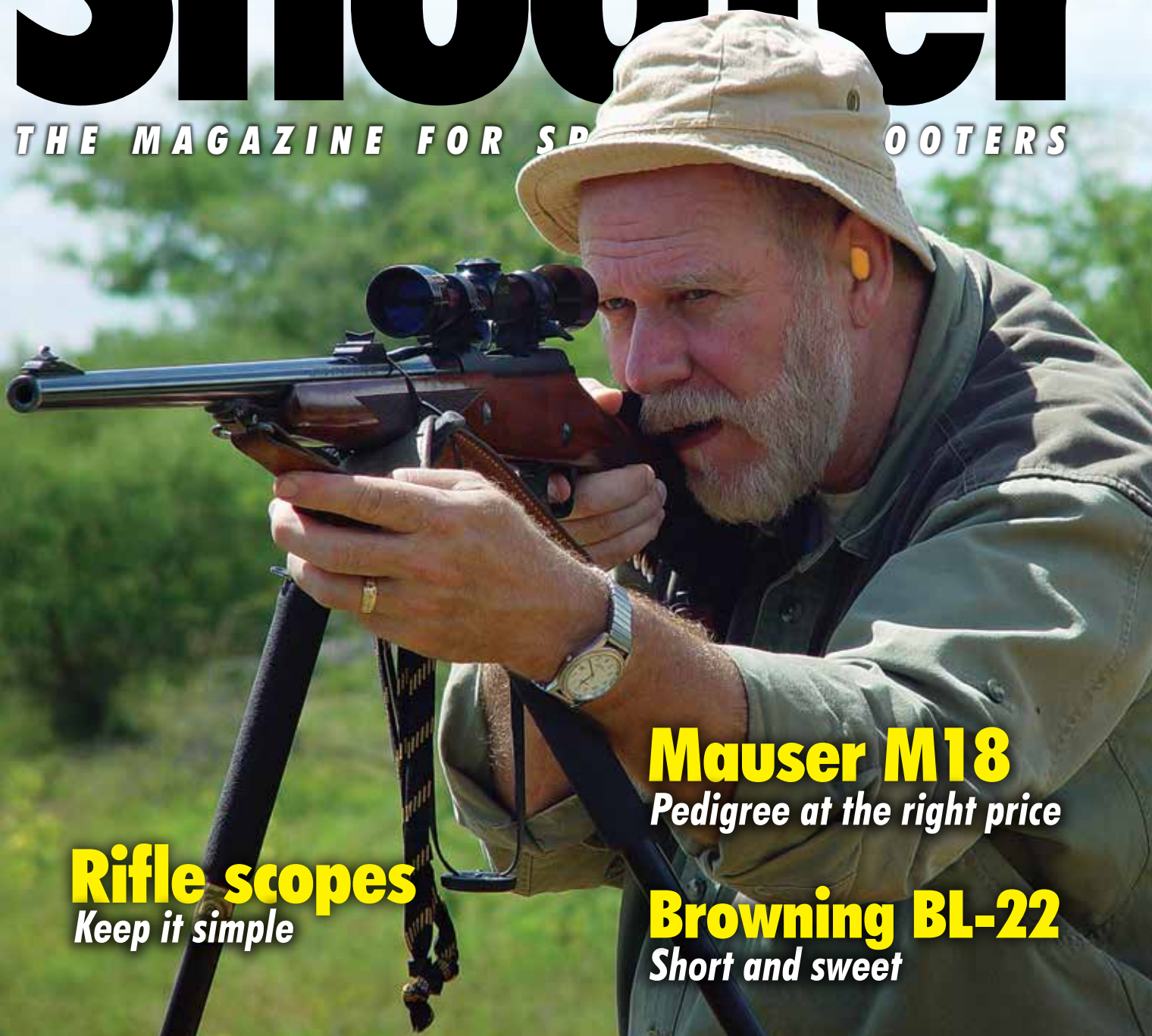


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Our May cover

Thomas Tabor scopes the target

NEXT ISSUE



In our shotgun mini-feature, Damien Edwards tackles the side-by-side versus over-and-under debate while Thomas Tabor helps with understanding your shot shells.

Sam Garro turns the spotlight on Branko Giljevic, custom knifemaker and firearm engraver extraordinaire with an astonishing eye for detail.

Con Kapralos takes to the range with the Sako 85 Black Wolf in .308 Winchester, "quality in a brand and model that delivers the best with no shortcomings".

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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Important to stand firm against negative inferences

Well it has certainly been an eventful and interesting month. In the aftermath of the terrorist tragedy in New Zealand, our thoughts and sympathies go out to all our Kiwi friends without exception.

SSAA prides itself on being open and tolerant to all legitimate firearms sports people with no barriers based on religion, race, sex, physical hurdles or any other bias in the community consciousness. Of course we condemn absolutely this type of horrific act itself and the use of firearms in it as much as we condemn the use of the motor vehicle used as transport, IT and social media that provided the information and perverted justification, the supermarket that supplied sustenance to the perpetrator and so it goes on.

It's a difficult position for any government searching for answers and future solutions to a problem for which there's no 'quick fix' but which it has to deal with and ultimately answer for. We can only hope the New Zealand Government and community don't go down the flawed firearms legislation path of Australia, which has resulted in no proved or associated control of criminal misuse of firearms, a huge administrative impost and cost plus a legacy of community division and mistrust of government. That mistrust is as intense 20-odd years on and likely to prevail well into the future, fuelled by governments which slowly but steadily undermine and take away our basic freedoms.

With this tragedy so raw, the anti-firearm brigade have with indecent haste and their usual unsurprising ethics or lack thereof, jumped straight on to the Australian bandwagon. There are any number of articles, exposés, selectively edited interviews, clandestine operations and unashamed bias by those with no evidence but a clear agenda, while downright misinformation and lies have been the order of the day.

While the whole situation has been taken as an opportunity to 'criminalise' legitimate

firearms owners, it is critical we do not allow these naysayers to define us. I personally will not and nor should any of our loyal and legitimate SSAA members.

With a Federal Election only days away, every member and his or her friends and associates should take the opportunity to review the *Australian Shooters Journal* political round-up included with this edition of *Australian Shooter* and study the SSAA website and Facebook page for up-to-date political information. And take a few minutes to familiarise yourselves with your own upper and lower house candidates and cast your vote with a critical eye and as importantly, be careful not to let your preferences flow to an anti-firearm candidate.

On a more positive note, SSAA associations and branches across the country are constantly trying very hard to provide more and improved shooting range facilities and hunting opportunities. It's so important that ordinary members take as much advantage as possible of these growing shooting openings so that demand is created for further increase and improvement. SSAA can only respond to a genuine need where it's obvious and broader communities only see and respond to legitimate community groups who are active and visible.

Don't forget ours is an amateur sport administered almost exclusively by volunteers, so I'd always ask for patience and understanding when things might not seem perfect. In those situations, an offer of support could well make a positive improvement.

We are closing in on our 200,000-member target so join up a mate or encourage a junior. There's strength in numbers and we can only make a difference if we're seen to be strong and stand together.

G. E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



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More on the Carl Gustaf

I WRITE IN regard to Rod Pascoe's Top Shots answer on the 6.5x55 Carl Gustaf (*Australian Shooter*, November 2018). These rifles in 6.5x55 were originally chambered for a 156 round nose projectile. I have many samples of this rifle and a copy of *Crown Jewels*, one of the definitive info sources on them.

I found I can't get a 140gr pill to touch the lands and still be engaged in the case neck with 'as issued' rifles. The only way a projectile can 'touch the rifling' is if the gun has had the barrel chamber re-cut with a sporting chamber reamer, set back in the receiver then it's possible to engage the projectile into the rifling.

When my son was at school, for reduced recoil I tried 100gr Taipans in 2001-4 when available but no matter the powder or load (2208 or 2209) couldn't get an as issued 6.5x55 to shoot less than 6" at 300m.

For repeated accuracy I wouldn't recommend less than 120gr pills in the original barrel/chamber (keep in mind the guns are only designed for 45,000 psi

loads). Ensure cases are neck sized to give sufficient neck tension to achieve the proper burn rate, too light and you get fouled necks with drop-off in consistency.

Best I have with light 120gr is 36gr of ADI2208 or 42gr of ADI2209 which achieves the same result for hunting and remember to maintain 85 per cent case capacity of powder as sometimes 2208 doesn't fill the case to achieve proper burn rate.

I've been testing and competing since 1999 in Military Rifle and Combined Services and what I quote above works in my guns and is conservative. I use a CED Mk2 velocity device and know how it all works, case pressure, head measurement, primers etc.

Andy Prowse, via email

Two-way deal a fair one

AFTER READING THE article Hunting: Make it a two-way partnership (*Australian Shooter*, February 2019) I would like to congratulate author Grant Walterfang as that is as close to the truth as you will get. Myself and good friend Peter shoot on two

properties in Queensland and to make it a two-way partnership are quite prepared to pay additional insurance to consolidate that.

In the event of being given permission to shoot on Grant's property, I am quite prepared to sign a disclaimer saying I will not sue him under any conditions relevant to being on his land. Peter and I are both SSAA members and if he'd like to see our résumés I can forward them to him. Peter and I love the land, shooting is a bonus.

Brian Cavanagh, Qld

Making our job harder

COULDN'T AGREE MORE with Geoff Smith's article on the current military arms fetish (P97 *Australian Shooter*, February). It just hands the anti-gun lobbyists another strategy to try and restrict our firearms. Guns that look like tactical weapons don't do the majority of shooters any favours and makes the role of the SSAA even more difficult.

Richard Jones, NSW



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q After reading in February's *Australian Shooter* about landowners taking public liability insurance before allowing shooters on their property, what does the public liability insurance cover that's included in my SSAA membership and also on my R licence? I was under the impression we were fully covered for public liability.

N. Lee

A As a SSAA member your liability is fully covered while engaged in any lawful recreational shooting activities. As per the policy, the definition of lawful recreational shooting activities is "bodily injury and/or property damage caused by the discharge of a firearm, crossbow or archery bow in a manner that is allowed or permitted by law and/or with lawful authority".

This is the only activity covered and does not extend to cover any property owner's exposure or that of professional shooters. Unfortunately we'd be unable to add an extension to the member's liability policy to cover these exposures as not all members need it and it's a completely different exposure to the recreational shooting activity.

SSAA General Insurance Brokers can arrange liability for both property owners who allow shooters on their property and professional shooters. We require the member to complete a proposal form and, once received, we forward it to the underwriter for their terms and conditions including premium. Find the proposal forms on our website at ssaaib.com.au or ring the brokerage on 08 8332 0281 and we'll get a proposal to you.

So as a member please don't rely on SSAA Member Liability Insurance as cover should you be doing professional shooting, own property you allow shooting on or any other activity that falls outside the definition of lawful recreational shooting. The policy will not respond and you'll be exposing yourself personally in the event of financial loss. To discuss this or any other insurance matter contact our Adelaide office on the number above or Greg Brown in NSW on 0455 777 685.



.17 HMR best for bunnies

REFLECTING ON DAVE Burgess' excellent article 'In search of the ideal rabbit gun' (*Australian Shooter*, December 2018) I went through a similar evaluation of contenders but can't go past my CZ 452 in .17 HMR topped with the 4-12x Leupold VX2 AO fine cross-hair scope. There's no ricochet danger with the 17gr Hornady loads and I can head-shoot rabbits with this outfit all day long at ranges the .22LR and .22WMR would struggle to match.

I believe the .17 HMR to be the best all-round rabbit cartridge ever invented, though the .22LR is king of rabbit spot-lighting cartridges as ranges are typically short at night.

Alex Wyschnja, via email

What goes around . . .

IN RESPONSE TO Matthew Godson's Open Season article (*Australian Shooter*, February 2019) 'Ducks don't visit dried-up ponds', we SSAA members here in south-east Queensland seem to be enjoying the company of most of the southern waterfowl population 'coincidentally' every time the southern states are in drought.

Dr Kingsford might like to leave his cocoon and travel around our local waterways and farmers' dams to assess if there's actually water in the impoundments as we can't see the water through the waterfowl density!

Bide your time southerners, the ducks will be back when you have the water and

we're in drought. Everyone, please stop stressing over waterfowl populations - we have millions of them here and are happy to share if you'll just be patient and await their return. They can actually fly very long distances in short time spans. Keep up the good work Matthew, see you in the reeds some time.

Garry McIntosh, Qld

The small issue of primers

WITH REFERENCE TO your Top Shots question on small pistol primers being replaced by small rifle primers (*Australian Shooter*, November 2018), I have used No. 7½ small rifle primers in my Walther .32 S&W L for two years due to the surplus primers I had and the increased price of pistol primers. I've had no misfires or problems with target loads and find they can be substituted as long as you're not using maximum loads.

Ron Hardy, via email

P14 .303 still going strong

WITH REGARD TO Eric Coleman's 'Top Shots' question in your December issue about the P14 .303, dies are available for this cartridge from Simplex Reloading. The M17/P14 was used in any number of conversions, the most popular in the US being from .30-06 to .308 Norma Magnum.

The action is exceptionally strong and safe even 100 years on and I have a number

of M17/P14 conversions including M17 Springfield .30-06 to .25-06, M17 Springfield .30-06 to .270 Norma Magnum, P14 Enfield .300 to .270 Roberts Improved and M17 Eddystone .308 to .308 Norma Magnum.

All reloading equipment is available from Simplex and Northern Shooters Supplies of Victoria offer 100 rounds of brass for \$95. Alternatively, you can buy factory loads from Golden Flash Cartridges at \$55 for 20 loaded with 130gr projectiles.

Ed Dickson, via email

Hunters a useful resource

THE SEARCH FOR the two hikers who went missing on Mt Buffalo in March had me thinking it might be a good idea to form a volunteer search and rescue unit for people who get lost in the bush, as many deer hunters have a great knowledge of remote areas.

In my younger days I hunted that area in search of the elusive giant stag and found it very difficult and dangerous. Just putting it out there as food for thought. Keep up the great work on *Australian Shooter* and well done with the women's magazine.

Mike Slattery, via email

Handloading Guide

MANY THANKS TO all who requested the vintage *Handloading Guide* from Peter Carter in our April magazine. First in was Jim Allison of NSW who now has the magazine.

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Putting the bite on croc conservation

In terms of sustainable use of wildlife, Australia has the honour of being a world leader in crocodile conservation.

We have a model that incentivises local communities through crocodile egg harvesting and ranching which sustains a \$100 million a year crocodile farming industry.

Recently, the ABC reported the famous Irwin family was opposed to new legislation allowing a limited number of crocodile eggs to be harvested in Queensland. In doing so they disputed the science and ethics behind our successful world-renowned crocodile conservation model. It seems the Irwins hold protectionist views that generally benefit a few, including their own donation stream.

The ABC reported the wild crocodile population in the Northern Territory, since protection began in 1971, had increased from about 5000 to 30,000 by the 1980s. With this substantial rise came an increase in negative human-crocodile interactions that led to calls to wipe out crocs again. The only way forward in terms of conservation was to find a way to create a benefit for landholders that supports crocodile populations.

That led to the development of an incentive-driven conservation strategy which allowed people to receive payment for harvesting crocs' eggs so they could be hatched on farms and raised until their skins were ready for export. One of the drivers behind this was world renowned crocodile expert Grahame Webb.

Professor Webb attributes the NT's thriving crocodile population to the strategy of putting a dollar value on their existence and allowing sustainable benefits to flow to indigenous communities and landowners. That strategy has been seen as a blueprint for other conservationists world-wide to help achieve conservation goals without ruining the livelihoods of local people.

Supporting that view is Rosie Cooney who heads the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group. The ABC quoted her as saying most of the world's conservation was only viable if supported by local people. The fact is, if local people don't support conservation in their areas they'll continue to poach, harvest resources and graze livestock there.

Dr Cooney described the NT's crocodile management program as a world-leading example because crocodile populations had recovered from near extinction to carrying capacity. It also had accumulated the best data of any program as it has ran for a long time - 35 years in fact. A conservation strategy can't be any more successful than bringing a species of interest to a healthy sustainable population which is certainly the case with the crocodile management program. Dr Cooney also provided the ABC with examples of other conservation programs across the world that used similar strategies, including yellow anacondas in Peru and the vicuna (camelids)

in South America, both living in areas where poaching had a significant impact.

She also expressed her frustration at fashion houses which recently announced they'd stop making products out of exotic animal skins as they felt it was difficult to determine if they'd been sourced ethically. Such a move undermines conservation efforts where skins provide a vital source of income for poor and remote communities.

Trying to look good by doing something without grappling with the real-life consequences of a decision is something even the Australian Government is guilty of. Look no further than the ban on lion and rhino trophies that has the potential to erode conservation efforts.

The Irwins suggested that removing 5000 crocodile eggs from the wild in Queensland will be a huge detriment to their population, even going as far as saying it will be catastrophic for the species. They base this on advice from the most supposed comprehensive science conducted on crocodiles and their behaviour. Wherever their so-called science comes from, it doesn't align with a world-leading conservation model. To put it nicely, real experts on this topic say they're simply misinformed and misguided.

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The vexed question of measuring bores

Perhaps you have at some stage wondered why the whole shooting world has persisted for so long with two distinct methods of measuring, and of nominating, that most important parameter of a small arms barrel.

By this I mean the diameter of the bore (ie, the hole that runs down the centre) of the barrels of its guns. I refer of course to the practice of naming some barrels under a 'gauge' system and others by a simple measured diameter of the hole. This weird set-up, despite its historic basis, continues to this day.

