 1924, available calibres being .22 or .32 rimfire. In 1929 barrel length was increased to 55.8cm (22") and the blued frame became colour case hardened, name and number of the model stamped on the left of the frame. Sights on all barrels consisted of a front blade and fixed rear.

The stock was walnut-finished birch fitted with a steel, carbine-style buttplate, overall length with the 50.8cm barrel being 86.3cm (34") and weight 1.47kg (3¼lb). Initially it sold for \$3.50 but by 1924 that had risen to \$7.50. A smooth bore Crack Shot No.26½ was also available, chambered for the .22 and .32 rimfire shot cartridges.

In 1940 the Crack Shot was revamped, a pistol grip stock fitted and forearm made longer and fuller. An adjustable rear sight

was fitted to the barrel and the screws in the frame were replaced with pins. Production of the Crack Shot No.26 ceased in 1942-43 when it was selling for \$4.65.

Stevens Junior No.11

Patented on July 7, 1907 this little rifle was made in .22 rimfire only from 1924-1933. The action is similar to the one on the Little Scout No.14½ and many of its parts are interchangeable. Appearance-wise the rifle looks like a clone of the first Little Scout with its one-piece, walnut stained beechwood stock. Despite that it's a distinct design introduced "to meet the demand for a rifle with a safe, positive action and accurately rifled barrel . . . in an extremely low-priced arm".

A 50.8cm (20") barrel was fitted with a knife blade fore sight and fixed, flat topped rear, the model stamped on the top rear of the barrel which was fitted to a pressed metal receiver housed inside the stock. The

rifle was easily taken down by removing a screw through the stock which had no buttplate, weighed 1.2kg (2¾lb) with overall length of 86cm (34"). Towards the end of its production life in 1933 it was listed for \$4.40.

Stevens Ideal No.44

This was made from 1894 to 1947 and I have two examples in my collection, one chambered for .22 rimfire, the other in .25/20. The rimfire is a catalogue standard rifle with a 60.9cm (24") half octagon barrel fitted with a Rocky Mountain blade fore sight and ladder adjustable sporting rear.

Originally case hardened the frame has a plain grey patina, the two-piece stock made from oiled walnut, the buttstock fitted with a curved steel buttplate. This rifle dates from between 1901 and 1916 and was priced \$10 in 1902.

The .25/20 is a better example of the Ideal 44. In line with catalogue



Stevens Junior No.11.

Stevens Ideal No.44 rifle in standard centrefire configuration had a barrel 51mm longer than the rimfire version.



specifications it has a 66cm (26") barrel, the original fore sight has been replaced with a combination target-style sight, while the rear sight is as-issued. A Stevens mid-range Vernier sight is fitted to the tang and all the colour case hardening remains on the frame. It was made between 1916 and 1925.

Overview

Of the 13 rifles listed, only some can still be fired. For a few, ammunition is no longer made, others are showing their age and have earned their place in the strong room or collection cabinet and I don't consider any of the .22 rifles safe to fire with modern

high-velocity ammunition. All were made by a company which left an indelible mark on the history of single-shot firearms with an amazing range of unique types and for that the collectors of today owe Joshua Stevens a great deal of thanks. ●



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Make the most of your trophies

Thomas Tabor

Your hunting enjoyment doesn't necessarily have to end after you've put 'brown on the ground'. For many of us, displaying trophies in our home allows us to extend and relive those exciting hunting adventures we've shared for years to come. Sometimes that's done by engaging the services of a taxidermist to mount trophies for us. A shoulder, or even a full body mount, certainly is a great way to do that and like many hunters I've dug deep into my bank account to embellish the walls of our home. But while I've never regretted spending that money, there are less costly ways to achieve those same objectives.

From Outback to the wall

Over the years my trophy room has grown to include a wide variety of displays, not just those done by my taxidermist but many I've fashioned myself. For example, I often put up my deer antlers by sawing the horn bases off then boiling them clean on our kitchen stove.

After that I like to reshape the base using self-hardening modelling clay (sold by taxidermist supply stores), body filler (for car body repairs) or similar material. From there I cover and glue brightly coloured

velour over the antler bases using either contact cement or a glue stick, which doesn't seem to impregnate the cloth as badly as some other adhesives.

To make attaching the antlers to a display board easier, I glue a small block of wood inside the brain cavity of the horn base using the same material as the antler base, which allows me to screw through the back of the board directly into the block to complete the mount.

European-style mounts are popular too, particularly for displaying deer, buffalo and

similar species. This style usually involves mounting the entire skull flat on the surface of a decorative board which is then hung on the wall.

In preparation, all remnants of the flesh and hide must be completely removed. Many hunters accomplish this by boiling the skull in a bath of water, but this can frequently be both time-consuming and quite messy and, if not properly done, the bone can be weakened and damaged in the process. A much better way to accomplish this same objective would be to have it cleaned using insects to eat away the unwanted flesh. Some taxidermists maintain their own colony of an imported species of beetles specifically for this purpose or will often have contacts with people who do.

Another way of displaying an entire skull is to hang it on the wall without a decorative backing board. I particularly like this as it allows the head to be hung in a more natural angle. Various commercial outlets sell mounting brackets specifically intended for this purpose, but if you're looking to save money your local hardware stores likely sell a perfect substitute for a lot less.

A normal clothes hook for hanging jackets and shirts also works well. Many



Exotic imported beetles are used by some taxidermists to eat meat from bone matter.

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Make the most of your trophies

deer species have a hole in the back of the skull which will take a hook and when displaying other types of skulls which may not have a conveniently located hole, one can be easily drilled.

There's another alternative for hanging a skull you can easily make yourself from a small flat metal bar. For most deer-sized species the bar should be somewhere around 16mm wide and 115mm long and be flexible enough to be bent into the desired shape.

A couple of holes should be drilled in one end of the bar to accommodate screws which will be used to secure the bracket to the wall. After that the bar must be bent in a 'J' shape, adjusted to your desired hanging angle. Like the clothes hook, the protruding end of the bar then sticks into the hole in the back of the skull and the benefit of using this method of hanging is you can adjust the bend so your skull hangs at whatever angle you prefer.

For a bit more eye-catching flair you might consider having it metallised,



Displaying horns either as a skull mount or full skull can be an attractive addition to your home.



Painting the skull can add flair to the trophy.



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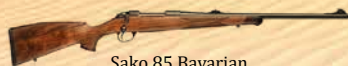
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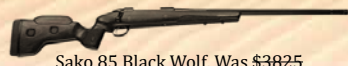


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Make the most of your trophies

bronzed or decoratively painted. Metallising and bronzing services are available through the internet or your local taxidermist may have connections.

Horn and antler versatility

While ivory is possibly the best and most versatile media for carving, horns and antlers make a pretty good substitute and when cut, sliced or reshaped, horns and antlers can be used to make attractive and personalised key chains. I've often added a bit of customisation to rifle and shotgun stocks by using various horns and antlers to make pistol grips and end caps and another popular use is for knife handles.

Like wood, it's best to allow horns and antlers to dry for a while before you attempt to use them. While horns and antlers may not hold as much moisture as wood typically does, it's still better to let them stabilise to the ambient conditions for a few months to keep warping or shrinking to a minimum.

Jewellery

Small horns and teeth can be used to make attractive jewellery items and I once made my daughter a unique bracelet using the tusks of a young boar I'd shot. In my own jewellery-making quest I've resorted to robbing my wife's worthless costume jewellery stash to come up with the various component parts I needed, but there are suppliers of jewellery-making products available on the web who can provide any type of metal accomplishments and attachments you need.

Trophy room

For years I suffered by living in a house which didn't really lend itself to the display of my trophy mounts - ceilings were too low and the walls lacked space - so I solved the problem by designing a home and having it built specifically to fit those needs. I realise few people will find themselves



in that situation but I want to make a few recommendations.

Some larger mounts can be heavy which means you'll need a solid anchor point in the wall. You can tie into one of the upright studs but this limits you as to location of the display. I solved this by having my builders place wood blocking in specified locations between the studs and made careful records for my future hanging needs.

Even if you don't have plans to build a house, the area you choose to hang your taxidermy mounts is crucially important to their long-term survival. We've all seen pictures or movies where a deer or stag head is hung on the wall over a fireplace or wood stove and while this might present a cosy appearance, there couldn't be a worse place to hang a mounted head as the heat rising from such a source will dry the mount out and eventually destroy it. And

exposing them to direct sunlight through your windows isn't much better, as that too can place undue heat on the mount and UV rays can result in bleaching out the colour of the hide.

The way I see it

No matter how you choose to display the successes of your hunting adventures, doing so will help keep those good times alive and every time my gaze settles on one of my exhibits hanging on the wall of my trophy room, the memory of that hunt comes flooding back. When I pick up one of the rifles or knives I've customised with a piece of horn or antler, I relive the fun I had on that trip. Even something as simple as a piece of horn hanging from my key chain can have the same result, as for me preserving those memories in these ways is every bit as important as the hunt itself. ●





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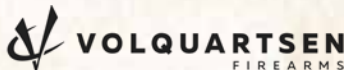
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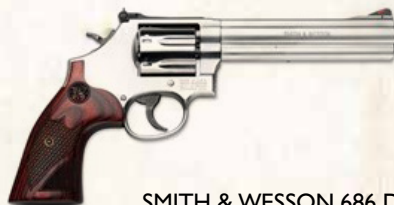
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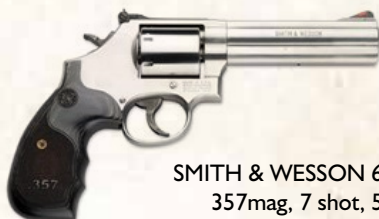
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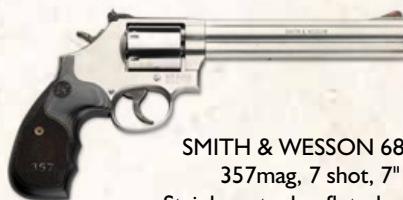
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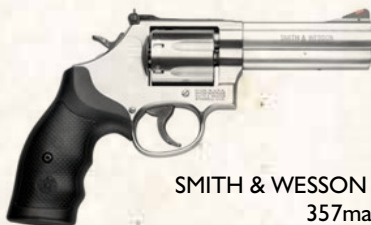
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Bruce pleased with himself after taking this nice warthog.