The first of the above routines is one born out of sheer necessity in that up to about 150 years ago there was no method of taking and/or specifying an accurate, direct measurement of a small hole - so gunmakers had to invent a system of their own.

Centuries ago the basic, general-use measurement for the whole country was the 'foot' which was literally the size of the pedal appendage (right side) of the reigning monarch. Details of this and other contemporary measurement standards are sketchy but I can remember the length of a string of barley grains appears in it somewhere.

Since kings are mortal and come in various sizes anyway, the first process,

For example, a batch of such balls that would weigh '10 to the pound' would then be nominated as being of '10-gauge'.

that of using the Royal foot, could never be a permanent standard measure. I imagine the length of barley grains would also vary between good and poor seasons. What a mess.

The whole idea becomes almost completely unworkable as the size of the bore decreases, as it tended to do from about 1850 onwards. So a group of the more prominent and progressively minded sporting gunmakers of Birmingham finally got together and fixed a few standards for their own profession.

One of these was the decision, in general, to follow the process that had been used for centuries by the large-bore gunmakers - ie, that of measuring and quoting the weight of the shot in the most general use.

As usual they would cast their standard balls from the metal they normally

used - lead with a small percentage of antimony to improve the 'castability'. The main problem was that when such 'standard' balls for small arms were cast (or extruded) in sizes suitable for personal arms, each individual ball was still too small to measure accurately. It was a crude indirect method but the best they could do at the time.

Spherical slugs of lead (naturally having a small dose of antimony impurity) were then cast as standards and rated by the number of such (exactly?) similar balls that would make a pound in weight. For example, a batch of such balls that would weigh '10 to the pound' would then be nominated as being of '10-gauge'.

Modern methods of boring and chocking the barrels could well mean the exact figures may or may not actually occur in the barrel concerned - but that's the system.

By comparison the direct measurement of small, deep holes is a breeze these days. The tool most commonly used by amateur shooters is the plug gauge that can be quite simple and cheap to make and use and can be every bit as accurate as seems to be necessary.





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Q My 13-year-old son is keen to take up clay shooting as his high school competes in an annual trap competition.

My 12-gauge shotgun is way too heavy and long in the stock for him, but I'm happy to spend some money and buy him his own shotgun. He's small for his age and I've been advised to buy him a 20-gauge trap gun. What are your thoughts?

Barty Smith, Vic

A Believe it or not I'm in the same boat, as my 12-year-old, who's quite small, is faced with a similar dilemma. I was keen to get my son into shooting clays as soon as possible and set him up with a 73cm (28¾") barrel 12-gauge but the overall weight of the gun was just too heavy. I ended up getting him a 28-gauge variable choke shotgun which weighs next to nothing. I chopped the stock down to suit him and with 21g loads it really is easy for him to hold and shoot. I thought it was important he got to understand the basic fundamentals first, but was pleasantly surprised that any clays out to about 30m were quite easy to break with No. 7 shot.

A 20-gauge shotgun will be heavier than a 28-gauge and the weight of the payload of shot can be greater. More shot means more recoil but this, of course, will be offset by the extra weight of the firearm. High velocity 28g loads through a lightweight 20-gauge shotgun will often have more actual recoil than a lower velocity 24g 12-gauge load fired through a heavier-framed gun. The trade-off occurs when the firearm becomes too heavy for him to actually hold correctly and therefore learn the proper techniques.

If he's shooting standard domestic trap targets from the 15m mark the targets are normally being broken at around 30-35m from the firing line. This is well within the boundaries of any reasonably choked shotgun with 24g of shot (remember that Olympic discipline clay target events have a maximum load of just 24g). I see no reason why learning the art of trap shooting from 15m can't be accomplished with a 20-gauge with 24g of shot travelling at around 400m per second. 20-gauge guns really only vary in weight, everything else

...the further you're pushed away from the target the more shot is required to break it.

is pretty much the same at the distances most trap targets are shot.

The obvious question leading on from this is why don't all trap shooters use a 20-gauge? The answer becomes simply one of distance - the further you're pushed away from the target the more shot is required to break it. Higher velocity 28g loads through a lighter weight 20-gauge trap gun become a recoil nightmare. For those who shoot competition handicap events from the 25m starting position and can use 32g of shot, a 20-gauge becomes a difficult shotgun to handle.

Many American discipline skeet shooters use one gun and include smaller gauge inserts in their 12-gauge barrels, but this means they're using a reasonably heavy-framed shotgun which won't be suitable for your 13-year-old son. If money isn't an issue, consider buying him a 71cm barrel 20-gauge trap gun. That length of barrel may be difficult to find so you might have to go to a 75cm barrel. If the overall weight of the gun isn't too much for him then this length will be fine.

Try to be cautious about the loads you give him to use. There's a great variety of 20-gauge ammunition available but don't go past 24g of shot. Once he grows a bit more and wants to keep shooting trap you can trade up to a 12-gauge. Good luck with it and I'm sure you'll derive just as much pleasure from watching him progress as you will from your own shooting.



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6.5 1/8 Varmint Contour
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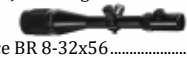
Nightforce ATACR 5-25x56 SFP \$3375
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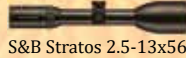
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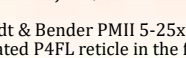
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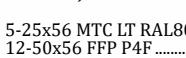
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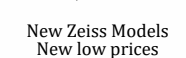
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illuminated P4FL reticle in the first focal
plane. .1 mil clicks. CW/DT/ST
Now just \$3790



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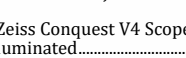
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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS ?

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

email: edit@ssaa.org.au

Q I wonder if one of your Top Shots could shed some light on this BSA Cadet .310 with a Martini Single Action. It came to me via the estate of a friend.
Mick Porter, via email



A The rifle appears to be a 1st pattern Cadet rifle used from about 1890 until 1910, bought by the Australian Government as cadet and military training rifles. A BSA catalogue in my collection refers to the rifle as a Long Fore-end Cadet Pattern No.4 Model and calibres listed include .22 Short and Long rimfire, .297/230 Short and Long, .297/250 Short and Long, .300 Rook and .310.

The 1st pattern rifle was replaced by the 2nd pattern Australian Commonwealth Cadet Pattern No.4b Model around 1910, which is identifiable by a different rear-sight. This model was used for training until about 1950 all around Australia, the stock markings serving as a record of where they were used. Both rifles use Francotte's Patent, a design which allows the mechanism to be removed from the receiver as a single unit.

The Australian kangaroo monogram stamped on the barrel was standard on most of these rifles. The ".310 12-120" refers to the bore diameter and bullet weight of the standard load though it would also accept and shoot .32/20 ammunition. Thousands of Cadet rifles were sold as surplus in the

1950s and '60s and nowadays any in good to excellent condition are collectable.

For those who like the idea of shooting them, reloading components and dies can still be found and many of the Cadet actions were converted to more modern calibres including .22 Hornet, .222 Rimmed, .25/20 and .357 Magnum. Sportco also converted many to rimfire rifles that were and still are in demand by shooters and collectors alike.

John Dunn

Q My mates reckon the best reticles for a hunting scope are those with all the fine aiming marks for elevation and windage. Do you agree?

Mike, Vic

A Thanks for the question Mike as it is one I hear a lot at the gun club when talk gets away from shotguns and on to rifles and scopes. We had a question recently in this column about the size of the objective bell and higher magnification range scopes for hunting and this one is similar. We concluded a more compact scope with a range of between 3-9x32 to 4-12x40 is about ideal for a hunting scope in Australia.

The trend towards military-looking sniper rifles and a desire to shoot targets or game at extended ranges has also seen scopes evolve for long-range shooting. The complicated reticles you mention are generally meant for expert shooters or military snipers shooting over longer and often uncertain ranges with time to calculate elevation and windage.

In the real world of hunting during daylight or spotlighting at night where you often have little time before the game spooks and clears off, you're better served by a slightly thicker reticle that you can see more clearly under all light conditions from early or late as well as during the day. Leupold's simple but highly effective duplex reticle is world famous as being simple and uncluttered for fast shooting on game animals within sensible ranges thus ensuring a certain and ethical kill.

Complicated reticles are interesting

and can be used for hunting but are not as versatile as the more simple uncluttered hunting ones when time is of the essence and you know the trajectory of your cartridge and are even better when used with a rangefinder. You can now buy scopes with turrets calibrated to your cartridge which are quick and easy to zero and use in the field.

Paul Miller

Q Over the years I've sold a fair number of firearms in various calibres which has left me with ammunition I no longer own rifles for. My question is, how do I legally dispose of this ammunition as dealers aren't interested in it.

Graham, Qld

A Your question is a common one since websites dedicated to buying and selling firearms have become so popular. Sellers are occasionally left with items such as powder, primers and ammo the buyer either doesn't want or, more commonly, can't ship because of the restrictions relating to transportation of dangerous goods. And you're right, dealers generally have no interest in buying second-hand ammo and if they do, won't be prepared to pay the sort of money you'd be looking for.

There are a couple of options open. You could find someone with a table at an arms fair with the appropriate permits who'd be willing to sell your ammo on consignment or you could advertise at your local shooting club. But before taking these options, check your state regulations regarding buying and selling ammunition. The rules relating to who can have, buy and sell ammunition varies from state to state and, in NSW for example, you're only permitted to possess ammunition that fits firearms registered to you. The best option is to contact your nearest branch of the Australian Cartridge Collectors Association (see australiancartridgecollectors.org).

Although your ammo may not be collector-grade as such, there are swap meets and auctions throughout the year where some

collectors buy modern cartridges, especially in good condition and in original packaging. Another option is to advertise on a website such as SSAA Gun Sales, bearing in mind the same restrictions will apply regarding transporting ammunition so the ad should state 'pick-up only'.

Any reloads or ammunition you've loaded yourself will be almost impossible to sell. In this case borrow a rifle and shoot off the surplus or pull it apart - carefully - and use or sell the components. And a note for you Graham: In Queensland the Firearms Registry doesn't administer the laws pertaining to ammunition collecting as this is covered by the Explosives Inspectorate, Safety and Health of the Department of Mines and Energy. All ammunition collecting and related enquiries should be referred to this department.

Rod Pascoe

Q I've been using locally-made commercial cast round nosed 125gr projectiles in my two 9mm handguns and have found barrels on both consistently suffer from extensive leading. The bullets are coated with some form of hard plastic which I suspect might be part of the problem. I've been using a load of 3.8-4.0 grains of AP70N propellant. The bullet maker has suggested my guns must be at fault as he says he has no complaints from other shooters. I've enclosed a small sample of the bullets in the hope you can suggest some help.

Dave, SA

A I'm glad you took the trouble to enclose half a dozen projectiles as otherwise this would have been quite a difficult question. The fact it happens with two separate guns suggests it's not a gun problem. I've been looking at bullet coatings and their application and there are several simple tests that can be done on commercially coated bullets. One is a 'smash' test where the bullet is placed on an anvil and hit very hard with a hammer. If the coating flakes off it hasn't been applied properly. Another is to rub a projectile on a piece of paper towel soaked in acetone, since this is the most usual initial solvent used with such coatings prior to curing. If the coating dissolves it hasn't cured properly. In your case, both tests showed the coating to be properly applied.

I then filed a small flat on the side of one projectile and used my Lee hardness tester to determine the Brinell Hardness and suggested maximum operating pressure. This gave the result of BHN 13 with a maximum pressure of 16,588 psi, which is substantially below the ADI figure of 24,400 psi quoted for 3.8 grains of AP70N with this bullet weight.

The other more interesting feature of your bullets is they measure 0.3530"-0.3545" in diameter and are also slightly out of round. It sounds counter-intuitive I know, but undersized bullets are more likely to cause leading problems than those slightly oversized. Since the standard diameter for the 9mm Luger round is typically 0.355"-0.356", your bullets are undersized by about

0.002" meaning you're not getting good obturation (gas sealing). Gases blowing by the sides of your projectiles at very high temperatures and pressures are likely causing the lead build-up.

As a final check I applied a little oil then carefully drove one of your bullets through the barrel of one of my 9mm guns. It slipped through relatively easily and after removing and inspecting it, the poor depth of rifling engraving, I believe, confirms my suspicions. Perhaps you could discuss this with your bullet maker as others are likely having the same problem.

Geoff Smith

Q I have a Tikka T3X in .308 and given that Santa was very kind I also have a Leica 2-10x50 scope to mount on it. I would like to use a single-piece mount such as the DNZ, however am unsure if the low height mount will provide enough clearance between the barrel and the bell for the 50mm objective lens? Alternatively, will I need to go to the medium height mount?

Roland Alger, Tas

A Hi Roland, I have asked around and checked with DNZ who recommend using their low, single-piece mount if the outside of the front bell is 2.03" (51.56mm) or less and go to the medium height mount if the bell is 2.28" (57.9mm) or less.

Barry Wilmot



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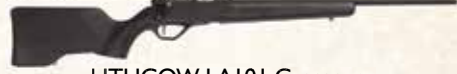
STEYR Pro Hunter Tactical
.308 Win, detachable mag
black Mannox finish
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LITHGOW LA102 .223 Rem
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3-shot, black Cerakote
Pic rail, threaded barrel, synthetic stock
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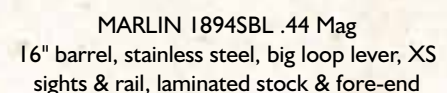
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black synthetic stock, 5-shot
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Skinner peep sights, black stock & fore-end
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MARLIN 1895TSCL .45-70
16.5" barrel, stainless steel, big loop lever,
peep sights, black stock & fore-end
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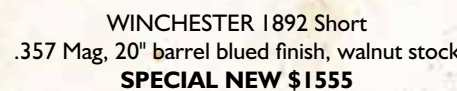
MARLIN 1894C .357 Mag
9-shot, traditional blued finish, 19" barrel
walnut stock & fore-end
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.38/357 Mag 20" barrel
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.357 Mag, 20" barrel blued finish, walnut stock
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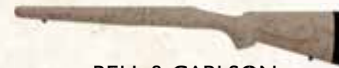


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ammo loaded with Sierra GameKing proj
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.308 Win, 20" threaded stainless varmint
barrel, alloy bedded stock
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.308 Win, 20" fluted barrel
Mil Spec finish
alloy bedded Kevlar stock
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.300 Win Mag, 26" barrel
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alloy bedded Kevlar stock
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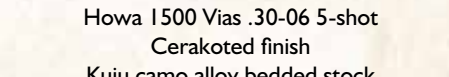
CZ 557 Synthetic
.308 Win, 5-shot, blued finish
synthetic stock
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MOSSBERG 464 .22LR 13-shot
lever action, 18" barrel
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straight pull bolt action
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timber stock
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5-shot, blued finish
walnut stock & fore-end
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5-shot, colour cased finish
receiver, octagonal barrel
walnut stock & fore-end
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NSW firearms count tops a million

John Maxwell

Shock and horror! There are more than one million firearms registered in NSW, the most since the buy-back which followed the 1996 Port Arthur tragedy. So screams the headline of a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* prompted by the release of the Gun Control Australia (GCA) report card on NSW, circulated in March.

GCA figures are based on data made public by NSW Police following access to information requests, a lot of which is both unexceptional and actually quite useful. As of February 1, 2019 there were 1,007,786 firearms registered in NSW, more than 880,000 of them owned by individual licence holders and an increase of 9.5 per cent on December 2016. Most are hunting rifles and shotguns and there are 40,930 registered handguns which doesn't seem that many.

At February 1 there were 236,588 individual licensees in NSW, each holding an average of four firearms. GCA cited the large number of guns owned by some individuals - one with 305, another in genteel Mosman with 285 - and in excess of 100 across the state with more than 70 each. There are 635 approved shooting clubs, 71 of them branches of SSAA (NSW).

GCA has a 14-point plan on what to do with all these guns, starting with limiting each licence holder to two. Yes, really. That

would necessitate the state government conducting a buy-back of some half a million guns, unlikely any time soon. GCA claims NSW law is in breach of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement (NFA) in 11 areas, but then demands the end to minor shooting permits (available to those aged 12-18) which were clearly approved in the NFA.

GCA doesn't draw much distinction between illegal conduct and guns legally owned by licensed shooters. For example, it says incidents of shooting into premises increased significantly from 51 and 54 in previous years to 69 in the year to June 2018. It says figures from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show there were 23 murders in domestic violence situations in the five years to 2018 and 178 incidents of stalking, intimidation and harassment with a firearm. How many, if any, of these incidents involved licensed shooters with registered guns GCA doesn't say, but clearly implies all these guns must mean more crime.

That's not supported by statistics from the Australian Institute of Criminology which indicate a declining homicide rate, with knives killing far more people than guns and, where guns are used, it's overwhelmingly (but not exclusively) by criminals with unregistered firearms.

The GCA report card warrants some comment. In simple terms NSW has more

guns because it has more people, with a population of 7.3 million at June 2018 compared with 5.6 million in Victoria. In 1996, anti-gun groups such as GCA were fully supportive of changes to licensing arrangements which imposed more rigorous conditions, including establishing genuine reasons and requiring membership of certain organisations.

GCA may have hoped these changes would deter people from shooting but they didn't and every single licensed shooter met those rigorous requirements, as well as those requiring proper storage and transport. GCA's bleating may have had some justification if firearm crime rates were soaring but they're not - far from it.