This won't be pretty!

Warthog hunters realise their dream

Mick Chapman

I've yet to meet the person who'd argue warthogs are easy on the eye, with large prehistoric warts protruding from their heads, huge ivory tusks and an almost hairless body. You could ask "What was the Creator thinking?" when he moulded *Phacochoerus aethiopicus*. Certainly unique in appearance, for any pig hunter travelling to Africa the mere mention of warthogs would be enough to flick their switch. I was no different.

Having spent a lifetime drooling over magazine articles and seeing the odd head mount at shows or in taxidermists' workshops, my desire to bag a warthog was ever-growing. The sheer size of the ivory was motivation enough but the real longing lay in their uniqueness - I had to have one.

I'd seen plenty of warthogs as we moved from one area to another in Zimbabwe during my quest for kudu and eland bulls. Some had been okay, so I thought, but Matt my professional hunter felt sure we'd encounter larger hogs at the Buby Valley Conservancy so I held off as we left the Mashura ranch mid-morning, driving the three hours to Buby.

The African professional hunter's knowledge of the animals and birdlife in his area is invaluable and Matt's grasp of the Buby layout was astounding. We'd be chatting away when he'd drop in something along the lines of: "We'll probably see a water-buck or nyala here," and sure enough one would appear almost on cue.

Approaching another waterhole searching for warthog sign I was watching a troop of vervet monkeys hard at play when I was brought back to earth with Matt exclaiming: "Look at that huge impala ram." Needing no more encouragement than Matt's

obvious excitement, I called him to pull up.

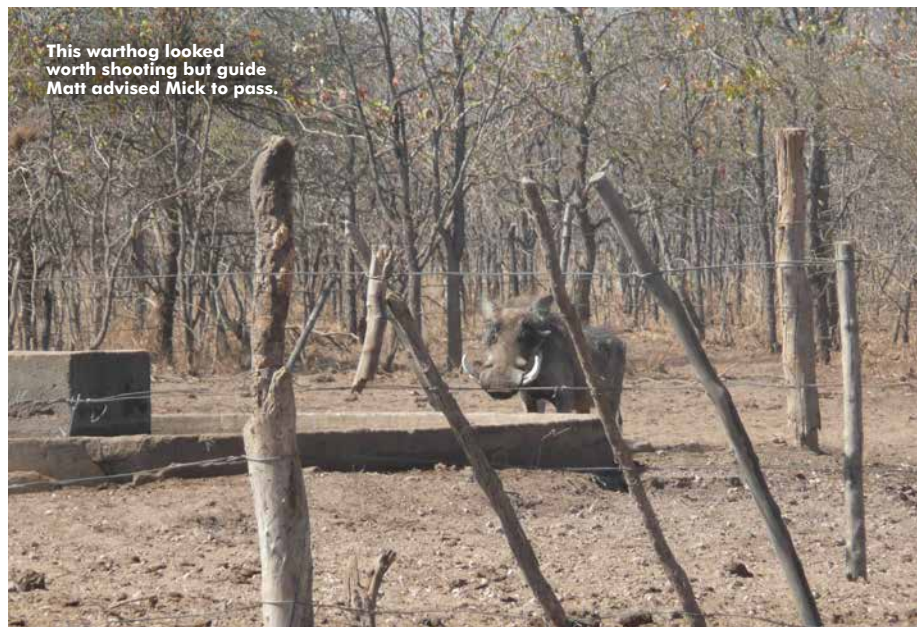
Leaving the comfort of the vehicle I began a stalk towards the impala using the sparsely wooded area as cover. The ram had slowed to a walk then stopped about 120m from me and looked back at the vehicle which had disturbed his afternoon drink. It was a magnificent animal with long and heavy horns, beautiful tan coat and stark white underbelly. Its head was turned to the left casually looking towards the now stationary vehicle, unaware the impending danger was closing in.

We managed to narrow the gap, unnoticed, to about 25m as I raised my Savage rifle and admired my prey through the lens of the Leupold VX III, gently tripping the trigger of the .338 RUM. The silence of the

bush was shattered as the 210gr Barnes TSX exploded into the ram at the intersection of its white and tan hair, passing straight through its body and ploughing into the distant backdrop, kicking up dust as it landed. The ram staggered and collapsed almost where it stood.

As we approached the ram its horns seemed to grow and grow and Matt was ecstatic, assuring me he hadn't seen an impala that size in years. He dashed back to the vehicle for a tape measure, the horns registered at 25" and, with the obligatory photo session over, we loaded the animal into the truck.

With the impala safely in the hands of the skinners we resumed our warthog mission. Prolific in numbers, we constantly came

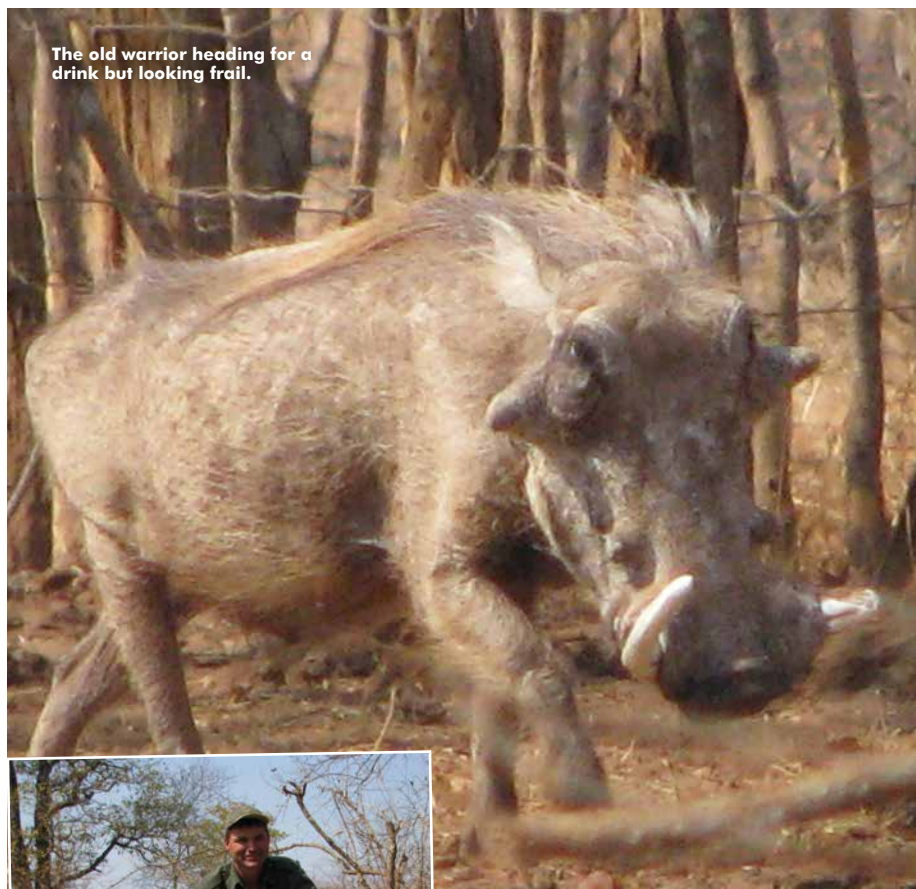


Warhog hunters realise their dream

across them but nothing Matt deemed a trophy. As we travelled around the hunting zone, Matt educated me in the habits of the warhog which apparently are capable of going without water for two to three months yet, when it's available, they'll drink regularly. Living in matriarchal groups, boars will come to the sows to mate but generally live a solitary life. Using aardvark burrows or digging their own cover, they back into the hollow and present those awesome tusks as protection from potential adversaries.

There were countless dugouts where a hog had spent the night but no boar bearing tusks that warranted me firing a shot and this lesson in warhogs was only firing my imagination and enhancing my dreams of shooting what was proving an elusive prey. The Zimbabwean bush was turning into a steep but rewarding learning centre.

In early afternoon with the sun high overhead, a person may be forgiven for thinking any self-respecting warhog would be lying in the shade enjoying a siesta. Not so. Jabulani, our chief tracker, tapped gently on the roof of the truck which Matt immediately brought to a halt, engulfing us in a cloud of dust. He jabbered to Jabulani in local dialect then quietly slipped out of the cab, signalling me to do likewise. Matt stepped to my side of the vehicle



The old warrior heading for a drink but looking frail.



Markus with his trophy the right-hand tusk measured 18".



Using aardvark holes or digging tunnels themselves, warhogs back into the hollows and present their formidable ivory as security while they rest.

and without speaking, gently pointed with shooting sticks in the direction of the meagre cover provided by the stunted scrub to our left.

Hunched over, we began stalking forward for some 200m to where a single boar was muzzling the earth and with binoculars up glassing him, Matt shook his head indicating this one was 'not a taker'. Jabulani whispered while pointing to the boar's right-hand rear. A couple of hundred metres beyond, in the middle of an open plain, another solitary boar was hungrily scouring the earth.

We stealthily crept past the first boar through sparse cover, stealing as many metres as possible when Matt stopped and once again raised his binoculars, immediately indicating me to ready myself. He continued to glass the animal in an attempt to view both tusks while I steadied the rifle in the 'V' of the shooting sticks in preparation for Matt's order to shoot.