To its credit, the *Sydney Morning Herald* spoke to target shooter Susie Smith who said what these statistics indicated was the sport she loved was growing. The story prompted a significant number of comments, some anti-gun but a sizeable number supportive of responsible gun ownership.

"Only one million? We're not doing our job properly," said one commentator, "it should be more than 2.5 million. Time for an Australia-wide campaign to get your unlicensed mates into the shooting sports and help them obtain their gun licences. Also to buy two more guns each in 2019 - come on guys, get cracking." ●



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Browning BL-22 short and sweet

Dick Eussen



Neale Ellis with the Browning BL-22.

As lever-action .22 rimfire rifles go the Browning BL-22 ticks all the boxes, up there with Marlin, Winchester, Miroku, Henry and Ruger lever-action .22 rimfires. All are a good pick if you need extra firepower and speed over a box magazine rifle for hunting rabbits and small game, and with the tubular magazine you also have a choice of using .22 Shorts, Long and Long Rifle ammunition.

The Browning BL-22 was introduced in 1969 and has seen few changes to the original, apart from some cosmetic improvements and several variants. This is important as it indicates it's a highly popular option for many shooters. However, with collectors in mind Browning has made the BL-22 in six models and configurations that range from blue to nickel receivers and stainless steel for the .22 Long Rifle round. Several 'grades' ranging from Grade 1, Grade 2, field grade and standard tempt the serious collector of Browning firearms.

I now have a Browning BL-22 Grade 1 in my gun safe - a present from my wife. It's a basic model designed for field use with no stock chequering or gold bands like those

found on 'fancy' models, just a plain solid compact hunting rifle. It's made in Japan by Miroku and in line with other Japanese rifles is finished to perfection with wood to metal matching exactly, and high smooth satin polish on the timber stock and all metal parts, including the hard-to-reach bits inside the lever and within the receiver, all impeccably finished as any good gun should be.

What makes the Browning BL-22 work is the impressive short lever throw that matches the 20" barrel. The weight is 2.2kg, ideal for a handy walkabout balanced hunting rifle. Its overall length is 93.3cm (36¾") making it one of the shortest rifles in its class, but one that fits all shooters, including women and teenage children old enough to have their own hunting rifle.

The tubular magazine takes 15 rounds of .22 Long Rifle ammo. The tube is unlatched by pressing a button on the knurled nut on its end, pull it out until it clears the loading port, drop in the required number of shells, push the magazine back, lock and it's ready to go. The rifle can also be single loaded.

A word of caution - tubular magazines are not that simple to unload when compared to

dropping a box mag out and shelling out the shells. One technique is to rack out all live rounds by working the lever, but my own method is to pull the magazine tube out and turn the rifle upside down which allows the unfired shells to drop into your hand.

However when done, and this is important, push the tube back in and work the lever several times to ensure all rounds have been removed in case one has hung up in the magazine well. This can happen if there's an obstruction like a blade of grass - or crud build-up from lack of cleaning - in the tube and you must ensure the barrel is always pointed in a safe direction. It's also a reason some shooters think rifles and shotguns loading from tube magazines are not safe, but that's wrong if these recommendations are adhered to.

Being shorter and lighter than most other lever-actioned rifles, the Browning BL-22 is wonderful for young shooters and especially women. However, most shooters readily adapt to shooting it and it's not hard to see why it has become one of the most popular small game rifles in the field, being just right for someone starting off as well as appreciated by seasoned hunters.

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Browning BL-22 - short and sweet



The Browning BL-22 Grade 1 is an ideal small game hunting rifle.

Shooting

With 15 rounds in the magazine, more if you use .22 Shorts or Longs, the BL-22 is one handy field rifle. It has an exposed three-positional hammer. Odd as it may be the trigger itself is part of the lever, meaning when you push the lever down the trigger comes down with it. While some shooters may find it hard to adjust to, you quickly become used to it and it makes the rifle capable of a high cycle of rapid fire as the trigger finger never leaves the trigger. You work the lever with the shooting hand, the finger stays on the trigger and when the action closes the finger doesn't have to locate the trigger as in other lever-actions, as it never left it. A safety prevents the rifle from firing until the bolt is closed and locked.

The short throw action, and especially the attached trigger, takes a little practice. It's a turn-off for some shooters who first pick up the Browning BL-22 at their dealer, but like all things it's about practice and it took me only a few rounds before I



The barrel/stock band is well fitted.

had my act together and was able to clear the magazine in a matter of seconds by rapid firing. It has now become second nature and firing the BL-22 is as easy as any other .22 rimfire lever-action rifle I've owned or fired, though this one is extremely accurate compared to some brands.

In line with most lever-action rifles with exposed hammers the BL-22 doesn't



The front-sight is a basic bead design, well suited for hunting.



The short-lever movement takes getting used to - note how the trigger remains with the lever.

have a separate safety device. Instead the exposed hammer works as a safety indicator as it alerts you at a glance if the rifle is cocked when the hammer is drawn to full position. The hammer has three positions - full, half and dropped/fired cock, the half-cock generally used as a safe method to carry the rifle.

The BL-22 is fitted with an adjustable folding rear-sight, elevation adjusted by two tiny screws though you need a drift for windage adjustment or it can be done on the beaded front-sight. I haven't shot the rifle with open sights, because as soon as I took delivery I mounted a Leupold VX-Freedom 1.5-4x20 scope fitted with a Pig-Plex reticle, a new design I've come to like as I generally preferred the duplex style.

If you have young eyes a scope may not be necessary on a small calibre hunting rifle where distances rarely exceed 80m - but I need one. Be aware that when adding

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Browning BL-22 - short and sweet

accessories you increase the weight of the rifle so choosing the right scope for a small hunting rifle is important to keep the balance or it may impact on its versatility. My own choice of a low power scope is because its power on the top end is adequate for the hunting I do.

Rabbits, hares, feral cats, foxes and even wild dogs are easily shot with a .22 rimfire, especially with high-velocity ammunition. I generally hunt rabbits in local mango, citrus and avocado orchards and only use CCI Standard velocity .22 ammo to keep gunshot sounds down as houses are in the vicinity. I only head-shoot bunnies and won't take the shot if I can't see their ears, the low noise of the ammo doing nothing to scare the game so few will flee.

At the range

I used my Sterling collimator for the Leupold scope. On the range with mate Neale Ellis I only needed a minor adjustment at 25m for windage and did the final elevation adjustment at 50m, setting it 25mm high which should bring it back on the target at 80m, depending on the ammo.

We both shot several groups using ammunition ranging from CCI Standard, Winchester and Remington HV 'Bucket', no group larger than 40mm at 50m apart from the odd 'flyer', with some being only 30mm for five-shot batches. We shot from a bench rest and used a Caldwell 'The Rock' BR rest and sandbags under the front end and stock and I'd expected nothing less from the rifle. The trigger is hard and takes getting used to but considering the long hammer fall, this modest rifle is amazingly accurate.



Wayne Peacock with a pair of mango orchard bunnies that fell to the Browning BL-22 and CCI Standard ammo.



A typical five-shot group using CCI Standard ammunition.



Remington 'Bucket' ammo gave great results, apart from the 'flyer', with 14 rounds in the bull.

In the box

Along with instructions on safe use and sight adjustment booklet, stickers and international warranty, the BL-22 also comes with a trigger lock that completely locks the lever/trigger assembly. This makes carrying the rifle legal as with others the bolt and magazine must be removed and stored separately. The lock is secured with a proper key, not a digital setting which I dislike as you must remember the settings, though it's impossible to fit the lock when a scope is mounted. ●

Specifications

Browning BL-22 Grade I

Overall length: 93.3cm (36¾")

Barrel length: 50.6cm (20")

Trigger pull: 6.1lb

Weight: 2.2kg

Barrel twist: 1 in 16"

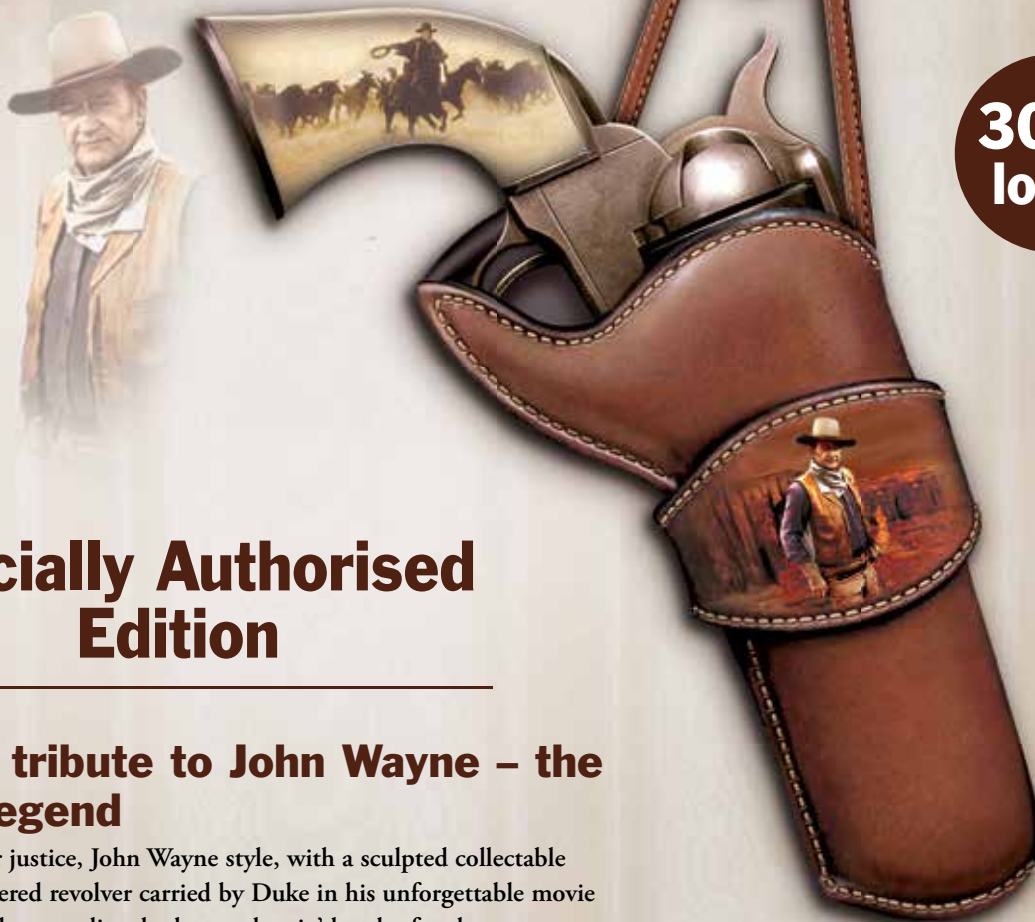
Magazine capacity: 15 Long Rifle, 17 Long and 22 Shorts.

Dealer price: \$1100

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Spartan Precision bipods and tripods steady as she goes

Con Kapralos

As shooters and hunters our primary concern is to safely put our shot on target - be it paper, steel, animate or inanimate object. While the pedigree of our firearm plays heavily in gaining the accuracy required, being able to position the firearm to achieve such a shot is just as important. Being adept enough to successfully shoot a longarm in the free-standing position (without a rest) takes some practice, but for the rest of us using a superior shooting rest in the form of a bipod or tripod makes sense.

Being an avid hunter, bench rests are a rarity in the field and having a rest you can quickly deploy without any obstacles and which contributes minimally to the weight you carry is highly desirable.

The range of Spartan Precision Equipment's bipod and tripods, designed and built in Britain, features some of the most technically advanced and highly sought-after accessories on the market. If rifle-makers such as Sauer and Blaser use Spartan accessories on their products, they must be good. What makes Spartan the leader in the field is their use of carbon fibre technology to produce items as strong as steel at a fraction of the weight.

Added to that, the use of rare-earth magnet know-how makes the attachment of the longarm, as well as any accessory made for the bipod/tripod, possible in the blink of an eye. No more lining up sling swivel studs or unscrewing retaining studs. Fast and simple is the magnetic way.

Gone Hunting, Australian distributor of Spartan Precision Equipment, forwarded *Australian Shooter* two of their most popular products in the Javelin MkII bipod and Kapita tripod. Also supplied were a host of accessories specifically tailored for the bipod and tripod - or both.

Initial examination of the items



confirmed my thought - these were premium pieces of kit made to perform under any circumstances but priced accordingly. The best doesn't come cheap.

Javelin MkII bipod

This is one of the most popular products in the Spartan catalogue and available in the standard (24cm extended) or long (32cm) specification. On review is the standard unit comprising the bipod, rifle adapter plate, two magnetic rifle stock screws (one #12 wood screw and one M5 machine screw) and a small Allen key.

A comprehensive user manual outlines correct attachment of the rifle adapter plate, using the Javelin bipod, bipod leg reassembly, complete disassembly and maintenance. The bipod itself has a minimum working height of 180mm and maximum 240mm. In the folded position its overall length with legs retracted is 210mm meaning it can easily fit into a shirt or jacket pocket. Its weight of 148g

gives the Javelin MkII star status. Once the bipod is attached to the rifle via the adapter plate you hardly know it's there.

Three different adapter plates are available to suit varying rifle fore-end profiles and Gone Hunting will supply the one you want as part of the Javelin bipod package. The adapter plate also has a provision for fitting a rifle sling using a QD-sling attachment. The bipod comprises an aluminum body to which the carbon fibre legs and attachment yoke (with the rare-earth magnet within) are linked. The attachment yoke is tensioned with a screw which protrudes through the front of the body, allowing the user to adjust the amount of side-to-side movement of the lower section of the bipod.

The carbon fibre legs are designed so one is affixed permanently to the body and the other swivels out to the maximum position. With the legs folded side by side two small magnets at their apex hold them together, a neat feature which helps when



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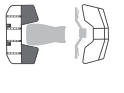
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Spartan Precision bipods and tripods

carrying the bipod fully folded in your pocket. The legs are easy to adjust by turning the sliding portion anticlockwise then turning clockwise to lock it in place once the desired height is achieved.

The feet are covered with rubber 'shoes' which can be removed to expose a steel stud that can be used where additional grip is needed. It's imperative that when adjusting the legs they're never overtightened to lock them into place. The manual clearly states the correct procedure for setting up the bipod and if adhered to the user should have no issues.

Two accessories available for the Javelin bipod are the Picatinny rail adapter and Gunsmith adapter. The Picatinny adapter allows the bipod mounting provision to be attached to a Picatinny rail on the underside of the stock if present. The Gunsmith adapter is a permanent attachment point on the rifle stock which does away with the need to use a bipod adapter plate. A gunsmith can easily countersink the adapter into the stock and epoxy it into place. This method of bipod attachment is even supplied by Blaser and Sauer on their custom-built rifles on request.

The Javelin bipod in either Standard or Long specification retails for \$379.

Kapita tripod

This is one of several tripod and quad-stick rests made by Spartan. Serious hunters will always opt to carry some form of shooting rest in the field and Spartan boasts the best money can buy. Once

again, their comprehensive use of carbon fibre for the collapsible leg sections gives the unit its very light weight of 700g.

The tripod fully folded and with legs retracted measures 760mm and with legs fully extended (but tripod folded) reaches 1820mm. With the legs opened fully, working heights from 670mm-1565mm are employable. The beauty of the Kapita is the user can easily retract the leg sections to make for a shorter tripod height. The legs are like the Javelin bipod in the way

they're adjusted and locked in place.

The head of the tripod is made from aluminum and comprises two main sections - the lower portion which attaches to the legs and the upper containing a yoke with the rare-earth magnet. This allows the tripod to attach to the rifle bipod adapter or any other accessories. The rare-earth magnet yoke is fully adjustable by loosening the large aluminum tensioning ring and tightening when required. This is not only important when shooting with a

The Javelin MkII standard bipod with the legs extended.



The versatile Kapita can be used as tripod, bipod or monopod.

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Spartan Precision bipods and tripods

rifle, but also when using the tripod with one of the several camera adaptors or other accessories.

A quirky feature of the Kapita is a hook which extends from underneath the head of the tripod. This screws into place and serves as a means for hanging anything you may wish to keep off the ground - I've even heard of roe deer being hung on this hook when field gutting, such is the immense strength of the tripod.

One unique aspect is its ability to be used as tripod, bipod or monopod. Each leg is easily unscrewed from the head of the tripod as required and the two legs with the foam-padded top segments can be used as trekking poles. The versatile Kapita tripod has a multitude of uses aside from shooting and hunting and retails for \$689.

Range and field use

The Javelin bipod was used at the range when concurrently reviewing the Schultz & Larsen Legacy rifle fitted with a Javelin rifle adapter. I normally use a front bench rest and rear bag for all rifle testing but the bipod served its purpose well.

The accuracy of the test rifle with the various barrels was excellent despite



Testing a Schultz & Larsen Legacy rifle, the Javelin MkII bipod was excellent.

gale-force winds on some sessions. The ease to which the bipod can be installed and removed makes it well worth its cost. You don't have to have a deluxe rifle to use the Javelin bipod - it will easily fit on any rifle be it rimfire, centrefire, sporter, varmint, long-range - anything. Considering top-grade traditional hunting bipods retail for around the \$150-\$200 price point, the Javelin, at a little more, makes an excellent investment.

The Kapita tripod wasn't deployed in a field setting but was used for photography

around town and easily held a compact Panasonic camera as well as a Canon SLR and Nikon Coolpix nice and steady when taking distant pictures and video footage. The tripod is perfect for the serious stalking hunter, light weight and flexibility being its best attributes.