The old hog was unaware of our presence about 150m away and, except for the low scrub we were hiding in, the open terrain was making it almost impossible to close the gap between him and us without detection. He cut a path from our right to left, maintaining his bearings without turning

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Warhog hunters realise their dream

his head to allow Matt a view of the second tusk. I was having trouble maintaining a sight picture while resting on shooting sticks so eventually relaxed to watch the warthog go about his business. After about 10 minutes he turned to face us in all his splendour and Matt signalled to take him.

Refocusing my sight picture on the hog's shoulder I gently squeezed the trigger of my Savage 116 FLSK 338 Remington Ultra Mag, a well-placed missile in the form of a Barnes 210gr TSX striking its shoulder dead centre as the warthog never so much as blinked, dropping instantly to his dose of copper. Jabulani turned to me, grabbing my hand and shaking it: "Goot shoot, goot shoot," he exclaimed in broken English as we walked across the plain to where my warthog had breathed his last. As Jabulani raised the head of the hog Matt claimed the tusks to be 13-14" long. I was ecstatic as my enduring dream of shooting a warthog had come true.

The following day my mate Lloyd Heintzberger took a huge 16½" monster

warthog, Bruce and Markus, another couple of my travelling companions managing to fill their quota too, each taking fine specimens.

Markus proved a trophy is in the eye of the beholder after spending the best part of a day sitting in a hide overlooking a water-hole until an ageing warthog wandered in for a drink. This one was so advanced it would stagger 10 or 15 paces then take a break before resuming its struggle to the water. Not large in body, it had a huge tusk protruding from its right jaw, the left tusk having been broken off a couple of inches from the jaw line.

Markus was mesmerised by the animal and decided it was the trophy he'd take home and having watched it come in for water and now on the edge of the bush 100m away, took aim and ended the misery of old age for this seasoned campaigner. Steve Miller, another member of our party, took another old hog with well-brushed and worn tusks, shot on the run through some difficult country with his 308, thus ensuring our warthog set was complete.

Fulfilling the dream of hunting in Africa will go down as a major highlight of my life, all five members of our party just ordinary blokes - no millionaires or magical formulas - just a bunch of mates who hunted the dream. ●



Mick decked this 13½" warthog after an eventful hunt.

Lloyd was all smiles after taking this ripper 16½" warthog.



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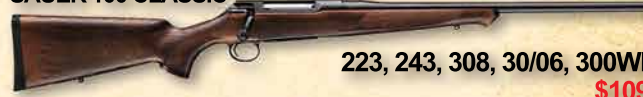
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8x32s

The forgotten binoculars

Chas Harding

Choosing binoculars for hunting is not an easy decision. There are a myriad of choices available and prices to match ranging from sub-\$300 to \$3000-plus. Decisions are being made though, and it appears from what I hear and see that most hunters these days are buying either 10x42 or 8x42 roof prism binoculars, usually at the upper end of the price/quality range. I don't believe this is essential as nowadays many mid-range optics manufacturers produce very fine and useable products - and the gap is closing.

The two popular binoculars mentioned are fine choices as they provide good field of view and adequate magnification, with 10-power about the maximum a human can steadily hold unsupported. Both have exit pupils of between 4 and 5 which covers most light situations and both are of manageable size due to their objective lens diameter of 42mm.

A smaller percentage choose 8, 10, 12, and 15 x 50/56, again good choices with exit pupils from 7 to 3.7, but these are starting to verge on the large size due to their 50-56mm objective lens with some stretching the limits of hand-held stability. Readers new to optics would naturally think magnification is key to binoculars. Let me assure you it's not and two examples spring to mind.

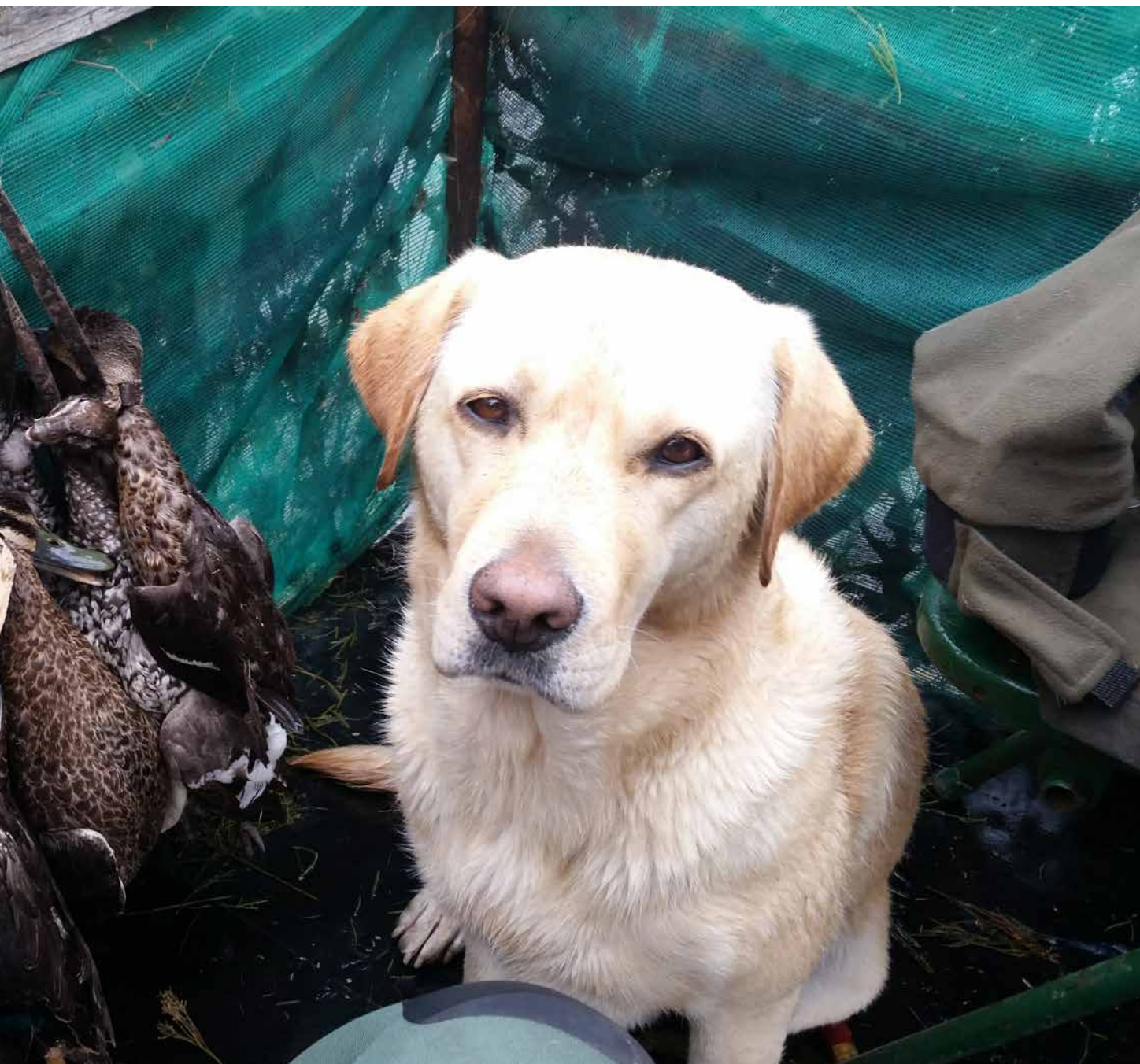
- We were chasing chital deer in Queensland and my friend had his 15x56s tripod-mounted looking at deer. I laid my 10x56s alongside resting on shooting sticks to observe the same mob. I tried both binoculars and while the difference was noticeable, it was definitely marginal which surprised me as I expected a greater difference with his having 50 per cent more magnification.

- Another friend and I were searching at long distance for game in Tasmania when a shape in some wattles caught our attention though we couldn't quite make it out. His 12x56s and my 8x32s were resting across



Small binoculars are no burden and go everywhere with you.

Nowadays many mid-range optics manufacturers produce very fine and useable products



8x32s - the forgotten binoculars

the ute bonnet and quite stable. I made the call first that I felt it was a deer-shaped rock and after another minute of intense observation he told me: "You've no right to see so well through those small binoculars - it is only a rock." Again I was surprised as his binos also had 50 per cent more power.

Those new to optics would also naturally think the bigger they are and the more light going through the binoculars, the better. The answer is yes but this extra light is (a) often unused except in very specific light conditions and (b) comes at a cost in weight and size. To summarise:

(a) Broadly speaking (respecting effects of lens coatings and quality), light transmitted through binoculars is dependent on two things: Magnification and objective lens size. This light transmission is seen as the small circle of light at the back of the binoculars when held at arms' length. This circle is referred to as the exit pupil and its size is calculated by dividing the objective lens diameter by the magnification (10x42 has an exit pupil of 4.2mm). The pupil receives light in the human eye and opens and contracts depending on conditions, opening to a maximum 6mm in very poor light (7mm in the young) and contracting to a minimum 2mm in very bright sunlight.



Lower binoculars with an exit pupil of 5.6 come at a definite cost in size and weight.



10x42 compared with 8x32, considerable size difference but both with exit pupil of around 4.



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8x32s - the forgotten binoculars

Simply put, if the exit pupil of your binoculars is larger than your pupil at any given time due to light conditions, some light coming through your binoculars is unused, effectively hitting either side of your pupil and not entering your eye. Hence in most light conditions, for the average hunter aged 20 or older, binoculars with an exit pupil of 3-5mm provides all the light the eye can receive and, more importantly, need and use. Therein lies the reason for the popularity of 10x42 and 8x42 binoculars (EP 4.2 and 5.2).