While I'm attached to my homemade quad-sticks and another field tripod, I could certainly entertain buying a Kapita for deer stalking. It has quality, finish and functionality. For more visit gonehunting.com.au or call 1300 338 300. ●



The two padded legs can be detached to make trekking poles.



The Picatinny rail adapter permits use of the Javelin bipod on firearms with such attachments.



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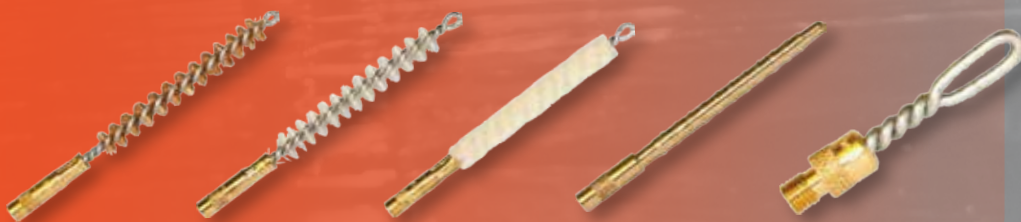
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Talbot on target! Target Pistol

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



It has been a varied start to 2019 for me, heading to the Wild West to shoot Single Action then spending time at the Australian Scout Jamboree. This month I returned to more familiar surroundings at a typical shooting range to try Target Pistol, my first time using a self-loading firearm which quickly proved a lot of fun and a great challenge overall.

How it works

Target Pistol employs a wide range of revolvers and self-loading pistols over six main classes and several side matches, each of these based around the class of the handgun and ammunition used with many having their roots in different eras and types of service pistol shooting. The discipline includes four main matches:

National Match Course, 900 Match Course, International Mayleigh Match and Short Course Match. Competitors have varying time restrictions to shoot single-handed in the standing position at paper targets placed at 25m and 50m.

National Championships and other serious competitions generally use the 900 Match Course, while National Match Course is more popular for club matches and was the selected course of fire for the event I shot in.

The National Match Course comprises one string of 10 shots slow-fire at 50m/yds in 10 minutes, two strings of five shots timed-fire at 25m/yds with 20 seconds per string, and two strings of five shots rapid-fire at 25m/yds with 10 seconds per string. The scoring of targets is done after each 10-shot stage and as usual if a bullet hole touches the scoring ring of a higher value the superior mark is awarded.

Getting started

Before I began I enlisted the help of Target



John Walsh goes over the basics of using the Ruger Mark III and loading the magazines.

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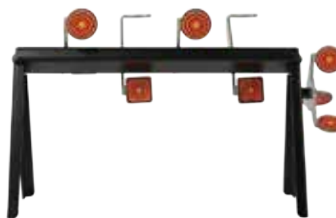
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Talbot on target! Target Pistol

Pistol National Chairman Greg Riemer who told me if I wanted to shoot the discipline seriously I'd need at least three different guns and to be a genuine competitor I may need as many as six.

"You should start with the standard and Any .22 matches. They can both be shot with an iron sighted .22 handgun but to be competitive you'll want a dot sight for the Any .22 match. A Ruger is an example of a good starting gun," said Greg.

He also suggested beginners engage a coach to discover the basics of pistol shooting. "Learn to use the iron sights first. Practise on a reduced target up close at 7-10m until you're shooting one-hole groups of 10 shots then step it back to the full distances. And don't be intimidated by the 50m slow-fire distance, it's all in your head, just pretend you're shooting at that 10m reduced target," he said.

"There are plenty of good primer articles and books available about bullseye shooting and shooting mindset. If you want to really

Beginners
should engage a
coach to discover
the basics of pistol
shooting

improve you must read and put into practice what you've read but also make sure you enjoy it, embrace the game and if you like it you'll have impetus to improve."

Sadly, due to my habit of throwing myself in at the deep end and the fact my competition was only days away I didn't have time to put all Greg's excellent recommendations into practice. I knew I'd be using iron sights but beyond would

be borrowing a handgun, though as I went through the schedule I realised that what Greg was saying would be a better way of improving in the discipline and it's certainly worthwhile advice.

Getting involved

Like many other competitions, finding a Target Pistol outlet was as simple as calling my local SSAA club and asking. Luckily for me when I contacted SSAA Para the man who answered the phone, John Walsh, also ran the Target Pistol sector.

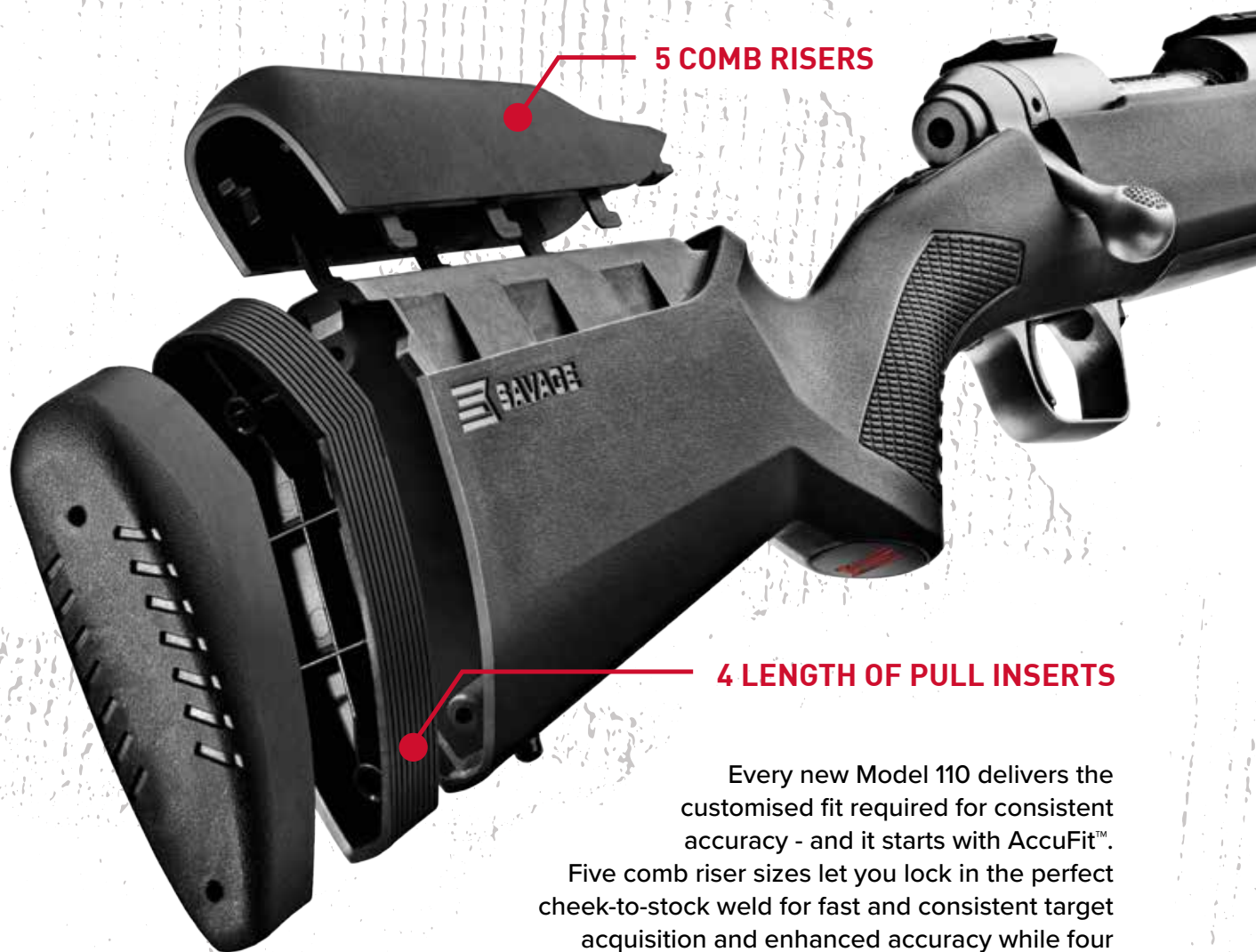
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The range only being 25m didn't stop Sam missing the target occasionally.



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Talbot on target! Target Pistol

On the day of competition the only equipment I took were my trusty earmuffs which I much prefer to disposable earplugs, especially during phases where I have to take them in and out. On arriving at the range I bought two boxes of CCI Standard Velocity .22LR for \$7 each then met John who showed me the basics of the Ruger Mark III pistol I'd be using.

The competition

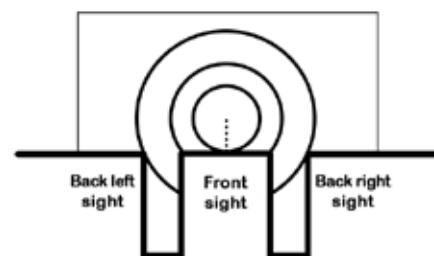
For the contest we shot a modified version of the National Match Course and given the event was on a Tuesday morning we weren't shooting for sheep stations and a few tweaks were made to the format - instead of 50m we shot the entire match

at 25m in the interest of convenience and range availability. While there are many classes of firearms for Target Pistol, my competition essentially fell into the 'Any .22-calibre Pistol or Revolver' firearm bracket.

Perhaps the trickiest part of Target Pistol is you must shoot from the standing position and only use one hand, John suggesting I put my other hand in my pocket. If nothing else, having my left hand in my pocket at least allowed me to stop thinking about it, enabling me to focus all my attention on the important hand, aiming and holding the pistol correctly.

The iron sights consist of a front and back-sight at opposite ends of the barrel.

6 o'clock aim



When aiming, the top flat edge of the front-sight needs to be level with the top flat edge of the rear-sight, in addition to the front-sight centred between the two rear-sight posts. With everything lined up properly you should see your front-sight as a black rectangle with slits of light either side, all perfectly flat, and the sights lined up in this way ensure you're both vertically and horizontally straight.

For the first 10-minute string no-one, including me, came close to using all the allotted time, only taking about a minute or so to complete five shots. I managed to shoot a 41 for my first string followed by 37 and 36 for my 20-second and 10-second strings.

John explained I should be aiming at 6 o'clock which meant placing my sights on the bottom of the target's black circle, common for many handguns so you can still see the target when shooting or if the firearm is zeroed in for a different distance.

As you can imagine it doesn't take long to progress through the National Match



Sam and Geoff Smith count their scores and place stickers over the holes.



Sam is happy to score a nine on the rapid fire.



The 9mm makes noticeably larger holes than the .22.

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Talbot on target! Target Pistol

Course, leaving plenty of time to do it again. While my competitors moved on to 9mm for their second match I stuck with the .22 ammo, on this occasion managing a 51 on the first string, followed by a 32 before closing with a 56. Even though theoretically it should be the hardest of the three strings, the 10-second string proved my best, showing what can be accomplished when you don't have time to over-think things.

Other shooters reckoned this wasn't particularly uncommon and surprisingly I never felt rushed on either the 10 or 20-second strings. For me, going through five shots in 10 seconds with a self-loader is much easier than negotiating the rapid fire three shots in 15 seconds of Field Rifle which requires cycling the action, and using a self-loader felt just like any other firearm I have shot.

Licensing for handguns

One of the major challenges with handgun disciplines compared to rifle or shotgun options is the matter of licensing. There are quite a few extra steps involved in obtaining an H licence over the typical A and B, including a six-month probation period where a handgun cannot be purchased. Clubs are far more heavily involved in this category and must give permission to the H licence applicant with some differences between states and territories.

At the end of competition every participant carefully recorded their club attendance, noting the category and type of match we'd shot. Attending a certain number of competitions is a crucial part of maintaining your status and is another hoop for H licence holders to jump through. Generally, a member must attend at least

four to six club events per year to retain their membership and endorsement of the handgun category of their firearm licence, while clubs are bound to advise the registry if a member has not fulfilled those quotas. While these rules may be extra barriers, they can easily be overcome if Target Pistol is something you're interested in and shouldn't discourage anyone from trying the discipline.

Conclusion

After my recent venture into the Wild West for Single Action and this month's Target Pistol competition, I've grown quite fond of handgun shooting. While I'm unlikely to go through the system to obtain my H licence any time soon, it may be something I'll consider down the line. In the meantime Target Pistol is a fun and relatively simple discipline that welcomes newcomers, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to try handguns or as a general test of their shooting prowess. ●

DATE: / /
NAME:-

SSAA National Target Pistol

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
50 SF	10	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	0	0	51
25 TF	9	7	6	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	32
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TOTAL:-											

The final figures for Sam's second match.



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Mantis 50

proves effective fox lure

Chris Redlich



Although we've recently experienced one of the worst droughts in living memory, it was evident to me as we drove back to the farm one night that dry conditions appeared to have no impact on the fox population in our area. The number of eyes that lit up in our headlights was incredible, including a pair of redcoats that had taken up residence near our house.

Hunting foxes has been a big part of my shooting life and while some have come easy by way of spotlighting, the thrill of taking a wily old adult has always given me a buzz, knowing every fox down is another predator removed from our volatile ecosystem, not to mention the damage they inflict on chooks or farmers' lambs.

Australian Shooter was approached by Tasco Australia to review a new product, the Mantis 50 by Western Rivers. The Mantis 50 is a hand-held electronic game caller preset with 50 different calls, hence the name. It resembles a horn and fits easily in the hand, the side of the hand grip having two folding legs that can be used to position the caller on the ground with the other end of the speaker upright.

The Mantis 50 comes with instructions

but is simple to use, all the button-operated functions self-explanatory. It requires four AAA batteries installed to the underside compartment to power up and with your hand firmly grasping the handle, the buttons are comfortably within reach of your thumb. The 'On' button is left of the main screen on the top of the handle. Hold down for a 1½ seconds and you're in business, same to turn off. To the right of the screen is the mode button and by pressing this simultaneously it takes you through the call categories and settings. A call repeat option is found in settings and the repeat is set at default from the factory.

The call activating button is pressed on the underside with your pointer finger or what I'd call trigger finger. The screen has a well-lit, green backlight and can be viewed easily in lowlight conditions (the auto backlight can be turned off if not needed). The screen will revert to basic LCD (liquid crystal display) after 10 seconds but lights up as soon as you touch a button. Push the mode button and use the up and down arrow buttons to scroll through the choice of 50 game calls until you settle on the right one. The last used call will remain after each power up until



The Mantis 50 is practical in the field.

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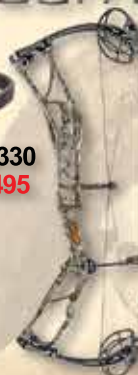
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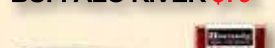
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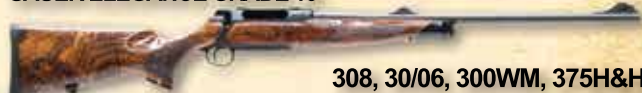
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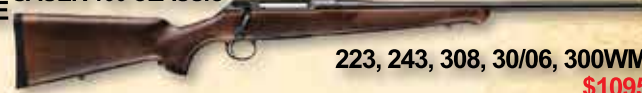
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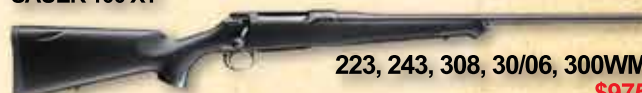
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Mantis 50 proves effective fox lure

an alternative is selected. The volume is adjusted with the left and right arrow buttons and the unit will turn itself off after 30 minutes of no buttons being pressed.

The Mantis 50 is designed by US hunters and the majority of calls are for American game but one thing's for sure - a red fox's call is universal no matter where in the world you are. With your choice of game call selected, push 'enter' below the screen and activate the call with your trigger finger. For added volume an audio jack is built in but note the internal speaker won't operate once an external speaker is engaged. A wrist lanyard is also supplied.

I didn't have far to travel in putting the Mantis 50 to use as a pair of foxes had built a love nest no more than 100m from our farmhouse. Arriving home in darkness I put the caller to the test.

With a torch in one hand and Mantis in the other I let out a couple of blasts of the 'fox greeting bark'. A flash of the torch picked up the reflection from their eyes and I had their attention. With my son Carl assisting, I had my 22-250 rifle and field pack as a rest and set up a firing position with Carl operating the Mantis 50. A flash of the torch showed the foxes were out of



It comes with a 3.5mm auxiliary speaker jack, the cable connected as shown.

range so, taking up a new position with the wind behind us, Carl let out another 'fox greeting call'. I picked them up in the scope at about 250m behind a couple of contours in the land and maintained my firing position with the torch off. We let out two more calls with a 20-second gap and hit the lights again. Drawn by the sound of the caller, a big male had closed to



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Mantis 50 proves effective fox lure

around 90m and was well within range of the 22-250 Rem. He was alert and clearly interested. With sights set under his chin I fired immediately and with a thud he was down at the first attempt. The Mantis 50 had done its job. The vixen fled the scene and wasn't stopping for a second glance but a couple of quick calls had her attention again, though she was never within range.

With the big male at our feet I was impressed, given the wind was strong and blowing straight in the direction of the foxes. To be honest I didn't think we had a chance but it proved that although conditions were not in our favour, the Mantis 50 really did work and lured the fox to us even though he'd have been able to smell danger.

I loaned the Mantis 50 to my brother to test on his farm, and while working the back paddock he gave it a go with the 'distress rabbit' call and to his surprise caught the attention of a wild dog. Kicking himself for not having a rifle with him, this proved that while the Mantis 50 is not equipped with a wild dog howl, it highlights the effectiveness of the distress calls the marauder was obviously attracted to.

Conclusion

I admit that before reviewing the Mantis 50 I wasn't sure what to expect. I've always



The wrist lanyard comes supplied.

believed in sticking with tried and proven aids when it comes to hunting, but when my Tasco contact assured me it worked well on a spotlighting hunt off the back of an idling ute I felt I'd be mad not to give a go.

Yes there are limitations on the amount of calls we can use in Australia of the 50 on offer, but my fox experiment proved the Mantis 50 really works. I was so happy with the outcome I arranged to have the big fox in splendid winter coat mounted by a taxidermist.


For hunting or shooting foxes the use of an aid like the Mantis 50 is definitely worth a try. Its compact design allows it to fit your pocket and is much less bulky than many remote callers. In my opinion there's no such thing as cheating when it comes to conservation and the Mantis 50 is another tool that can give you an edge.

The Mantis 50 game caller is pre-packed with instructions but not batteries and retails for \$99. Details are on the Tasco website or ask your local gun retailer for availability. ●

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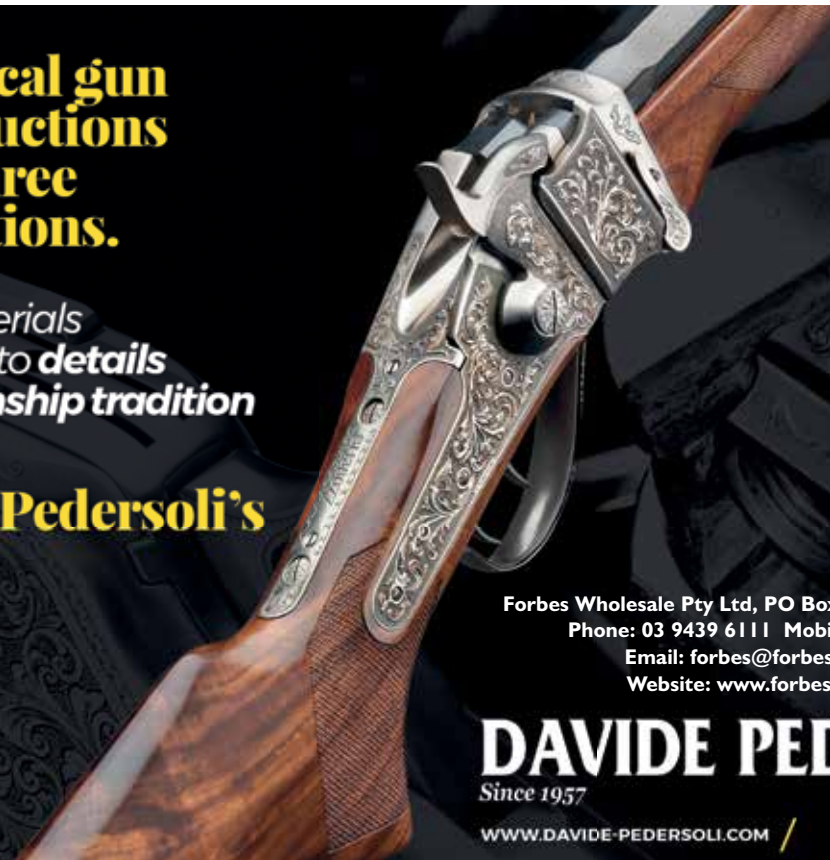
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I scream, you scream challenge to Fly Shooters

S SAA Fly Shoot competitors can now earn a brand new 'screamer patch' - but they really will have to earn it. The idea for the patch came from Fly Shoot National Chairman Dave Groves who wanted something special to recognise a significant achievement.

"A screamer in Benchrest is a very tight group for the distance being shot and since Fly Shoot is now recognised as its own discipline, when I drafted the new rule book to govern it in consultation with state representatives and the SSAA, we decided to introduce the screamer, bringing it with us from the Benchrest discipline where Fly Shoot originated," said Dave.

"We discussed what should constitute a screamer in centrefire Fly Shoot which is competed at 500m, and came up with 1.25" which is near enough 0.22 Minutes of Angle (MOA). We wanted owning a screamer patch to be something special for completing a rare and difficult achievement.

"Rimfire Fly Shoot is shot at 200yds which is a fair test for shooters, ammunition and the humble .22LR. Since rimfire uses the same target as the centrefire event, we decided to have the same measurement



(1.25") apply to the rimfire screamer patch. At 200yds this equates to about 0.6 MOA, a tough ask and tiny area to land five shots in, therefore one well worth rewarding."

The wording on the patch - 1.250 and below - is spoken as '*one point two five o and below*', a reminder to competitors just how accurate they must be to meet the qualification criteria. If you shoot a group that size or smaller at 500m (centrefire) or 200yds (rimfire) in a SSAA Fly Shoot

registered match you become the proud owner of a screamer patch.

Dave sought feedback on different design options before settling on the ones shown, which got the thumbs-up from the National Board. He's already processing early screamer applications and hopes for plenty more to come.

Find out more about Fly Shoot and how you can become involved at ssaa.org.au/disciplines/fly-shoot ●

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Fly Shoot

Australian Shooter

SSAA Fly Shoot caters exclusively to rifles. It is a unique discipline as both the size of the groups and scores count towards a shooter's final result. Fly Shoot has its origins in the Benchrest discipline, with shooters who saw the need for a way to prove centrefire rifles under organised range conditions at 500m. Unlike short-range Benchrest, the match would be for group and score to encourage a higher degree of accuracy.



Single Action

A man wearing a black cowboy hat and a dark long-sleeved shirt is shown from the chest up. He is holding a silver revolver with both hands, aiming it towards the right. He has a focused expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

SSAA Single Action is a multifaceted discipline that employs original or replica firearms that were commonly used in the American Old West period of 1800 to 1899.

Shooters preserve and promote the skills, traditions and pioneering spirit. This includes adopting an alias and dressing in clothing representative of the era. Having evolved in the US in the early 1980s, Single Action has become one of the world's fastest growing shooting disciplines.

Firearms

The firearms include originals or replicas of lever-action or pump-action rifles manufactured from about 1860 to 1899 and incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles must be centrefire pistol calibres of at least .32 and no larger than .45.

Original or replica side-by-side or single-shot shotguns with or without external hammers, single- or double-triggered and without automatic ejectors are permitted. Lever-action, pump-actions and tubular-feed exposed hammer shotguns are also allowed. Shotguns must be centrefire of at least 20-gauge and no larger than 10-gauge, with the exception of pump-actions that must be between 16- and 12-gauge.

Original single-action revolvers made prior to 1899 or approved replicas are the only revolvers allowed. The Revolver calibres are consistent with those used in Rifle competition.

Categories

Each shooter only competes against others within their chosen category. The main groupings are Age Based, Duellist, Gunfighter, Black Powder, 'B' Western and Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl categories, all of which have specific clothing requirements, as well as firearm conditions.

Targets and scoring

Targets are generally specifically designed 'reactive' plates with multiple targets on each stage. They are varied, with most common being square, round or card-suit shapes often based on a 400x400mm size. Novelty targets, buffalo, ore cart and tombstone-shaped targets are also used. The targets must be engaged in the same sequence from static positions, regardless of which category a participant competes in.





Firearms and classes

The Rimfire match allows for any .22LR rimfire rifle weighing no more than 7.71kg. The Centrefire match includes a Light and Heavy class, with both allowing any rifle up to and including .49-calibre (or the largest calibre allowed on the range). Light class has a 7.71kg weight limit including bipod. In the Heavy Centrefire class the rifle may have an unlimited weight, but it must be manually lifted onto the bench by a single person. Rifles are fired from a bench with a front rest and rear sandbag for support.

Courses of fire

Competitors are offered a warm-up target with unlimited rounds to confirm their zero and five targets for score. They may use only eight rounds per detail; three rounds for sighting on a sighting plate (paper, steel or other medium) and five rounds on the target to score.

Targets and scoring

The goal is to hit the 'fly', which is right in the centre of the target, as well as to shoot the five scoring shots into the smallest group possible for a maximum tally. The discipline includes Rimfire and Centrefire matches shot at 200 yards and 500m respectively. Both use an approved 10-ring target 220mm in overall diameter, with a 25.5mm 'fly' as the X.

The target comprises a possible 60.5 points, which entails 50.5 for score and 10 points for group.





The two-way benefits of deer hunting

Sam Garro

While there are state forests and other designated deer hunting areas that can be accessed under certain conditions and guidelines, including private properties given permission, the planning to actually implement the hunt can prove daunting and often frustrating.

Then when you or other like-minded deer hunters finally decide to explore a secluded or unworked area with your gear and GPS, you roll up only to find another party of stalkers or a group with hounds ahead of you. Not that there's anything wrong with that but it's not the scenario you envisaged. So you either take your chances in the same vicinity or start again in another location.

It was just a few years ago I hunted my first red deer in the Brisbane Ranges with a creditable guide and even though it took some 40 years to eventuate, the experience was worth the wait and the dollars spent. However, from the start my goal has always been to hunt the high country for the impressive sambar stag.

Then I met fellow hunter, Derek, in a gunshop and started talking about deer hunting in Victoria. I expressed some frustration at my inability to gain entry to sambar habitat areas through privately

owned land, a personal preference as opposed to parking my vehicle on a dirt track in a state forest where it could be broken into.

He was empathetic with my plight and hinted there might be an opportunity but couldn't elaborate at the time, saying he'd get back to me. True to his word Derek made contact, explaining that a private concern was being established which would allow hunters like myself to hunt deer in a safe, ethical and sustainable way which would also benefit landowners whose property we'd be accessing.

The idea to form a deer guiding operation was fostered by Robert Cavedon, born and raised in the farming community of Eurobin, Victoria. In 1938 his father worked on a family related dairy farm before buying his own property in 1952. As long-established residents, farmers, neighbours and good friends to the surrounding and more distant property owners, they're well placed to pursue the venture.

While it's Robert's concept it can be likened to buffalo or wild boar-hunting safaris in the Northern Territory where the Aboriginal elders or landholders are compensated for the privilege to hunt on their land as well as for the game hunted. Robert sees this as a way of bringing

together in a safe, controlled, supervised environment, landowners and responsible hunters. Importantly it provides farmers and landowners some financial benefit, as touched on, to enable them to buy feed or meet other monetary obligations.

Also at a time when most small businesses are struggling, it helps Robert's family concern, the Red Stag Restaurant Farm in Eurobin. Recently, the restaurant has employed several local young men and women with the required skills and abilities to act as guides for the deer operation.

As a farmer, Robert understands the plight and hardship endured during catastrophic weather events like drought and the frustration ethical hunters experience trying to access deer country. At present, crops, vineyards, orchards, pastures and stock feed, even botanic gardens are being raided by a greater than previous deer population. The situation has become so desperate in places that culling by spot-lighting is proving the most effective method, a more recent and legally approved option applicable to private landowners under stipulated conditions.

The landowners' willingness to share their territory has come about through a trusted relationship with Robert's family built over the years. I don't mind paying



The two-way benefits of deer hunting

a few dollars to hunt in a place where someone's aware of my deer hunting movements, just in case of emergency, and it helps the landowner. Property admittance is strictly controlled through the operator to ensure the landowners' requirements are fully respected. So it's crucial we as shooters act ethically and appropriately if we're to gain the farmer's or landowner's respect and for this type of hunting activity to prosper. In most cases they're way too busy attending to their farming activities to chase deer on an ongoing basis.

Ironically it comes at a time when Parks Victoria is trialling aerial culling of sambar and other deer species in such places as Mount Buffalo National Park. Sure, there's good reason for the culling but is it going to be effective and at what cost and waste? Sambar deer are stubborn critters, hard to push out of thick forested areas. And where are they felled, how many are badly wounded or crippled only to wander about in pain before expiring? And there's the waste of good venison and a trophy stag most deer hunters strive for.

When the invitation was extended to experience the situation for myself, I drove through the picturesque high country to Robert's Red Stag Restaurant where I met my guide. For the exercise of sighting deer the plan was to drive out late at night to various privately owned properties, with respective owners' awareness and permission, using a night-vision



Sam checks out fresh sambar tracks.

A balcony view of the majestic ranges.



Guide Brad indicates scent markings on a fern trunk.

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The two-way benefits of deer hunting

hand-held scope. In just a couple of hours driving we counted about 80 deer, most feeding on the fringe or just inside forested areas.

The next day, decked in camo gear and full of anticipation I ventured out at 5am with Brad, my guide, to spot sambar deer in their natural habitat. We made our way up a rising hill bordered to our left by a black-berry choked gully and dotted with stunning overhanging ferns. Under the canopy of the towering gums and an overcast sky, visibility in dim light was poor. As drizzle started to fall a murky black shape emerged from the scrub on the narrow path in front of us - a sambar stag which paused before scampering up the hill through the dense growth, followed by three or four hinds.

My first sighting had the adrenalin pumping as we stalked through the bracken-covered gullies and up the slopes, aided by the light rain that softened the twigs and dry bark underfoot. An hour passed with no further sightings as if our presence had been telegraphed. On our return we noticed fresh dog scat, possibly a dingo hunting the area and a reason for the absence of deer.

But nearing the pick-up point we sighted a young buck and were further honked by two mature stags above us. The previous night's sightings and those that morning were proof enough to confirm their presence in numbers. Due to other commitments my stay was restricted to that morning but I'll be back for an organised hunt.

Talking to Robert, the guiding is diverse in its approach and can be tailored to the client's preference, from free-range hunting to night hunting under strictly controlled conditions. There are photographic excursions at night where wombats, possums and other wildlife are common. Importantly



the project also caters to physically disadvantaged people who, for example, may require the aid of a wheelchair. Presently, and to ethically fast-track the reduction in deer population, spotlight hunting is probably one of the most effective methods for farmers to be rid of problem deer.

In the US, feral animals such as hogs or wild pigs, out of control in Texas, coyotes, deer, foxes, cats and other predatory animals are being successfully harvested or eradicated using spotlighting or night-vision equipment. It's a workable idea and should also be applicable in Australia.

Robert's idea is to make the experience a pleasurable and memorable



Guide Derek with a meat animal for dressing out and venison.



The team from the 5 Star Deer Guide Company.

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The two-way benefits of deer hunting

one, hence the title 5 Star Deer Guide Company, a status name he firmly believes in for its longer term viability. The Red Stag Restaurant that sponsors the operation is nestled in picturesque Ovens Valley, Eurobin between Myrtleford and Bright.

Hunts, including vehicle transport, are conducted by experienced guides who are trained in first aid. Apart from field outings and camping arrangements, more comfortable accommodation and ready meals, including varying game dishes, are offered through the restaurant, particularly where youngsters and family members are involved. Deer are field dressed and the venison, cape and antlers, or all, can be retrieved to take home. For interstate travellers pick-up from Albury airport can be arranged.

Conclusion

The exercise certainly confirmed the abundance of deer and the dilemma facing property owners. However, out of an often hopeless or unsolvable situation, it goes to show how an idea from simple beginnings can sometimes prove effective and beneficial. It's certainly worth pursuing. For anyone contemplating a deer hunt or outing, Robert or Grace can be contacted at Robert@5stardeerguide.com.au or visit 5stardeerguide.com.au ●



Sam with a young red deer stag.

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Tanning fox pelts

from target to trophy

Daniel Musgrave



Foxes are a huge problem in Australia and have a massive financial impact on the farming community as well as decimating native animal populations. As a wily and intelligent creature they've long been a popular target among hunters and, with a bit of work and time spent, can also yield a nice trophy for the cabinet.

As most people hunt foxes in the winter months and at night, temperature is somewhat less of an issue but it's important to remember that if any decomposition takes place the fur will start to slip (fall out) and the pelt is wasted. So as soon as possible the carcass should be put on ice, just as you would when you harvest an animal you intend to eat.

The skin should be removed within a day or so. Cutting techniques vary and are down to personal choice and desired outcome but there are plenty of instructional videos online so you're sure to find one that suits your needs.

Even if you're confident with cutting you might still become stuck at the tail. For this you'll need two sticks, 15-20mm gum tree or something equally as hard. You can cut and pull back about four tail joints. Place the sticks on the top and bottom of the tail bone and grasp the sticks in your palm with the tail running between your middle and ring fingers. Hold the sticks very tight on the bone and pull towards the tip, pushing on the rump with your other hand (if the skin is

otherwise removed you can stand the fox on its hind legs while pulling up).

There will be plenty of flesh to take off after skinning and this is where the hard work begins. Deburring the fur is a good idea as running the fleshing tool over a hard bur can cause a cut to the skin. A hair brush run through the fur back to front and front to back will remove any nasties.

If fleshing on a flat surface the fleshing tool supplied with a Leder tanning kit or just a small skinning knife will suffice. I start between the front legs, scraping down towards the tail in short strokes. You'll see the flesh peeling back so keep working from side to side and gradually towards the tail, a bit like shaving the

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Tanning fox pelts - from target to trophy

flesh from the skin. If you've taken the whole face and ears you'll need to do some fleshing here too.

You can choose to keep the cartilage in the ears or carefully remove it leaving only the skin and fur on the back of the ears, as this can make things a little easier to deal with later in the process. If it's a warm day and the skin starts to dry out, you can either keep wetting it down or salt it and finish fleshing straight before putting it in the tanning bath.