(b) In binoculars, weight and size should be seriously considered as even with today's harnesses, big ones are bulky items to hang off the chest and neck and do get in the way (try a prone rifle shot with 56mm binoculars in a chest harness and you'll find out). More importantly, large and heavy binos will eventually be left in camp or car when the hunter heads out as they can feel a nuisance. Big mistake - your binoculars should always be with you no matter how large or small the trek.

And so to that all-important decision. I have a pair of 10x56s which I've noted took only a very backward step to the 15x56s. I have a pair of 8x32s which I've also mentioned I compared relatively favourably alongside 12x56s and I rarely use my 10x56s (only from the car).

The 8x32s are my go-to binoculars, the ones I unreservedly recommend and unsung hero of the binocular world in my opinion. Why? 8-power gives plenty of magnification and is easy to hold steady unsupported; exit pupil of 4 gives good and useable light; field of view is good; light and easy to carry and never left behind; cumbersome strap/harness not necessary. They do everything the popular 10x42s and 8x42s do in a smaller and lighter package.

Readers may raise the issue of range-finders and say they're rarely available in 8x32. True, but to my mind 300m is a very long shot and the average person should be able to estimate that with practice by eye (visualising 3x100m sprints is how I do it). And Mr Average really shouldn't be trying to take game any further out as wounding is too real a possibility. Stalk closer if it's that far out - or don't shoot. If you really need a range finder buy a separate small unit.

I'll end this treatise on binoculars with a couple of quotes, the first from CEO of Zeiss Sports Optics, Germany in a letter to me in the 1990s: "In my opinion you have purchased the two best products from this company. The 8x32s are my personal favourite for hunting, nature observation and walking which I enjoy." The man could have chosen any optics he liked from the

world's premier manufacturer. Interestingly he chose 8x32s.

The second quote is from the owner of the Leica dealership in Tasmania in the late 1980s. A surveyor by trade and birdwatcher, naturalist and bushwalker in his spare time, he too could have chosen any binos from that esteemed company and definitely understood optics. He told me: "You'll try several binoculars in your lifetime but in

the end come to the same conclusion as I - the 8x32 is the ideal compromise."

Many will disagree and that's the nature of hunting equipment. Firearms and optics are very subjective and create much camp-fire discussion just as choice is one of the joys of the pastime we follow. But I say to the nimrod and the unsure: Buy a set of 8x32s and you won't be disappointed. ●



From left: 56mm, 42mm and 32mm objective lens binoculars.



This stag was picked out with the 8x32s alongside friends using larger binoculars.

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CZ 455

takes style to new level

Con Kapralos

When we mention the words 'CZ' and 'rimfire', thoughts immediately turn to the classic blued steel and walnut models this Czech Republic manufacturer is known for the world over. From the 452 up to the current 457 rimfire models, their best sellers would have to be those offered with the warmth of walnut and elegance of blued steel - a must for the rimfire purist or Australian small calibre shooter or hunter who has grown up admiring what should make a great .22 Long Rifle.

But in this modern materials age, if you look over your shoulder you risk being left behind. Thankfully, CZ have moved with the times and offer their rimfire models with all manner of synthetic stocks and aluminum chassis to cater to consumer demand. One recent item available only to the Australian market through Winchester Australia is the CZ 455 with a rather innovative twist - a carbon fibre-wrapped varmint profile barrel with black thumbhole stock. Now that's different.

Australian Shooter was offered the rifle for evaluation along with an excellent optic in the form of a Meopta Meopro 3-9x42 and CZ rimfire rings. Meopta rifle-scopes are among the best to come out

of Europe and the Meopro options offer superb optical quality at a price hard to believe. Also supplied were some samples of Winchester's .22LR ammunition offerings. It would be interesting to see how the carbon fibre-wrapped barrel would perform in the accuracy stakes but first, a closer look at the rifle itself.

At a glance

The 455 Thumbhole Black Carbon came in a cardboard carton with CZ livery and on opening the container the rifle, factory test target, CD-ROM, user manual and warranty card were removed. As always, reading the enclosed literature is a must for anyone handling a firearm, regardless of how many they've dealt with.

Features of the rifle

- Turn-bolt repeating design based on the CZ 455 action.
- Silky smooth bolt travel with two-position wing-style safety.
- Match grade chamber.
- Removable five-shot polymer clip magazine.
- Integral dovetail milled to receiver to accommodate scope mounting.

- Fully adjustable trigger, factory set at 1kg.
- Free-floated varmint-profile barrel - 533mm (21") chrome moly barrel liner wrapped with carbon fibre for added rigidity and light weight (barrel not made to be interchanged).
- Integral muzzle brake fitted to barrel.
- Thumbhole stock made from timber and finished with non-slip black coating.
- 340mm length of pull (LOP).
- Superb handling thanks to overall weight of 2.8kg appreciated in a hunting rifle.

Range testing

A selection of Winchester's most popular rimfire loads were supplied and these would be supplemented by other loads used by this reviewer. Once the scope was fitted to the rifle and the bore cleaned to remove any factory preservatives, range testing began at the normal 50m.

I consider the .22LR to be effective out to 75m maximum and see no purpose in accuracy testing the little rimfire round at 100m and beyond, as that defeats the purpose and application of this great little round. Several range sessions yielded the results in Table 1.

The CZ 455 Thumbhole Black Carbon



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Same spec as the popular 783 Synthetic now available with an attractive American black walnut stock. Package includes 3-9x40 scope, fitted and bore-sighted, QGE gunbag and sling. Available in the following calibres: .223, .243, 6.5 CM, .270, 7mm RM, .308, .30-06, .300 WM.



Remington 783 Varmint Laminate - \$1207

Exciting new model. Featuring free-floating 26" heavy barrel, oversized bolt handle, laminate stock and beavertail fore-end. Package includes Picatinny rail and bipod. Available in the following calibres: .223, .22-250, .243, 6.5 CM, .308.



Remington Model 783 Varmint - \$937

Featuring 24" heavy barrel with muzzle thread, oversized bolt handle and FDE synthetic stock. Package includes Picatinny rail and bipod. Available in the following calibres: .223, 6.5 CM, .308.



Remington Model 783 Package - \$776

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CZ 455 takes style to new level



The rifle came with a comprehensive manual, warranty card, test target and CD with multi-language instructions.



The standard CZ 455 bolt with integral two-position wing-style safety.

in .22LR performed beautifully as you'd expect from any rimfire with a CZ pedigree. The bolt cycled smoothly and extracted fired cases positively.

The five-shot magazine was a bit limiting in capacity but I'm sure there would be 10-round alternatives available for users who require such. The rifle produced some tight five-shot groups, no doubt aided by the free-floated, carbon fibre-wrapped barrel. Provision of the integral muzzle brake was a bit of a mystery - it wouldn't be there to tame recoil of the rimfire round and there was certainly a degree more report when the rifle was fired. I assume it was done for aesthetic purposes but stand to be corrected.

Added to that the fact the muzzle brake can't be removed is a negative and having the option to remove the brake and replace



Top of receiver with integral dovetails which makes scope mounting easy.



CZ 455 Thumbhole Black Carbon in .22LR in component form.



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CZ 455 takes style to new level

it with a knurled cap would have been a far better option. The thumbhole stock was comfortable to shoot off the bench and the non-slip black coating helped achieve a solid hold on the rifle.

I originally thought the stock was synthetic polymer but closer examination shows it was made of a non-descript hardwood and finished accordingly in a black. The Winchester Australia website indicates the thumbhole stock on this model is a soft-touch polymer unit but the review rifle had a hardwood version. All in all this rifle was a pleasure to shoot off the bench and would be a fine alternative for the SSAA Field Rifle rimfire discipline.

In the field

The rifle was included in my kit on a springtime deer hunt just as a provision for a small game unit. While rabbits are scarce in that hunting patch, the odd hare and fox would be candidates for the little rimfire round and while we drew a blank on rabbits we managed a brace of hares for the pot just as the sun was setting.

Carrying the rifle was a joy and shooting free-hand at our quarry at distances out to 50m was made easy with the thumbhole stock using Winchester subsonic ammunition. The rifle would come into its own using a bipod and shooting over a well-populated rabbit warren - if you can find one - but in this instance as a stalking outfit with the Meopta Meopro scope was a perfect combination.

In conclusion

CZ know a thing or two about making accurate rimfire rifles and the 455 Thumbhole Black Carbon sure is something different. On discussing it with the team at Winchester Australia, I was alerted to the fact this model is made specifically for the Aussie market.

It certainly works when it comes to dependability and accuracy but its aesthetics with the carbon fibre-wrapped varmint profile barrel, integral muzzle brake and thumbhole stock make this rifle stand out in the crowd. It's available in .22LR and retails for \$990 through any Winchester Australia dealer. More at winchesteraustralia.com.au ●



The five-shot polymer clip magazine is standard on the CZ rimfire line-up.



Con Kapralos puts the Thumbhole Black Carbon through its paces.



Left side of the 455 action with make, model and CZ logo engraved into receiver.