If using a fleshing knife like those available from Pizzari's tanning supplies, you'll need a smooth curved surface like a large diameter poly pipe or similar. Using the same short-stroke shaving motion you need to anchor the skin with a clamp of some sort and, as the skin is relatively thin, it can be a good idea to use the back edge of the fleshing knife and be careful with pressure so as not to cut through the skin.

Small tanning kits can handle five or six fox skins so if gathering these will take a few weeks you must salt the skins as you collect them. Table salt will do, apply a generous amount over the whole skin side, fold it in half so the front legs are together and back legs are together. Then roll it up, place in a bag and keep refrigerated until you're ready to tan.

Tanning solution manufacturers provide instructions on how to prepare the tanning bath and what to do while the skins are soaking and straight after for the drying and conditioning process. I use

Foxes are a huge problem in Australia and have a massive financial impact on the farming community...

a 600mm x 900mm piece of 10mm mesh for drying and plastic clothes pegs to hold the skin flat. Make sure the skin is kept horizontal and out of the sun as you don't want it drying out too quickly.

As you'll see from the tanning instructions, stretching and conditioning need to happen during the drying process and always turn the skin fur-side up to make sure it dries properly at the appropriate time.

Fox skulls can be another trophy worthy of your time and I have one in my python enclosure. Easily removed at any vertebra, all you do then is cut away as much muscle as possible and boil for a few hours until all visible flesh has fallen away. The bottom jaw will

have separated and the teeth fallen out so collect them before disposing of the water and flesh.

Sit all the parts in the sun for a few weeks until totally dry and perfectly white. Make sure the skull is completely clean of flesh then glue the bottom jaw back together, the teeth in and use Blu Tack to act as cartilage so the bottom jaw sits right and you're done. ●



A thick layer of salt will help preserve the skin in the fridge for months.



A fox skull adds a bit of variety to this python enclosure.



The finished article.

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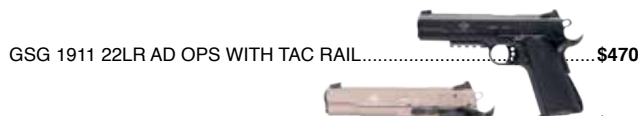
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Howa's M1500

H-S Precision SHB sporting rifle

Con Kapralos



Outdoor Sporting Agencies (OSA) continues to champion the Howa M1500 marque via its relationship with Legacy Sports International in the US. The popularity of the Japanese-made barrelled actions and their availability as ultralight, sporter and varmint models makes them an excellent platform for any hunting or shooting application. Match these to an appropriate stock and you're good to go - anywhere!

While the availability of the Howa M1500 barrelled action is one of its greatest assets, the team at OSA do offer Howa M1500 rifles as a complete package with a stock

specifically fitted. When it comes to stocks for the M1500 barrelled actions, the possibilities are endless - generally speaking better quality stocks do raise the overall price of the complete rifle.

The increasing popularity of long-range shooting has brought a series of rifles with a semi-heavy barrel (SHB) which sits between a sporter and varmint contour. The new Howa M1500 SHB is a #four contour, cold hammer forged barrel 26" (660mm) in length mated to a chrome moly steel receiver. A serious long-range outfit required a premium stock and the H-S Precision riflestock was chosen.

Review rifle

Australian Shooter was approached by OSA to take a closer look at the Howa M1500 H-S Precision SHB and forwarded one in .308 Winchester. Supplied was a Sig Sauer Sierra3BDH 4.5-14x50 riflescope in steel Nikko Stirling rings. The finish on the barrel and receiver was a traditional matte blue which extended to the entire bolt assembly, alloy triggerguard and magazine floorplate. The rifle, in its bare form, weighs 3.67kg and measures 1150mm in length. It's also offered in 6.5 Creedmoor and .300 Winchester Magnum.



The rifle in component form.

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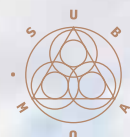


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Howa's M1500 H-S Precision SHB sporting rifle

Receiver

This is the M1500 short-action length. It's of a standard turn-bolt repeating design made from a single piece of steel with a cylindrical upper profile which terminates in a flat underside to facilitate the magazine box and stock bedding requirements.

The Howa M1500 receiver is one of the few that still encompasses an integral recoil lug machined into the same piece of metal as the receiver itself. The Howa recoil lug is simple, effective and strong and the ejection port is well designed to allow ultra-reliable extraction and ejection of cases.

A small gas vent is built into the left side of the receiver ring to direct hot gases away from the shooter's face. The receiver top is of a slightly convex nature with four drilled and tapped holes, two fore and two aft of the ejection port. This pattern accepts any scope mounting bases designed around the Remington 700/Howa M1500 pattern. The receiver is secured to the stock via two hex screws, one attached directly into the body of the recoil lug, the other fastened into a shallow lug that makes up the rear tang of the receiver directly behind the trigger housing.

Barrel

This gives the rifle its purpose. It's of a semi-heavy profile on a #four-contour and its extended length at 660mm is well suited to the ballistics of the .308 Winchester as well as the 6.5 Creedmoor and .300 Winchester Magnum. The chrome moly, cold hammer forged barrel is of a one in 10" rate of twist with the barrel profile starting from 29.8mm at the knox form and tapering to 16.4mm at the muzzle. The muzzle is also 1/2"x28 threaded to accept a muzzle brake and the barrel crown is finished with a recessed target profile, conducive to an accurate barrel. The barrel is matte blued

Three-position safety is part of the Howa HACT set-up.



to match the receiver and triggerguard/floorplate.

Trigger

Howa fits the new Howa Actuator Controlled Trigger (HACT) system to all its rifles. The trigger does have the usual take-up as per a two-stage unit but breaks cleanly and crisply. I assume the trigger pull weight could be adjusted lower if required but recommend tinkering with triggers be left to a professional.

Having said that, the trigger broke at around 1.4kg, perfect for testing as set. The safety system is an extension of the HACT with a three-position function. The rear-most setting blocks the trigger and locks the bolt handle down, the middle setting checks the trigger but permits the bolt to be cycled and the forward setting frees the trigger, allowing the rifle to fire.

Triggerguard and magazine assembly

The bottom metal, which encompasses the triggerguard and magazine well, is made from a single piece of aluminium as is the magazine floorplate which pivots from the front of the assembly. The magazine spring is steel with the follower made of plastic and the entire assembly, except for the spring and follower, is matte blue finished. The review rifle in .308 Winchester has a five-round magazine.

Bolt

This is a one-piece unit with dually-opposed twin locking lugs and is designed on a push-feed action. The spring-loaded plunger through the bolt-face and a claw-mounted extractor perform the task of case manipulation and the entire bolt is easy to strip and clean. The bolt handle is a tactical cone-shaped unit and lends itself to the long-range application intended of the rifle.

The bolt body, shroud and handle are matte blued similar to the rest of the barrelled action. The bolt lift is of a 90-degree configuration but the design of the tactical bolt handle and shank ensures that even with low mounted scopes, clearance is never a problem. To remove the bolt Howa incorporates a small bolt-release tab on the rear-lift of the action. By depressing the tab when the bolt is drawn back, the bolt is withdrawn.

Stock

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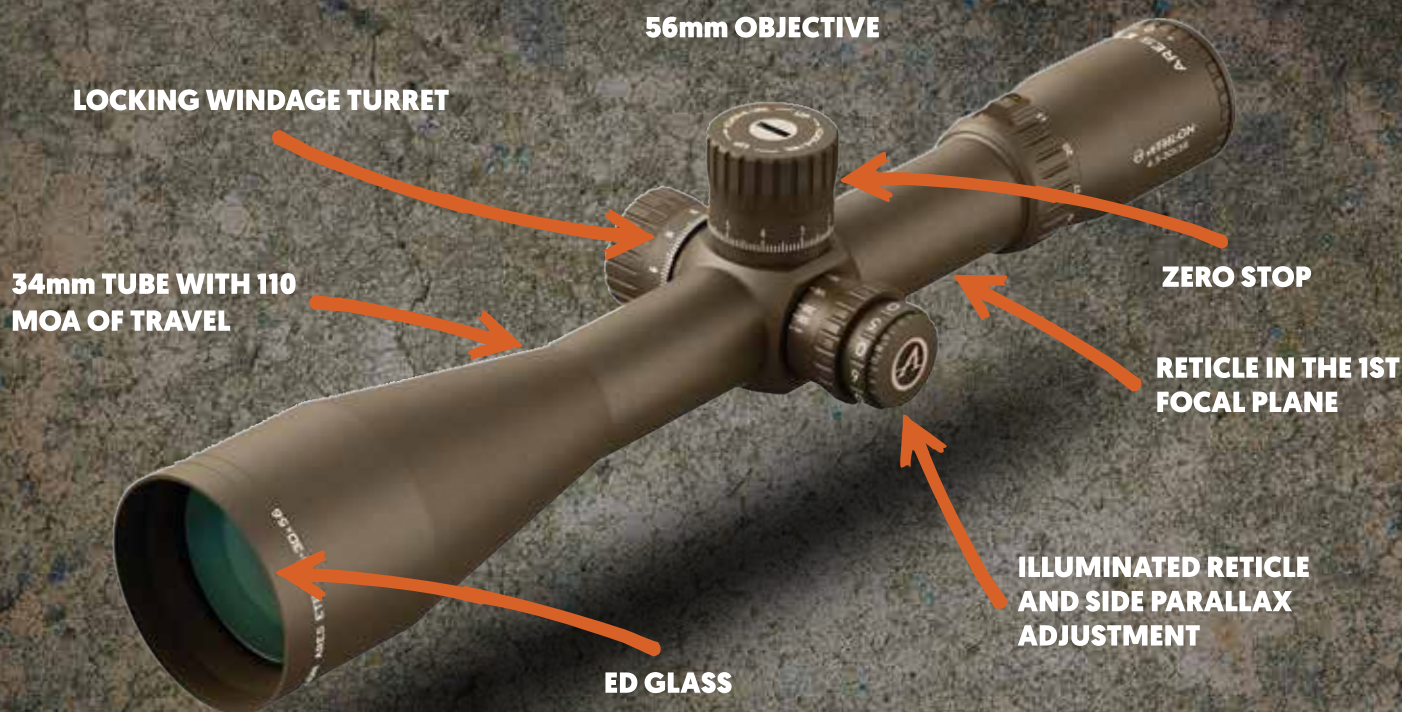
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Howa's M1500 H-S Precision SHB sporting rifle

and listening to what customers want. The Pro-Series stock fitted to the Howa M1500 SHB is of a sporter profile with a classical American outline, straight comb with a rounded fore-end. These stocks start with a CNC-machined aluminium block, fitted precisely to the dimensions of the Howa barrelled action. The aluminium bedding block is placed into a mould with both sides of the mould hand-laminated with Kevlar, fibreglass and carbon fibre. This material matrix gives the H-S Precision stocks their strength and durability. The mould is injected with a proprietary mixture of dense polyurethane foam which gives the stock its general shape and design characteristics. The stock is hand-finished to ensure a perfect fit, is of a sporter profile in the green/black finish (tan/black also available) and has a rubber recoil pad and blued QD-sling swivel studs as standard.

A neat feature of the Pro-Series stock is the incorporation of the ProCenter technology which allows the barrelled action to be precisely centred in the barrel channel using two small grub screws either side of the recoil lug. These screws can be accessed through the side of the stock and H-S Precision supply detailed instructions on how to adjust these screws when removing and reinstalling the riflestock. The Pro-Series stock mates perfectly with the Howa M1500 SHB barrelled action and lends itself brilliantly to the requirements of both rifle and user.

At the range

OSA supplied several popular hunting and target loads from Buffalo River and Hornady, which were supplemented with Federal Premium and Winchester alternatives. The rifle had a Sig Sauer BDX optic and, being brand new, warranted a thorough clean to remove any factory preservatives. Once the rifle was bore-sighted and adjusted to be 'on paper' at 100m the barrel was cleaned again (see Table 1).

Accuracy testing gave satisfactory results considering it was a new rifle. Between changes in ammunition the barrel was cleaned and I had a handful of ammunition left from each test batch and shot metal plates at 300m with careful hold-over, achieving hit after hit at the longer distance.

The rifle can be used as a hunting option if stalking on foot, especially if the terrain is not too physically taxing, but its forte is shooting from a stationary position, be it targets, varmints or game.

One of several test targets shot.

Table 1. Group accuracy testing – Howa M1500 H-S Precision SHB .308 Winchester at 100m

Ammunition	Best mm	Worst mm	Average* mm
Buffalo River OSA Sierra 135gr HP	24	35	28
Hornady Superformance 150gr SST	23	33	27
Hornady Match 168gr ELD Match	29	40	35
Win Varm Spec 130gr Woodleigh Pro SP	30	45	38
Federal Premium Speer 130gr HP	28	43	35

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



The full-length aluminum bedding block mates perfectly with the Howa M1500 barrelled action.

Overview

The H-S Precision Pro-Series riflestock is one of the best on the market and mating it with the semi-heavy barrel Howa M1500 platform makes for a serious mid- to long-range hunting/target rifle. The Howa M1500 H-S Precision SHB has a retail price of \$1699 and is available through the OSA dealer network. Visit osaaustralia.com.au. ●



Specifications

Manufacturer: Howa Manufacturing, Japan

Model: M1500 H-S Precision SHB

Action: Bolt-action, push feed repeater, 90-degree bolt-lift, matte blue finish

Barrel: Chrome moly steel, semi-heavy #four contour, 660mm in length. Test rifle one in 10" twist, 1/2"x28 threaded muzzle for accessories

Calibres: .308 Winchester (tested), 6.5 Creedmoor, .300 Winchester Magnum

Sight: Clean barrel, no sights. Receiver drilled and tapped for scope mounting

Trigger: Howa HACT two-stage adjustable

Magazine: Fixed with floorplate release. Capacity five rounds (.308 Winchester)

Stock: H-S Precision Pro-Series stock, composite construction with full-length aluminium bedding block, available in green/black or tan/black

Overall length: 1150mm

Weight: 3.67kg

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies

RRP: \$1699

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Hunting scopes simple is simply better

Thomas Tabor



It's natural for manufacturers to enhance and update the products they offer in an effort to improve performance and increase sales. For example, the vehicles we drive today frequently include cruise control, built-in GPS and Wi-Fi, cameras intended to prevent accidents and even DVD players in the back to keep kids entertained. We now have computers capable of more than ever before, remote controlled appliances and mobile phones that have, in some instances, made filing cabinets almost obsolete.

Equally so, over the past few decades the scopes we choose to mount on our rifles have also seen significant improvements. They generally come with clearer optics and better resolution, enhanced colour transmission, augmented light-gathering abilities, higher level of durability and are more dependable than ever. But while these traits are worthwhile, other changes which have taken place in recent years

could actually be hindering our chances of hunting success.

Each year it seems the size of scopes increases as does their weight. Main-tube diameters continue to grow as do the ocular and objective lenses. Manufacturers have in many cases reached new heights when it comes to magnification levels and have added all sorts of bells and whistles that may be eye-catching and interesting on the surface, but may not be the best choice when it comes to a hunting optic.

Variable versus fixed powered

I have a few hunting mates who strongly prefer fixed powered scopes over variable models. Some of that preference has its roots within the somewhat chequered past of the first multi-powered riflescopes, which sometimes failed to maintain the same impact point when the magnification was changed. But that problem has long since been resolved. Others shooters

may simply prefer the consistency of the sighting picture through a fixed powered scope.

But whatever the reason behind their preference, I believe the use of a fixed powered scope results in unnecessarily handicapping a hunter's abilities. The capability to quickly and easily turn the magnification level of a riflescope up or down to suit whatever situation you're facing comes with significant advantage.

It allows the shooter to effortlessly select a low setting when shots are expected to be close and natural light is at a premium, yet when facing the challenges of longer range the power can be quickly turned upward, giving an enhanced level of target identification and more accurate shot placement.

Variable power in moderation

I view 3-9x40mm scopes as my 'go-to', suitable for the widest range of hunting applications. When turned down to 3x they



The King

Meeting him was always an extraordinary experience for me, whether in the mating season when his imposing looks left no doubt in the minds of his rivals who they were dealing with, or in his regular winter habitat, where his mere presence was enough to force the other stags to respect him.



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Hunting scopes: simple is simply better



serve the hunter well at close quarters and setting to 9x usually provides an adequate degree of magnification for shots out to 400m and sometimes beyond.

Another option if you like a bit more magnification would be a 4-12x model. In recent years these have become popular with hunters and usually aren't too much bigger in size or heavier than the 3-9x models.

On the rare occasion I believe shots wouldn't exceed 100m I've used a lower power variable, usually in the range of 1-3/4-5x, but a variable in this magnification

range produces little advantage over that of a fixed 4x model.

The vast majority of the 3-9x and 4-12x variables come with a 1" main-tube diameter though there are a few 30mm models. While the 30mm tube scopes are typically promoted as being capable of drawing in more light, any benefit is offset by the disadvantages. Most 30mm scopes will carry a higher initial cost, mounting rings will frequently be harder to find and also more costly, and 30mm scopes will typically be heavier and bulkier than their 1" cousins. Staying small and mounting the scope as



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Large and exposed turrets can easily be knocked out of adjustment when hunting.



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Illuminated reticles use batteries that can go dead in the field.

close to the body of the rifle as possible helps limit potential scope damage in the field.