Table 1. Accuracy testing - groups at 50m

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Average*
Winchester Winner	15mm	31mm	26mm
Browning BPR	20mm	41mm	31mm
Winchester Subsonic	20mm	38mm	26mm
Winchester MAX 42 Power Point	14mm	29mm	21mm
Winchester Power Point	16mm	37mm	23mm
Winchester 555	17mm	30mm	24mm

*Average group calculated from five 5-shot groups at 50m

Specifications

Make: CZ

Model: 455 Thumbhole Black Carbon

Action: Bolt

Calibres: .22LR only

Trigger/safety: Trigger user adjustable for weight of pull and travel, two-position wing-style safety on bolt

Barrel: 533mm (21") chrome moly hammer forged tube with carbon fibre wrapping, varmint profile. Integral muzzle brake fitted (not removable)

Magazine: Five-shot polymer

Stock: Thumbhole stock with comb-over cheekpiece made from hardwood, finished in non-slip black, rubber recoil pad fitted (listed as polymer soft-touch on Winchester Australia website)

Overall length: 1020mm

Weight: 2.8kg

Distributor: Winchester Australia

RRP: \$990 but shop around

See the light The PA5 by Nextorch

Mark van den Boogaart

The Nextorch PA5 is a compact, hand-held torch capable of producing 660 lumens at maximum setting. Measuring a handy 15cm with barrel diameter of 26mm and a slightly larger lamp head at 34mm, its power source is a single, rechargeable 18650 lithium-ion battery.

Looking closely at the PA5 there are a couple of features worth mentioning. Firstly, the build. It feels like a well-made product using CNC-machined aluminium alloy 6061-T6 finished in a Mil Spec III-type hard anodic oxidation surface treatment, solid work you can feel the moment you pick it up. To complement the build, the torch barrel and rear switch unit have deep-cut straight checkering to provide grip, while the rotating lamp head has enough resistance to ensure it stays at the desired focus. That said, at just 15cm long you can hold and adjust the focus in one hand.

Second standout feature is the thought which has gone into the charging arrangement. The PA5 is charged via a direct USB connection, the micro USB port hidden and protected by a spring shroud that fits over the rear switching unit. Pull the shroud away, rotate it about 20 degrees to lock it in place and you expose the micro USB port and charge/recharge indicator. It's a neat little feature and a great way to protect the USB connection point.

Up front the PA5 uses a CREE XP-L medium white light LED. Initially I thought a colder white light would be better but the



medium LED does seem to help you better pick out definition at night. Delivering a maximum brightness of 660 lumens, the unit has five modes via the 'Duo Switch' at the rear of the torch. There's the 'Momentary' on and 'High' setting, both at 660 lumens with a stated distance of 220m and a 3-hour, 54-minute run time, a 'Low' setting at 30 lumens and 32-hour run time as well as 'Strobe' and 'SOS' at 100 lumens.

The PA5 also has a focus function which allows you to easily move between a pointed focus to wide beam. To adjust the beam you simply rotate the lens unit and, as stated previously, there is enough resistance in the lens unit to stop it from moving by itself, though you can hold the torch and rotate the focus in one hand. In terms of durability the PA5 has a 1m drop/impact rating and IPX-4

water resistance rating, IPX-4 referring to a specific test which involves the torch being subjected to water from either an oscillating fixture or spray nozzle. The test is conducted over a period of time to determine the torch's water resistance so in layman's terms is durable enough for most situations.

All told, the Nextorch PA5 is a great option for someone seeking a torch which performs a variety of outdoor tasks well, its design and build quality combined with 660 lumens output and focusing beam making a compelling argument for your hard-earned dollars. Imported by Beretta Australia, the recommended retail price of the Nextorch PA5 set is around \$123.

• Nextorch is a Chinese manufacturer of LED torches catering to the tactical, police, hunting, fishing and outdoor markets. ●



A woman in an orange tank top and black leggings is standing in a field, holding a leash attached to a brown dog that is jumping up at her.

**AUSTRALIAN
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<p>Avid hunter and Conservation and Wildlife Management member Michelle Pares tries her hand at setting some traps on a family farm for pesky wild dogs and foxes.</p>	<p>Expert insight into ammunition selection continues with a focus on pistol ammo and everything you need to know.</p>	<p>Recent South Australian Sport Hall of Fame inductee Libby Kosmala discusses her 12 rifle shooting medals across 12 Paralympic Games.</p>
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A magazine cover featuring a woman's face. The title 'AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER' is at the top. A circular badge in the bottom right corner says 'NOW in digital format'.

Dress code?

Casual with Colts

Jeremiah



**The Custer
Colt story from
the January,
1993 edition
of *Australian
Shooters' Journal*.**

It all began in 1993 when Maurie Albert's Melbourne Gun Expo theme was advertised as 'Colt Firearms' and the visiting keynote identity was Colt Peacemaker authority and author Keith Cochran. In July the previous year Keith had published his *American West - A Historical Chronology* and I was privileged to receive one of the initial run, No.10 of 1000, signed by Keith and with which he included a personal letter.

After the Expo, Mike Papps of Frontier Arms invited Keith to Adelaide and I was

honoured to have him stay with us and hosted a dinner party for him. Other guests included Mike, Brian Harding, John Bird and Mike Carr of Gully Guns and the theme was 'Casual with Colts'.

Although it wasn't actually present at the dinner, there was much discussion about one of Keith's recent acquisitions - A Colt SAA revolver - for which he had established its provenance as being from Custer's Battle of the Little Bighorn. Discovered in Australia, the story of this Colt was told in full in my article published in the January

1993 edition of *Australian Shooters' Journal*.

Brian Harding brought with him a Colt SAA No.349350 engraved to a member of the Legion of Frontiersmen and at the time no one could shed any more light on the Legion. That fell to the late Neil Speed, a fountain of knowledge, who told me later that in the early 1900s, a worldwide group of British patriots and adventurers were an unofficial agency for gathering intelligence for the British Government. At the outbreak of World War I they petitioned George V and were granted official status as a military force of the British Army and served with distinction in East Africa.

One member, the African game hunter Frederick Selous, was killed in Africa by a German sniper in 1917. Selous was a close friend of Teddy Roosevelt and accompanied him on his famous safari of 1909-1910 on which Teddy gathered specimens for the Smithsonian Institute. There was also an Australian Chapter of the Legion as evidenced by the engraving on Brian's pistol.

If you ever visit the Natural History Museum in London, walk past the dinosaur and up the left-hand staircase. At the top on the right is a wall plaque recognising the contribution to the museum of specimens shot by Frederick Selous.

Anyway, the night of the dinner, John Bird and Mike Carr exhibited their favourite SAAs of various calibres and low serial number, mine was a SAA I recently had engraved and gold inlaid by Phil Vinnicombe and, while my memory fails

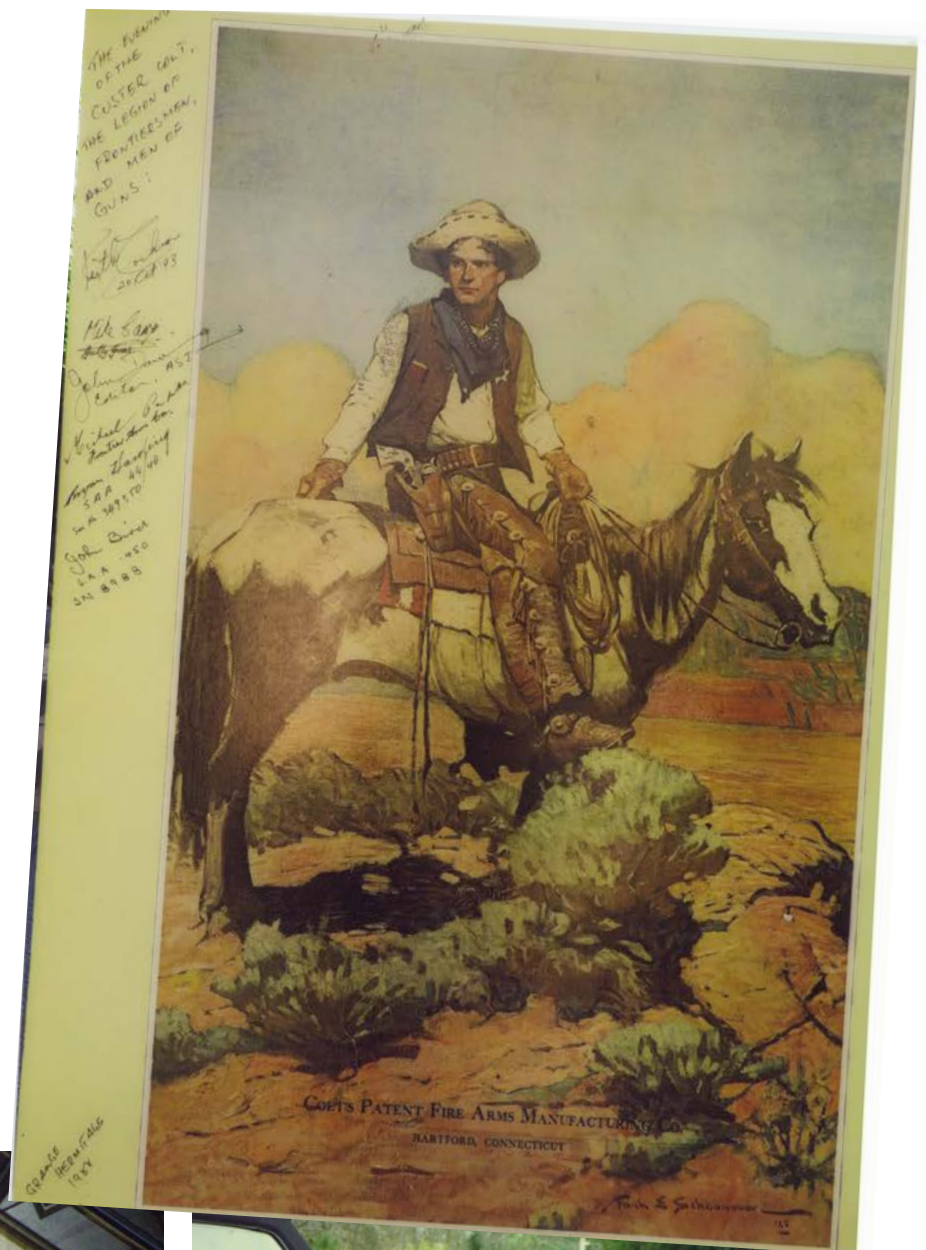


Dinner guests: Back from left are Mike Papps, Brian Harding (now deceased) and the author. In front are Mike Carr, Keith Cochran and John Bird. Keith was ill during his visit and succumbed to cancer soon after.