Reticle and turret choices

A shooter today has more reticle choices to select from than ever before, but when it comes to a hunting scope I use the 'keep it simple' theory. A standard cross-hair, or what is commonly referred to as a duplex reticle, serves me well. This model is similar to the standard cross-hair but the legs of the reticle are more pronounced and

heavier around the outside perimeter. It's believed this style allows the shooter to centre their target quicker.

Whichever reticle I choose I prefer them not be too thick or heavy or too fine. The heavier styles unnecessarily block out too much of the sighting picture and the finer reticles are too difficult to see when the background is dark or non-contrasting. I also prefer avoiding the concept of hash marks or stadia marks. These designs are intended to allow the shooter to more easily compensate for trajectory drop or wind

drift, but a much better way to accomplish that goal for me is to know the trajectory of the bullet and hold over the target to compensate.

Most experienced hunters understand roughly the dimensions and size of the game they're pursuing and using that knowledge allows them to accurately compensate for bullet-drop. If you find it hard to remember your bullet trajectory you could tape a small chart to the butt-stock of your rifle as a reference, showing the bullet drop in 100m increments.



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Hunting scopes: simple is simply better

Another method of trajectory drop compensation in vogue today is the idea of being able to dial-in your reticles to match the distance to the target. While on the surface this may seem the perfect answer when longer shots are called for, I don't buy into that theory. In more than half a century of shooting and adjusting thousands of reticles, I've seldom found they move in the precise manner intended.

Sometimes the mechanism sticks and other times I'm at a loss to explain why the bullet impact changes in the manner it does. And those problems aren't limited to just lower quality scopes as I've frequently found the same issues on scopes costing thousands of dollars. That's why I try to avoid this concept completely and instead know the trajectory of my bullet and simply hold over to compensate for bullet drop.

Easy-to-adjust reticle designs have also



A low-powered 1.75-5x variable like this one shows little benefit over a fixed 4x scope.

become common. In some cases all you need do is turn the turret dial, or raise it slightly then turn it to adjust the bullet impact point. But while these designs might be great for benchrest shooting, I feel they have no place in most hunting scenarios. Simply put, they're all too easy to become

changed unintentionally in the field. For that reason, having to physically remove a cap in order to gain access to the reticle adjustments makes better sense for a hunting scope.

Many scopes now come with illuminated reticles and while I have a few of these



Big scopes work well on the range and are best limited to use there.

Hunting scopes: simple is simply better

mounted on various hunting rifles, I seldom turn the illumination on. The intended advantage of these designs is to provide better contrast in order to place shots more precisely. While there's a certain amount of validity to that claim, you'll have to decide for yourself whether it's worth the usual higher costs of these scopes. In most cases that illumination is provided by CR-style batteries which aren't all that long-lasting and are fairly expensive.

Parallax adjustments

Most lower to moderately powered variable-magnification scopes come with the parallax adjustment permanently set at the factory. Those scopes designed for centrefire use are typically set to be parallax-free at 150m. However, there are some scopes that come with a manual parallax adjustment located either on the front bell of the scope or along the side of the main tube. If you choose one of these, a side-mounted adjustment is most often preferred for hunting as it allows the shooter to keep their eye on the target while adjusting the focus.

The way I see it

Not everyone will agree with the opinions expressed here. Ask five shooters their

views on any shooting-related topic and you'll likely receive at least six opinions, but the overall concept of 'keeping it simple' is not something hunters should quickly disregard. Things can happen

quickly in the outback and for that reason, if you can keep your fidgeting and decisions to a minimum, you stand a better chance of success. ●



Thomas' Leupold 3-9x did an excellent job while culling donkeys in the NT.

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The Engage series: Bushnell's new scopes for field and range

Senior Correspondent John Dunn



Bushnell describes the 3-9x40 Engage as a classic mid-range configuration.

The 4-16x44 Engage.

The Bushnell name has been part of the optics landscape since 1948, the year company founder Dave Bushnell first imported and sold Japanese-made binoculars to US outdoorsmen and women. The first Bushnell scopes were marketed in 1953 and since then the brand has become something of a fixture, offering good quality optics at prices affordable for budget-conscious hunters and shooters.

Since 1971 Bushnell has gone through a plethora of commercial sales and changes involving numerous other companies and brand tags. In 2015 they became part of Vista Outdoors, a spin-off from the ATK Group whose products are marketed in Australia by Nioa.

Late last year *Australian Shooter* received two scopes from the Bushnell Engage series for review - a 3-9x40 and 4-16x44. Though different in construction both have common features, some of which are fresh to the Bushnell collection.

All scopes are O-ring-sealed and nitrogen-purged for water and fogproof operation. Accordingly they will withstand complete immersion in 900mm of water for up to 30 minutes while remaining dry internally and interior glass surfaces will not fog when subjected to rapid changes in temperature or humidity.

All lenses have anti-reflective multi-coatings that deliver optimum light transmission, brightness and colour definition across the whole light spectrum. Both

scopes arrived with slip-on/slip-off flip-up covers fitted. New to the Bushnell camp is the EXO barrier which the makers regard as the best protective lens coating they've ever developed. This is the last layer applied during the coating process, molecularly bonding to and filling the pores in the glass to repel water, oil, fog, dust, debris and smudges as well as being scratch resistant. The technology has been patented and is used exclusively on Bushnell optics.

Also new is the Deploy MOA reticle. Designed to be useful across a wide array of shooting applications, the reticle is located in the second focal plane and remains the same size across the full magnification range of each scope. The cross-hairs are .018 MOA thick and while that's much finer than many other scopes, the view through the reticle remains relatively unobstructed making it easier for the shooter to pick up the target.

Both the vertical and horizontal bars of the reticle have hash marks spaced at 1 MOA intervals with a heavier bar every 5 MOA. On the vertical bar each small hash mark is 2 MOA wide and the heavier marks 4 MOA wide, the specific width designed to provide a reference point for hold over or under. The small marks on the horizontal bar have a height of 1.5 MOA while the heavier ones are 3 MOA to allow for windage hold off. None of the hash marks are calibre specific.

To make the most of the reticle the owner's manual specifies the scope must

be sighted in at 91.44m (100 yards) on the highest magnification available. Additionally, the distance to the target must be known so the use of an accurate rangefinder is recommended. To take advantage of the horizontal hash marks an estimate of wind velocity must also be made to ensure the right amount of hold off is deployed. In real terms that means the user still has to calculate which hash mark(s) to use to make a shot or shots connect. The reticle can help in that respect but cannot guarantee a result.

For those who would capitalise on the Deploy reticle and the other reticle types used by Bushnell a ballistics calculator app is available that's compatible with Apple and Android phones and iPads. All the user needs do is select the model of scope, magnification, the reticle it uses and relevant ammunition data and the app will deliver all the relevant information about hold over and off points for the scope and load.

The Engage 3-9x40

Apart from the Deploy MOA reticle and new-age coatings on the lenses, this scope is relatively old-fashioned in design and appearance. Bushnell refers to it as a classic mid-range configuration and that's pretty close to the mark (specifications are listed in the accompanying table).

The lenses are corrected for 20/20 vision and parallax is fixed at 91.44m (100 yards). The power ring is firm to grip and turn with the aid of a substantial thumb lug on

The Engage series: Bushnell's new scopes for field and range

one side to grant extra leverage and make changes easy, the ring going from 3-9x in half a turn. The fast focus ocular ring has a range of almost two full turns so finding the correct eye relief isn't a problem so long as some care is taken in positioning the scope in the first place.

The elevation and windage turrets have a nominal click value of 6.35mm at 91.44m, clicks both audible and tangible. A full turn of the dial gives 15 MOA of adjustment for a maximum range of 60 MOA and a bar inside the top of each turret offers thumb and finger grip to make setting changes.

A white dot at the back of each turret provides a reference for establishing a new zero once a rifle is sighted in. To reset the zero the two small screws that secure the bar to the turret are loosened half a turn with a small Phillips head jeweller's screwdriver. The adjustment scale ring can then be turned until the 0 lines up with the reference point and the screws retightened.

For testing I mounted the 3-9x40 on a Ruger 77/17 in .17WSM I was reviewing, a good combination as the 9x setting on the Engage allowed me to maximise the accuracy of the rifle's .17WSM cartridge.

At the range the settings were quick and straightforward to change and repeatable as required and in the field it meant I could easily take rabbits out to a bit over 100m with minimum fuss.

The Engage 4-16x44

This is probably more versatile than the 3-9x as it almost doubles the high-end magnification for those longer shots at extended distances. The 4-16x has a side



On both scopes the change from minimum to maximum magnification was done in a half turn of the power ring. The fast focus eyepiece has a range of almost two full turns.

mounted parallax adjustment turret on the left and also uses the Deploy MOA.

The windage and elevation turrets both have standard 6.35mm click adjustments and before they can be altered must be pulled away or up from the body of the scope to allow the dials to turn. Once the scope is sighted in, the turrets are pushed down again to secure the settings.

The dial on the windage turret is numbered left and right so there's no doubt about which way the reticle is moving when being adjusted. With the turret locked, zero points can then be re-established by removing the top plate on the turret and turning it anti-clockwise, no tools required. The graduated scale ring can then be pulled off and the zero mark realigned with the reference point at the back of each turret. The ring is then replaced in the fully down position and the top cap screwed back into place. Overall it's a simple process that can



The parallax turret on the 4-16x44 is adjustable from 9m to infinity.

be completed in less than a minute.

For testing I fitted the scope to my LA101 Crossover in .223, primarily interested in finding out how well the turrets responded to changes. There were no surprises, the scope responding very accurately to alterations. With the rifle sighted in at 100 yards I did a simple square test - 10 clicks up, across left, down and across right from the original settings. The last adjustment put the final two shots back into the centre of the original group. There was no hint of backlash and the changes were easy to hear and feel as they were made.

The side-mounted parallax adjustment was effortless to use and fine-tune at different ranges and to me is a much better proposition than an adjustable objective lens.

Overview

Both review scopes offer good quality optics at a reasonable price. Combined with the longevity and recognition the Bushnell name enjoys I expect that will make them attractive to many shooters and hunters.

Functionally and optically both were excellent. That said, I do have a minor gripe about the reticle. The thickness is fine and the hash marks useful. They don't clutter up the field of view like some others and that's obviously a plus, but the scope would be much more user-friendly if the main cross-hairs stood out a little more - in really bright sunlight they were washed out and hard to see. In the latter part of the day when ambient light levels were low they had a tendency to disappear against the background of the bush and making the cross-hairs darker would resolve both issues.

Overall I regard the Engage scopes as good value for money, both coming with Bushnell's Iron Clad Warranty. More at bushnell.com ●

Specifications

	3-9x40	4-16x44
Tube diameter	25.4mm	30mm
Reticle	Deploy	Deploy
Reticle type	MOA	MOA
Focal plane	2nd	2nd
Parallax adjustment	Fixed at 91.44m	Side adjustment 9m to infinity
Eye relief	101mm	91.4mm
Exit pupil	13.3mm (3x) - 4.4mm (9x)	11mm (4x) - 2.5mm (16x)
Length	306mm	356mm
Weight	340g	570g
Field of view at 91.44m	11.5m (3x) - 3.96m (9x)	8.5m (4x) - 2.1m (16x)
Click value	6.35mm	6.35mm
Elevation range	60 MOA	50 MOA
Windage range	60 MOA	50 MOA
Turret locking	No	Yes
Coatings	Fully multi-coated	Fully multi-coated
EXO barrier	Yes	Yes
Flip-up lens caps	Yes	Yes
Waterproof	Yes	Yes
Distributor	Nioa	Nioa
RRP	\$299	\$649

Nextorch P5G torch and hunting combo

Mark van den Boogaart

If, like me, you enjoy hunting and outdoor gear then you probably own a torch or two. I still have my Maglites, an Eveready Dolphin and even have one of the old Eveready lamp and handle spotlights that connect to a large rectangular battery. I also have a more modern collection of LED torches, the earliest of which is getting on in years, as am I.

So it was with some anticipation I opened the Nextorch P5G, a dedicated hunting set-up based on the P5G Dual-Light torch. The P stands for police, or more broadly law enforcement, and is one of the many torches available across the Nextorch range.

Out of the box the 6061-T6 aluminium torch measures 170mm with a main body diameter of 26mm and lens diameter of 40mm, and with deep laser-cut chequering in the main body it fits comfortably in the hand.

The battery, a single 2600mAh 3.7v rechargeable lithium-ion affair, is charged via a recessed micro USB input that you expose by gripping and sliding back a spring-loaded shroud that fits around the rear-mounted on/off switch. It's a neat little set-up which you rotate to lock open so as not to inadvertently damage the supplied charging plug.

Up front are two LEDs, one a white CREE XP-L V5, the other a green CREE XP-E2. The dual LED function allows you to switch between white and green lights by rotating the large, tapered barrel section directly behind the lens housing. The Nextorch P5G comes in various dual colour combinations including green, red, blue, warm white, infrared ray and ultraviolet ray, the white/green model supplied being the recommended hunting combination.

Performance-wise the white LED gives a maximum output of 800 lumens for 3½ hours at a stated range of 246m and a long run mode at 45 lumens for 27 hours. Alternately, the green LED will give maximum output of 200 lumens for five hours with a stated range of 224m and a long run mode of 27 lumens for 30 hours.

As this is a hunting set you also get a flat pressure switch which attaches via a rear



The P5G Hunting Set includes a universal quick release scope mount and pressure switch.

switch replacement unit and quick release-style scope and torch mount. The scope mount is suitable for 25.4-30mm scopes and will fit a torch with a diameter of 20-28mm, the P5G coming in at 25mm. In terms of durability the P5G has an IPX-4 water resistance.

If you're unfamiliar with the IPX-4 rating, here's what Google says: 'Water splashing against the enclosure from any direction shall have no harmful effect utilising either (A) an oscillating fixture or (B) a spray nozzle with no shield. Test A is conducted for 10 minutes, test B (without shield) for five minutes minimum.' So in layman's terms it's water resistant.

After familiarisation with both torch and components it was time to fit it to the rifle and I chose my CZ .22LR matched with an older Leupold VX-1 in 3-9x40mm. Fitting was simple though I did have to give some consideration to the pressure switch placement. To be honest, no matter where I positioned the switch I couldn't get it to suit my shooting style, so I removed the pressure switch and reinstalled the duo switch unit. Ultimately I was able to tune the set-up to suit me rather than the torch, which is what you want from your hunting gear.

Once mounted on the rifle the light was excellent, at maximum power the P5G

throwing a beam of light I was more than happy to shoot under. The white light was bright and easily gave enough illumination for the comfortable range of my .22LR. I was able to define rather than just see the objects in front of me and the natural spread of light also provided a bigger picture view.

But the real surprise was the green LED which afforded a very different view and perception compared to a traditional white LED and I believe the green output would be a real benefit to those hunting under lights on a regular basis.

All told the P5G set is a great option for someone looking for a torch that performs a variety of different outdoor tasks. It's design and build quality, combined with an 800 lumens output and well-appointed hunting set, makes it a worthy consideration for your next hunting torch. Imported by Beretta and carrying a five-year manufacturer's warranty, recommended retail price is \$193. ●

• Nextorch is a Chinese manufacturer of LED torches catering to the tactical, police, hunting, fishing and outdoor markets. Launched in 2005 and initially making LED torches for the Chinese military, it now supplies police and military units worldwide.

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Trevor Jenkin
SSAAGiB National Manager

Reminder to self

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A SSAA member advantage



Mauser M18

Pedigree at the right price

Daniel O'Dea



Neatly paired for review with a Zeiss Conquest V6 3-18x50 riflescope.



I am the first to admit I like a fancy rifle with fine timber, high lustre blueing, steel components and all the traditional features. German company Mauser, besides its well documented military heritage, is likewise famed for producing excellently engineered high-end commercial rifles along such time-honoured lines and generally with a price tag to match.

So I was very interested when I heard about Mauser's new value offering in the M18 rifle. As much as I like a fancy rifle, when it comes to going afield I have a little more austere view towards what I carry and am happy to swap the lavish timber and all-steel construction for modern polymer for stocking and fittings such as triggerguards, magazines, bolt shrouds etc - materials totally inert to inclement conditions while lightweight and durable. Of course, function and quality are things I don't want to compromise on and the M18 Mauser would appear to meet that brief perfectly.

The Mauser M18 has a no-nonsense dark grey polymer stock featuring a thick soft rubber kick-pad that's removable to access a void in the rear of stock which Mauser claims as a storage area. However on the sample gun this void was foam-filled. No loss there as who needs gear rattling around in their stock anyway? And foam filling removes that hollow sound when knocked or bumped, a feature more familiar to some cheaper plastic stocks.

The pistol grip is flared with a little palmswell on each side, and along with the fore-end both have soft grip inlays to give good grasp in all conditions.

The triggerguard and end cap are integrated into the stock as a single unit and there are the ubiquitous Quick Detach (QD) studs front and rear for sling fitment. All in all the stock has a good feel and the comb height is well suited to scope mounting. The basic

Daniel O'Dea lines up behind the Mauser M18 in .308 Winchester.



design is ambidextrous so lefties could run the gun quite easily, albeit with the right-handed bolt throw, of course.