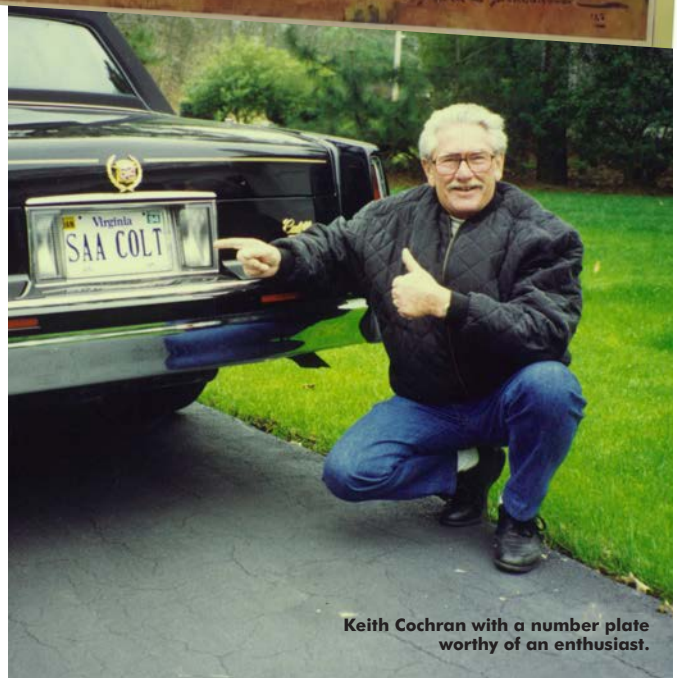
The autographed *Tex and Patches* poster.

me, I think from photographic evidence that Mike Papps brought a Sheriff's Model SAA.

To commemorate the evening all six of us signed my copy of the *Tex and Patches* Colt poster painted in 1925 by Frank E. Schoonover and published in 1926 and I had the privilege of seeing an original of this poster with a letter from the artist when I visited a serious Colt collector friend in the US a while back. ●



The author, left, viewing the original Colt poster.



Keith Cochran with a number plate worthy of an enthusiast.

Fabarm Axis RS12

- as good as it gets

John McDougall



Having visited the Fabarm factory in Brescia and the Italian Proof House, it's always a pleasure to review the company's shotguns. Their firearms are made from the best available materials, proofed to the highest levels possible for a shotgun (1630 bar) and their tribore barrels are second to none along with their latest development, hyperbolic choke tubes.

The warranty for these guns is generous at three years, such is the confidence the manufacturer has in its products, so let's take a closer look at this fine Italian shotgun as the latest model, the Axis RS12 QRR with interchangeable ribs, looks a real winner.

Barrels

These are faultlessly put together in an almost black matte blued finish as opposed to chrome, the top rib removable with two different heights supplied. One is designed to throw 65 per cent of the pattern above the point of aim and 35 per cent below while the other, the lower of the two, is set to throw 50 per cent above point of aim and 50 per cent below.

The barrels are separated from the monobloc to almost the muzzle where a joining collar is used to maintain point of aim for each barrel. Fabarm's latest HP inner hyperbolic choke tubes protruded from the muzzle by 10mm, giving enough surface

area to screw them finger tight before using the T-piece choke tube wrench to fully tighten.

Before installing the choke tubes it's advisable to smear a layer of grease over the threads to ensure an excellent gas seal and additionally provide a lubricated surface which will allow them to be easily removed if they need changed to suit different shooting conditions. As a safety precaution, choke tubes must *never* be removed and reinstalled in a loaded shotgun. The gun should be completely unloaded before replacement or even before checking tightness of the choke tubes.

At 760mm (30") the barrels are striking.



The Fabarm Axis RS12 QRR is perfectly suited to the competitive sporting clays shooter.

Passing a bore gauge through the bores demonstrated the tribore system of barrel configuration whereby the bore is enlarged beyond the nominal chamber dimension of 0.730" going out to 0.740" and then tapered back to match the bore size to accept the choke tubes. The tubes, just on 95mm in overall length, then have a parabolic inner curve rather than a traditional tapered parallel section which determines choke and pellet distribution.

For those unfamiliar with Fabarm's choke system, they rely on a full choke printing an 80 per cent pattern as opposed to the traditional industry standard of 70 per cent pellet distribution at 40 yards over a 30" circle.

The quick release ribs are easily removed from the top barrel by pressing out a small pin at the monobloc end and sliding the rib forward. This can be done using the T-piece handle of the choke tube spanner, as its rounded edges don't scratch the pin but be careful not to lose the pin as a spare is not supplied.

Made from aluminium alloy the ribs are light, effective and a great help to a shooter's comfort and performance when coupled with the Monte Carlo adjustable stock comb. A white bead sight and brass mid-rib sight are fitted to both ribs to avoid gun canting, whereby the barrels aren't vertical but slanted.

At the chamber end the gun is suited to 76mm cartridges and proofed to the superior level of 1630 bar, well above that of any competitor and additionally matched for use with all types of steel shot with appropriate choke tubes installed. This one is ideal for either the clay target sports or field hunting and appropriate proof marks, including the Fleur de Lys for 'high performance' steel shot compatibility, are stamped on the monobloc.

Fabarm make extremely strong ejectors which are one-piece and timed to perfection, loading the gun done without the action being too tight to open the barrels. Bifurcated jointing of the barrels to the action is via trunions (pivot pins) in the receiver walls which are replaceable should they ever wear and the action requiring 're-tightened'.

Receiver

Finished in a silver nitrate colour (also available in black) the receiver is stunning and looks sensational with black scroll engraving to contrast. The low profile, achievable by the bifurcated jointing system of the barrels to the receiver, is equally striking. Although a boxlock actioned gun with inertia trigger set, the trigger releases



Striking design of the receiver with contrasting black scrolling.



All tools are supplied to complete stock adjustment and trigger pull length.



Choke tubes fitted to the muzzle.



Sturdy two-piece ejectors and huge lumps on the bottom of the monobloc ensure the Fabarm is well supported.

have come a long way as their crispness and release weights are fantastic with minimal creep and lightning-fast second barrel firing.

The bottom barrel trigger pull is 1kg, upper barrel release 1.1kg and set-up of the trigger means it's adjustable for the shooter's trigger finger reach from the nicely raked pistol grip. This has around

4mm adjustment each side of centre and no other trigger feet are supplied. Size of the triggerguard is generous and will easily accommodate hands wearing thin leather gloves and it's finished in the same blued colour of the barrel set.

Top lever for opening the gun is in the usual place just behind the apex of the barrels, has a scalloped handle and works

Fabarm Axis RS12 - as good as it gets

smoothly with no sign of burring on the lever rod. Behind is the barrel selector-cum-safety catch and I was impressed as small red dots show whether the under barrel or top was fired first - one dot indicates the bottom barrel to fire first while if the selector is showing two dots, the over barrel would fire first. This is a great option for incoming and going away targets when shooting sporting clays or simulated field.

For an incoming target the tighter-choked barrel can be fired first and the more open choke (usually in the bottom barrel) used second as the target comes nearer and the reverse works for an outgoing target.

Stock and fore-end

These are stylishly finished in Turkish walnut with excellent character and grain structure. The stock is a Monte Carlo style with adjustable comb piece to cater for the higher ribs of the Axis RS12 QRR, the concept of the high rib and stock to prevent eye strain. With lower stocks and ribs many shooters tend to tilt their head forward on the stock and look through the top of their eye sockets, which produces eye strain after a prolonged spell. With the Monte Carlo stock, adjustable comb piece and high ribs, the shooter simply needs to put their cheek on the stock and look straight

down the barrels with their head upright for sighting a target as normal.

The stock is well designed with settings on the comb stems to record adjustment, this Micro Metric 3D system an excellent one and once set up for correct head position should be left. All Allen keys are provided and neatly packed into a red holder so they can't be misplaced.

Proofed to 1630 bar and capable of firing 76mm cartridges, the Axis RS12 QRR is also adept at waterfowl hunting so it was great to see a substantial recoil pad fitted to the butt of the stock, an excellent idea for the field shooter but hardly necessary for 28-gram sporting clay loads. Great for good mount on heavier loads to prevent the gun from sliding off your shoulder, especially on overhead shots. Design of the fore-end is standard with the release catch on the underside and chequering about the stock and fore-end extensive and well completed at around 20 lines per inch.

In the field

The Fabarm Axis RS12 QRR smashed target after target at Frankston Australia Gun Club. The features I like most in Fabarm guns are the tribore configuration of the barrels coupled with the long choke tubes with their 'Inner HP Hyperbolic

profile.' The barrel/choke tube combination is unrivalled in factory offerings, having tested more than 200 guns in my 40 years as an outdoors writer and more specifically a 'shotgun man'.

For those in the market for a competitively priced shotgun the Fabarm Axis RS12 QRR is a hot contender, with either silver or black receiver, the balance and swing of the gun incredible and when you're on target, clays are demolished.

My final decree is this gun would suit the competition shooter quite well without a lavish price tag. At around \$3995 with three-year warranty, strong ABS case, gun socks and all accessories, the Fabarm Axis RS12 QRR is a superb buy. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Fabarm, Brescia, Italy

Distributor: Raytrade, Melbourne

Model: Fabarm Axis RS12 QRR Sporting (12-gauge)

Overall length: 1228mm (48")

Barrel length: 760mm (30")

Overall weight: 3.68kg (8lb 2oz)

Barrel weight: 1.45kg (3lb 3oz)

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 1kg/35oz, over barrel 1.1kg/37oz

Stock dimensions: Length of pull 390mm 5mm/15½", drop at comb adjustable, drop at heel adjustable

Warranty: Three years

Price: Around \$3995



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See the bigger picture

ATN day/night binoculars

Con Kapralos

When out hunting, a set of binoculars is imperative to success. I know many hunters who still, for reasons unknown to me, continue to use their riflescope to scan for game at extended distances. A quality set of 8x or 10x binoculars can be had for a few hundred dollars and, as the price increases, you benefit from improved light gathering, image crispness, colour and contrast. Believe me, the number of times I've spotted game through my normal 8x42 hunting binoculars when the naked eye couldn't distinguish it from the background is simply astonishing.

Advances in sports optics coupled with electronic technology has spawned a new generation of riflescopes and binoculars which can be used around the clock, day and night. Infrared and thermal technology has opened up new hunting optics and applications, as well as use in many scenarios away from the hunting field. ATN is one such company which continues to develop leading edge binoculars and riflescopes embracing infrared technology while being within monetary reach of the average sports hunter.

Outdoor Sporting Agencies, Australian ATN distributor, sent *Australian Shooter* one of their premier day/night products for review in the form of the Binox 4K 4-16x Day/Night Smart High-Definition (HD) binoculars. While I've had some familiarity with infrared riflescopes in the past, reviewing day/night infrared binoculars would be a new experience.

At a glance

The binoculars were packed in a sturdy cardboard box with ATN's branding and logo along with contents and features printed on the flaps. Upon opening, the binoculars have a separate carrying pouch with detachable strap and data/recharging cable as well as an excellent user manual and quick-start guide.

These are certainly not a compact affair, measuring 240mm x 125mm x 60mm and



weighing 1165g, however the layout is neat with a central function keypad on the body of the unit, easily accessible with the index fingers as well as a 'ranging' button just forward and left of the central function consul.

The objective lenses up front come with a protective cover to shield the delicate optics within, the left objective housing also containing the rangefinding componentry while the image seen within the internal LED screen can be easily focused by turning the bell of the right objective. To the rear, the ocular eyepieces are fully adjustable for focus and intra-pupillary requirements.

Features

On reading the excellent user manual the great features of the unit are described and their functions explained. This model features:

- Laser rangefinder
- Video recording capability

- Day/night mode
- Built-in infrared illuminator
- Dual core processor
- Dual stream video
- Capability to share images on social media
- Ultra-low power consumption
- Bluetooth connectivity with micro SD-card data storage

I spent several hours familiarising myself with the role of the central keypad which does everything it states with a few pushes of the correct buttons. For a traditionalist like myself, having the day/night capability, 4x-16x magnification range and rangefinder would be all the features I'd use personally, though plenty will embrace the dual stream video and image sharing options via Bluetooth connectivity.

See the bigger picture - ATN day/night binoculars

One pleasing aspect I must point out is the internal, rechargeable lithium-ion battery as a major bane of mine in other electro-optics is having to install AA batteries as a power source. The lithium-ion internal battery gives up to 15-plus hours of use on a single charge and avoids the need to carry additional batteries.

In the field

From the outset my intention was to use the ATN Binox binoculars from my vehicle or stationary position, be it a ground blind or deckchair. The ability to mount the binoculars to a tripod was used immediately which saved me having to hand-hold them, at the same time giving a steady image of the internal colour LED screen.

That screen is fully adjustable for brightness and focus and places minimal strain on the eyes. Image quality both day and night is good - you must appreciate you can't compare this to ordinary binoculars with glass lenses and prisms. The electronic circuitry generates the images day and night and the infrared illuminator dictates the effective range as to what you can see at night. The rangefinder is perfectly adequate for day and night use and, as always, can be tailored to suit the user's requirements. I took the binoculars on a trip to the seaside and also used them at my



The micro SD card slot and data/charging port.

brother's olive grove during a few sessions trying to intercept some cunning foxes which did their best to evade us, rabbits and hares easily picked out and ranged at distances up to 200m. The beauty of the ATN Binox unit is users have a huge array of features at their fingertips and it's their call if they push the binoculars to their full potential or simply choose what facets they require.

The ATN Binox 4K 4x-16x Day/Night Smart HD Binoculars retail for \$1675 and are available through all good firearms and sports optics retailers.

More at osaaustralia.com.au ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: ATN

Model: Binox 4K 4-16x Day/Night Smart HD Binoculars

Magnification: 4-16x

Display resolution: 1280x720x2

Angle of view: 6 degrees

Interpupillary adjustment range: 60-70mm

Focus range: 10ft-infinity

IR illuminator range: 300 yards

Laser rangefinder: Built-in

Video recording resolution:

1080p@30/60/120 fps

IP rating: Weather resistant

Charging: USB, type C

Wi-Fi (Streaming, Gallery and Controls): iOS and Android

Bluetooth: Yes

3D Accelerometer/3D Gyroscope: Yes

eCompass: Yes

Smooth zoom: Yes

Night vision mode: Yes

Micro SD card: 4 to 64 Gb

IR illuminator: Built-in

Battery life (Li-ion): 15-plus hours

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies

RRP: \$1675

BOOK REVIEW

Wild tales from an Aussie hunter

HUNTERS EVERYWHERE ARE in for a treat when they pick up a copy of *Australian Adventures - Bows, Blades and Bullets*. The 260-page book is the second edition detailing the hunting adventures of *Australian Shooter* contributor Ted Mitchell Snr.

His initial volume was put together in 2011 and this time round Ted has enlisted the help of his youngest son Brenton, also an avid hunter, to update a myriad of stalking and shooting trips across the nation and beyond.

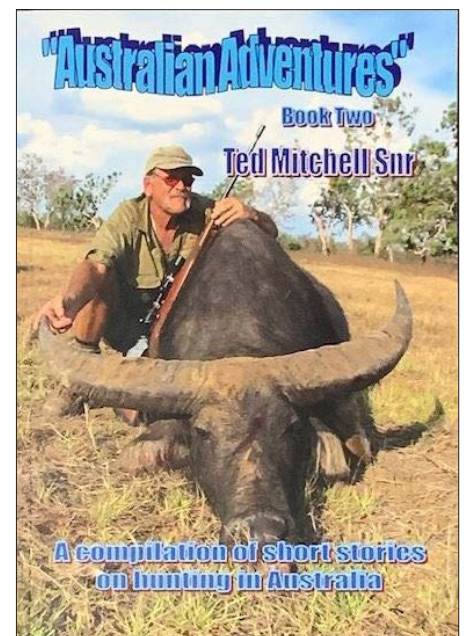
The action kicks off with a hectic boar hunt in north Queensland as Ted and his party dodge crocodiles and cyclones to keep busy after landing on a rough, dirt airstrip. There's a real taste of the Outback from the word go.

Boars feature heavily as one of Ted's favoured quarry but there are also bucks, bunnies, pigs and scrub bulls encountered and his love of the Queensland terrain is evident as the outings are tallied up.

He refers to Cape York as 'the wild frontier' where he and his mates are in their element. There are yarns on the skills of mounting trophies and asides to guides on preparing such tempting morsels as venison kebabs and rabbit satay.

As an overseas interlude, Ted paints a vivid picture of a bow hunt for elephants in Zimbabwe, a family affair with his three sons and grand-daughters in on the act at various stages, as evidenced by some attractive colour photographs. Elsewhere, Ted's father spent 20 years in India and he recounts thrilling tales passed down about tigers, cobras and other exotic wildlife on the sub-continent in an enthralling chapter. It sounds a hazardous task just for the formally named Bertram Henry Noel Mitchell just to stay alive in his younger days as his dad (Ted's grandfather) worked as Chief of Police near Madras.

The revamped book has been produced by In House Publishing in Queensland and is available via Ted's son's website at



primalhuntingandoutdoors.com.au. The full colour book is A5 and contains copious photos from the many excursions and as well as numerous hunting escapades there are a few tasty game recipes to enjoy. RRP is \$29 plus \$10 postage and handling. ●

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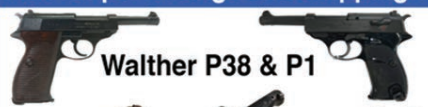


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SSAA Victoria 2020 AGM notice



2020 Annual General Meeting and postal ballot

The AGM will be held from 2pm to 4pm
Sunday, September 27, 2020 at the Hotel 115,
115 Cotham Road, Kew, Vic 3101.

Nominations to fill four Board vacancies will
open May 26, 2020 and close June 26, 2020.
Nominations to be posted to **Returning Officer**
SSAA (Victoria), PO Box 336, Nth Melbourne,
Vic, 3051; or emailed to frank@ybg.com.au

Results of the postal ballot, which opens
August 3, 2020 and closes August 28, 2020,
will be announced at the 2020 AGM.

Financial accounts for the year ending April
2020 will be available at ssaavic.com.au prior
to the meeting or upon written request.

For details contact the State Office by
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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.

ssaa.org.au

Gun & Knife Show List

Due to the uncertainties of scheduling because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic our Gun and Knife show list has been temporarily suspended.

As soon as we have confirmation of their reinstatement we will publish all the new dates.



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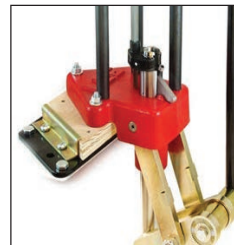
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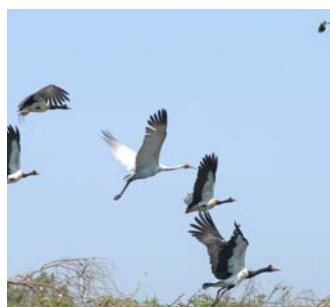
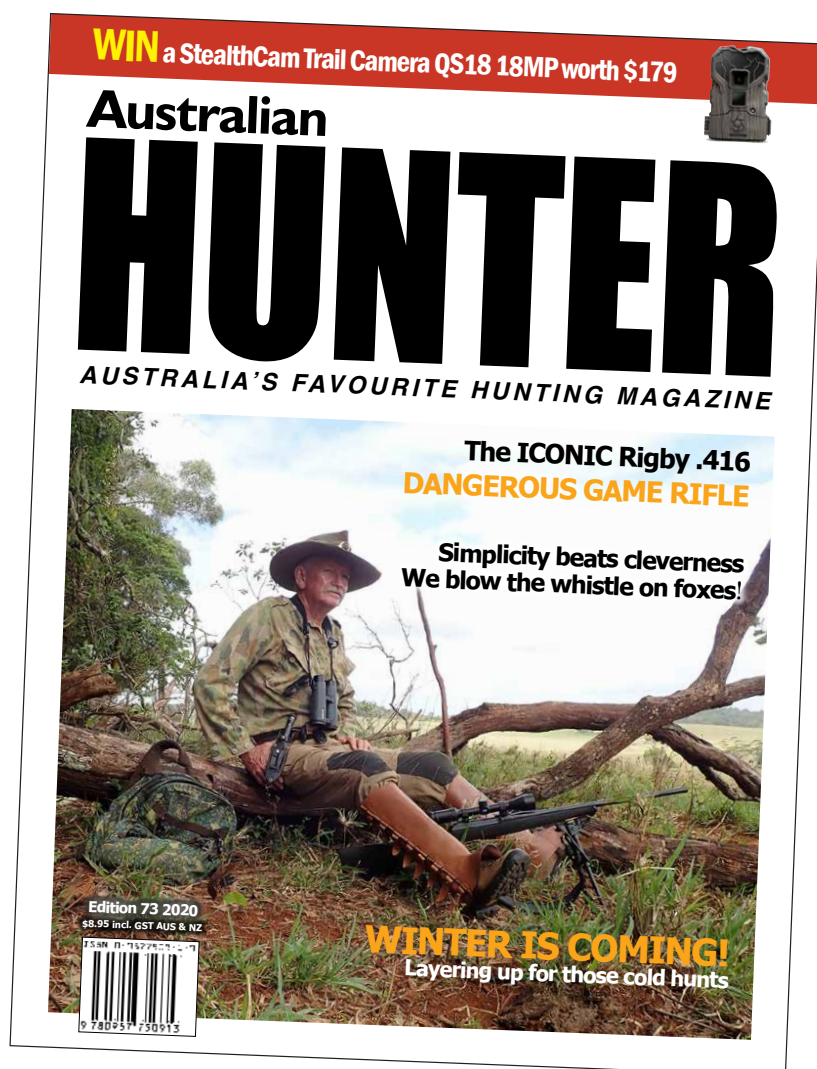
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(Name of competition)
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Australian Shooter April 2020

Best Shots Mug
Nigel Quinton, Vic

Issue 25 AJS and April AS
SSAA Prize Pack (Bucket Hat, earmuffs, trigger comb lock)
Anthony Wilkes, Qld

Handgun book by Jim Supica
Corrado Premoselli, Vic

1 of 4 .30-cal pen sets and deer antler stand
Neil Duffield, NSW
Leon Kalaitzis, VIC
Ian Manock, NSW
Arthur Snell, NSW

Advertisers' index

Beam Communications	19
Bradford Exchange	25
Claremont Firearms	67
Cleaver Firearms	40,41
CR Kennedy	9,23
Earmold Australia	64
Down Range Perth Firearms	33
Glenn Kable Lawyer	67
Great Australian Outdoors magazine	IFC,3
Grycol	35
Hermann's Sporting Guns	27
Horsley Park Gun Shop	29
Lynx Optics	10
Magnum Sports	17,37
Man Magnum	67
Nioa	5,13,21
Nyati	47
Outdoor Sporting Agencies	53
Paul Brush	67
Polaris	45
Qld Gun Exchange	55
Raytrade	IBC
Spika	39
SSAA General Insurance	57
SSAA Gun Sales	68
SSAA Members Firearms Insurance	OBC
SSAA Membership Form	72
SSAA Sponsor a Junior	67
SSAA Women's Shooter	59
Winchester Australia	11

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Dixie, ducks and decoys

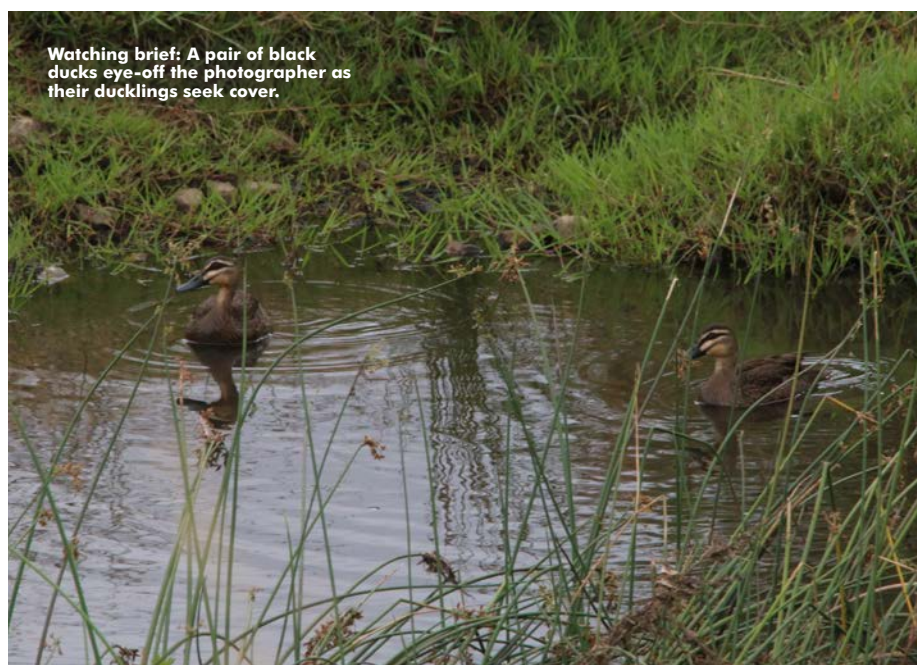
On the edge of the tussocks below the big hole on the corner of the creek Dixie stopped, raised a paw and pointed. For the briefest of moments she hung there then dashed through the cover and plunged into the water beyond. Almost immediately a black duck flapped away upstream, never quite getting off the water, one wing dragging and splashing noisily to draw the dog's attention. It worked a treat.

Completely taken in by what she thought she'd found, Dixie followed the bird, swimming strongly against the meagre current, almost but never quite catching what she undoubtedly saw as an easy take. She never stood a chance. When the creek began to shrink at the end of winter last year, a pair of black ducks took up residence on our pump hole, defending their chosen patch against all-comers. Given the feeding and protection opportunities the location provided, that wasn't surprising.

After the summer fires the first decent rainfall lifted creek levels in a minor, black water spate that left a dark layer of sludge over everything creek-side. Subsequently, the ducks disappeared as did the platypus, turtles, water rats and most of the surface skating aquatic insects. There were even a few dead carp along the edges and for a short time the water quality was so poor the cattle seemed hesitant to drink.

Within days there was a green flush of growth and, as the water began to clear, life along the creek began to return to normal. The ducks were back and, if their flapping and squawking was any sort of indicator, seemed to have settled in. Mostly they'd be found around the tangle of old flood debris hung up in the willows and it reached the stage where Dixie would go looking for them, almost guaranteed some sort of chase when we wandered by on our morning walk.

Then two ducks became one, usually swimming ahead as we walked up the creek, keeping a safe distance between us



Watching brief: A pair of black ducks eye-off the photographer as their ducklings seek cover.

almost as if it was leading us away which in effect it was. For a week or so I thought the other bird may have perished then I remembered all the activity when they came back and realised there was a pretty good chance they were breeding, that at any given time one or the other was sitting on eggs, even if it was several months outside the usual breeding season.

The duck flapping across the big hole with Dixie in pursuit confirmed my supposition. It was a classic 'chase me' invitation ducks are renowned for if or when their young are threatened. While the dog is intent on a supposedly easy catch, the other parent and ducklings sit tight or quietly disappear into whatever cover they can find.

Dixie thought she had a win when the flapping duck tried to climb up a steep bank on the top end of the hole. As she closed in the bird dived out of sight then surfaced some distance upstream, still flapping in mock distress, still leading the dog away from her brood. It was about then the dog realised she'd been had and came back to

me with a sad look on her wet face, apologetic for not being able to achieve what she'd set out to do. I laughed at her discomfort and sympathised, then walked away from the creek so she wouldn't be tempted to look further afield and perhaps find the ducklings I knew were there somewhere.

The following morning I saw the youngsters, at least six or maybe seven little striped birds disappearing among the reeds while their parents watched me to see if any sort of decoying efforts were required. Dixie stopped while I took a few photographs with the long lens, whining softly as I'd told her to sit and stay when there were ducks on the creek to be chased.

When we walked upstream to a shallow crossing I could see them paddling downstream - one parent in the lead, the other bringing up the rear, ducklings rafted together in between.

Nature has a way of bouncing back from devastation, something we mere humans often tend to forget. ●

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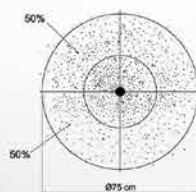
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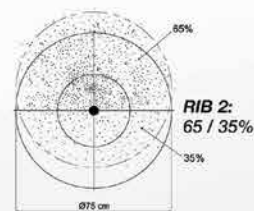


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