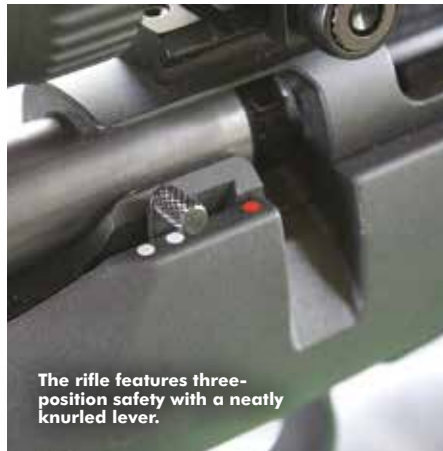
The action is of tubular design which uniquely extends to a flat section about halfway across the bridge, so it's not a completely open breech but not an enclosed port-style action either. This seems to be good middle ground as engineering-wise it would add stiffness to the action although it still allows ample room for single round loading or 'topping off' the mag from the open breech.

Departure from the traditional Mauser-style action (dual opposing locking lugs with claw extractor and control round feed) doesn't stop there with the M18 having a large rounded bolt body featuring a three-lugged bolt head offering 60-degree bolt lift and a very slick throw. The bolt head also features a generous extractor with two plunger-style ejectors. The bolt handle is steel and incorporates an oversized polymer bolt knob which rolls nicely in the palm. This combined with the bolt lift, which on the M18 was also noticeably light, adds to the smoothness in cycling for rapid manipulation when needed.

The bolt is finished with a polymer bolt shroud, recessed at the rear end exposing the back of the firing pin and incorporating a red collar, providing a visual and, in low light, tactile indicator as to whether the bolt is cocked or not.

To the right and just forward of the bolt shroud is a neatly knurled lever operating the three-position safety. Position one locks both bolt and trigger; position two allows for cycling the bolt with the trigger remaining locked and position three is the fire position. The safety is ideally located for thumb operation while still maintaining a full grip and is silent in activation between positions. Ergonomically I found the relationship between trigger, safety and bolt handle just about perfect.

The rifle as supplied was chambered in .308 Winchester but calibre selections



The rifle features three-position safety with a neatly knurled lever.



Relationship between bolt knob, trigger and safety seemed ergonomically perfect

include .243 Win, .270 Win, .30-06 Springfield and .300 Win Mag. Standard calibres all come with a 56cm barrel length which extends to 62cm for the .300 Win Mag, giving the rifle an overall length of 106cm and 112cm respectively. The barrel and all other metalwork carries a black burnished finish and bare rifle weight is 2.9kg for the Standard calibres and 3kg for the Magnum.

The M18 is marketed as featuring a 'Mauser Six Pack' having a total ammo capacity of five rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber, though I'm assuming you might lose a round or perhaps two with the fatter .300 Win Mag. The double stack five-round polymer magazine also has a polymer follower and stainless-steel magazine spring. The M18 has a full-length action and the magazine (as supplied) was correctly blocked at the rear for the medium action length .308 cartridge. This is commonplace with most manufacturers



The polymer bolt shroud features a recessed cocking indicator.

using standard full-length actions for multiple calibre offerings. I'd also note, perhaps as a giveaway to future options, the magazine was marked for .243 Win and .308 Win plus 7mm-08 and 6.5 Creedmoor as well. I hear 7mm Rem Mag may be in

Mauser M18 - pedigree at the right price

the offering shortly. It's flush fitting with the recessed magazine release located just forward of the magazine. The release is a push button affair and on activation the magazine just about jumps free, single-handed removal done by pinching the stock between thumb and middle finger and pushing the release button with your index finger, allowing the magazine to drop into your hand.

For testing the Australian distributor for Mauser, Outdoor Sporting Agencies, supplied the rifle with a Zeiss Conquest V6 3-18x50 riflescope in quick detachable rings on two-piece bases. This is an optic of the highest quality and completely in step with the German theme. Just on optics mounting, I understand the M18 receiver is compatible with Remington 700 bases which would open many options in this area.

The M18 barrel is cold hammer forged and Mauser guarantees accuracy to be sub-MOA. On the range I had little trouble producing results between 0.75 to 1.3 MOA, so no doubt that when paired with the right ammo the sub-MOA guarantee would be readily and consistently achievable.

The M18 comes with a 'dry standing, direct action trigger' according to Mauser marketing, and to be honest I couldn't find out exactly what that means other than it 'breaks dry', 'breaks like glass' and a few other trigger clichés. What I can say is the trigger is exceptional for a rifle in this price range, adjustable for between 2-4lb it broke cleanly and felt consistent and predictable.

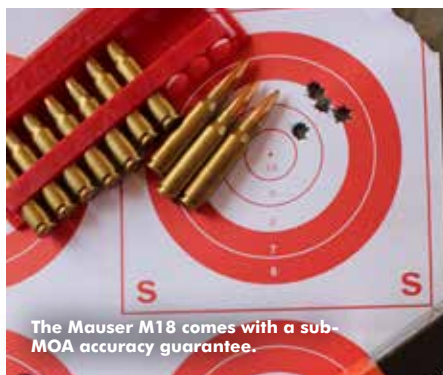
General balance and feel of the M18 was excellent with smooth lines and practical grip surfaces, coming to the shoulder well



The polymer stock has a straight comb for ambidextrous use.

and pointing freely. As an everyday hunting 'sporter weight' rifle the Mauser M18 impresses. It fits that matter-of-fact brief of providing all the basics you need in a solid hunting rifle combined with acclaimed German quality and all at a highly reasonable price.

Just released, at the time of writing an online search found the M18 available for as little as \$895, which is exceptional value for this rifle. More at osaaustralia.com.au ●



The Mauser M18 comes with a sub-MOA accuracy guarantee.

Specifications

Rifle: Mauser M18

Action: Bolt-action (three-lug bolt, 60-degree bolt lift)

Trigger: Dry standing, direct action 2-4lb adjustable

Calibre: Tested .308 Winchester, also available in .243 Win, .270 Win, 30-06 Spr, 300 Win Mag (at time of writing)

Capacity: Five rounds detachable box magazine (4x Magnum calibres)

Barrel: 560mm Standard, 112mm Magnum calibres

Sights: Open (accepts Rem 700 bases)

Barrel finish: Black burnished

Stock: Black polymer with 'soft grip inlay'

Weight: 2.9kg Standard, 3kg Magnum

Length: 1060mm Standard, 1120mm Magnum calibres

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WA members at home on the rolling range



S SAA WA's new mobile shooting range was officially opened by Federal Sports Minister Bridget McKenzie at last year's SSAA SHOT Expo in Perth. The 10m range features a bullet trap which catches 100 per cent of fired pellets and even though it can handle .22 rounds, it will only be used for air rifle and air pistol.

The range has a host of other features

including a side opening with monitor showing targets in the trap area, storage for air gun cylinders and a couple of marquee tents, full independent suspension with electric brakes and landcruiser wheels to make for a smooth towing experience.

As our picture shows, the range is a superb travelling advert for the SSAA and will be deployed at as many country field

days and expos as volunteer time permits. Interestingly, in another example of WA firearm laws anomalies, an individual permit is required each time the range is used, unlike other states, so long-term planning is essential.

Our inset photograph shows SSAA (WA) president Ron Bryant with Federal Sports Minister Bridget McKenzie. ●

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Deer numbers on the up and up

Anthony Tammett

"It was about 10pm near the Tyrolean village above Lake Jindabyne. We were coming back from a dinner in Jindabyne and suddenly, from the culvert on the side of the road, two large deer appeared, one a stag with imposing antlers. I wasn't sure what they were at first but my friend, a keen deer hunter, confirmed they were sambar."

These words are from a conversation I had with a neighbour at our rural holding in the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales about 40km from Jindabyne. Although sighting deer, especially fallow, at night on country roads is not particularly unusual in our area, the location mentioned is semi-suburban with few trees and little or no undergrowth. The appearance of this deer species, in what is almost a built-up area,

to anyone who has hunted sambar in the dense forests and bracken and blackberry-choked gullies of the Victorian High Country, is extraordinary.

Another of our neighbours, who at times has reason to cross our estate to reach another block he owns to our north, told me some time ago of seeing a sambar deer in a thickly forested gully that our access road runs by, only a few hundred metres from our house. While I had no reason to doubt the sighting, never having seen one on our land, I thought no more of it until I was told of the Jindabyne encounter.

Recently some friends from Sydney invited me to join them on a deer hunt for a day on a property near Dalgety, in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. This acreage,

south-east of Jindabyne, borders the Kosciuszko National Park which is a solidly forested environment that provides ideal bedding-down areas for fallow and sambar deer that emerge in the mornings and evenings to feed on the cleared paddocks of improved pasture. They assured me the deer numbers this property held would guarantee fallow deer, at least for venison, and could be taken on a one-day hunt.

On seeing the area the first thing that struck me, before spying any deer, is that all along its border with the national park a 2m deer fence had been built - a height normally used to hold deer in but in this case a futile attempt to keep them out. Given its inability to stop the deer the fence had been allowed to deteriorate and



An inquisitive buck and two does at the rear of Anthony Tammett's house.

New Zealand turned its growing deer numbers into a worthwhile export commodity and you wonder why we might not be able to do likewise.

maintenance abandoned, the landowner resorting to using shooters and hunters in an attempt to lessen deer numbers.

This particular landowner was making a sensible and sustainable use of his resource and, due to the severe drought plaguing south-east NSW being short of feed for his stock, was charging \$50 a day to hunters keen on making sure they'd be taking home venison.

Fallow are by far the most common species on this property with sambar present but, not surprisingly, seen less frequently. True to my friend's word I was able to take home venison from just one afternoon hunt. However, the one regrettable factor was the number of deer carcasses that culling simply to reduce

numbers had left lying around to serve as carrion for foxes and crows.

Given the drought, the impossible situation graziers face in feeding their herds and the impact on their livelihood, you can hardly blame them. It's just a pity to see such a valuable food source go to waste. New Zealand turned its growing deer numbers into a worthwhile export commodity and you wonder why we might not be able to do likewise.

On another friend's property east of the Snowy Mountains on the tablelands looking down towards Bega, fallow deer are also on the rise. This zone borders a state forest which again provides shelter for the fallow deer which emerge in the evenings and early mornings to feed in the clearings. I've

taken many deer there in the past few years and further culling to reduce numbers by forestry staff leads to numerous carcasses left for the 'bush sanitary clean-up squads' of crows, foxes and wild dogs. Although wild pigs are reportedly a problem in the adjacent state forest I've seen deer, often in small groups, on almost all my several dozen visits but have only twice spotted pigs.

Some months ago three curious fallow deer brazenly approached our house fence and stared inquisitively inside before turning to feast on the tender spring leaves of the apple trees in our orchard. And sightings of fallow deer are becoming increasingly frequent on adjacent properties where once they were rare.



The property adjacent
Kosciuszko National
Park - ideal deer country.

Deer numbers on the up and up

I was told by another neighbour on a property near Ingebyra, south of Jindabyne, where several dozen deer were culled in one day alone. The needless waste of this food resource is staggering in a world where the by-product of necessary culling could be turned into a valuable export, especially given the essential infrastructure for meat export is already well established in Australia.

Although numbers indisputably must be kept under control, some people are calling for the indiscriminate eradication of wild deer for simply being exotic, but it should be pointed out that *all* plants and animals that now support the population of Australia and our huge food exports are, or were once, 'exotic'.

Moreover, a glance at a map of south-eastern Australia will show that Kosciuszko National Park in NSW, Alpine National Park in Victoria, Namadgi National Park in the ACT and associated state forests form an immense, practically adjoining wilderness area stretching for hundreds of kilometres that's larger than some European countries.

These enormous reserves (Kosciuszko alone covers 6900sq.km) act as a preservation area and sanctuary for animals, including deer. And given the heavily forested nature of most of this country, in many cases with very limited access roads, it makes the whole idea of eradication absurd.

To underline the abundant anecdotal evidence of the increasing deer population, the closing of the deer season in NSW, usually the end of October, was lifted and deer can now be hunted year-round. The NSW Department of Primary Industries in an email dated November 16, 2018, advised of the amendment of some rules for the whole state for three years as follows:

Landholders and managers struggling with persistent drought conditions and abundant wild deer herds are now able to apply more effective control methods and access licensed, reputable assistance from volunteer hunters.

No seasonal restrictions - hunt all deer species all-year round.

Attract deer using baits and lures.

Hunt at night (private land only).

Hunt from vehicle (private land only).

Use spotlight and other electronic devices (private land only).

Hunting regulations around the use of dogs when hunting deer remain in force to ensure animal welfare standards are maintained.

While hunting in the summer months brings problems such as extreme temperatures, meat preservation and fire danger - not to mention the ever-present threat of snakes - I know some hunters will gladly make use of it to stock their freezers with venison and, at the same time, hopefully be of some help to struggling graziers.

The outlook for deer herds, especially where vast sanctuaries such as national parks along the Great Dividing Range are available for refuge is promising, and providing numbers are kept at tolerable levels can not only increase opportunities for hunters but hopefully provide a much-needed cash crop for struggling, drought-stricken farmers. ●

Rubbings are a positive sign a buck is nearby - note the pig rootings.



Hunting buddy Mauro with a young fallow doe being taken to camp for butchering.



A fallow buck taken just before dusk in the Snowy Mountains with a Sako Finnlite in .270 Win.

Gaining the edge in the woods

Damien Edwards



The Savage Model 1899 permits the use of spitzer projectiles along with the quick follow-up shot ability of the lever action.

Hunting in Australia could never be described as a 'constant', meaning there are potentially numerous variables which can exist within a single hunt. A classic example is rabbit hunting. Throughout the course of a few hours any number of shots may be fired and rabbits taken. You may be shooting across a freshly ploughed open field where a .223 would make sense, then 30 minutes later be at short range where rabbits dart between spinifex tussocks. This is the realm of the shotgun.

If hunting in young sorghum crops, a humble .22 long rifle or .22 magnum would be better as ranges are not too long and rabbits will attempt to squat, concealing themselves among the young stalks and leaves, and we're all aware it's not feasible to take three or four firearms on a single hunt in order to cover every situation.

Most of us, myself included, carry a single tool for a single task at hand. In the instance of hare or rabbit shooting I opt for my Brno model ZKW 465 in .22 Hornet, loaded with a semi-jacketed soft-nose hollow-point, the same projectile found on

the Winchester Super X magnum rimfire cartridge. Loaded to 2850fps, it has power aplenty to be capable of stretching out over oat paddocks to tag an unsuspecting hare caught and frozen in the spotlight. Closer in it's still good for them, assuming head shots.

A good variable scope such as the Leupold VX1 or Ultra-Light is fine for a rig like this but what if you're shooting at larger game? I've hunted lots of chital, red and fallow deer as well as goats in lightly wooded and hilly country in Queensland. Fortunately, I tend to hunt the same areas and know what sort of terrain to expect but there was a time when I didn't know what to expect and had to learn.

My intent here is to give pointers on how to select an appropriate firearm for the job at hand and how to identify and tune your rig accordingly. Naturally, the variables could be infinite and far too many exist to try and cover all possibilities.

Arguments pertaining to matching calibres to game would have to be one of the longest ongoing debates among the hunting fraternity. I've overheard countless



The result of a successful hunt and sensible cartridge and projectile selection - meat for the freezer.

arguments and read just as many articles on the subject and must say I rarely agree. My own opinion on what constitutes a fine woods rifle is drawn from 25 years of hunting.

Most of my woods hunting takes place in semi-open lightly wooded country with a few exposed patches and hills. To prepare for areas like this, buy a good quality mid-range variable scope, something in the order of a 2-7x33, 2.5-8x36 or the ever popular 3-9x40. In terrain like this a range of 150-200m is a long shot and overly powerful magnum cartridges offer no real advantage in terms of striking energy and ballistics. The standard non-magnum cartridge will have remaining impetus to despatch deer like the red and can usually be chambered in a lighter rifle to boot.

Lighter cartridges are easier to shoot accurately, so we can dismiss one variable: the alleged requirement and perceived value of the heavy magnum cartridge as a short- and medium-range load. They were designed to be shot at big game animals at uncertain long range. If hunting buffaloes on the vast expanses of wetland to be found

Gaining the edge in the woods

in Carpentaria, you'll have no argument from me if you opt for the .338 Winchester magnum.

But in the woods on deer-sized game, heavy calibre, hard-hitting and equally hard-kicking magnum calibres are simply not necessary. The perceived value of these cartridges for use on sambar and red deer is normally found only in the mind of the hunter, who has either never thought to use something more appropriate or is working too hard at being controversial.

Lighter non-magnum cartridges offer several benefits. The cost of ammunition and reloading components is generally lower and ammunition and unprimed cases are easier to locate, equating to more shooting before your dollar wears out. Lighter cartridges can be made in correspondingly lighter rifles. Sporting rifles chambered for cartridges in the order of the .243 Winchester, 6.5x55mm Mauser or .260 Remington will generally be lighter than the same model chambered for the .338 Winchester, .375 Holland & Holland or .416 Weatherby.

This translates into an easier to carry rifle that won't weigh you down. Stainless steel metalwork and composite stocks can add both durability and a weight saving. Sturm Ruger offers a sort of semi-skeletonised injection-moulded stock to save on weight, others have hollowed-out composite stocks. A heavy magnum cartridge chambered in a light rifle like the Remington model 7, Sturm



Damien Edwards is a fan of the three-position safety, easy tool-free stripping and aggressive claw extractor of the Winchester Model 70.

Ruger Ultra light or Winchester model 70 Featherweight is apt to kick the shooter enough sighting it in to develop a flinch. If you can't shoot accurately at the range, you stand little chance in the field.

To counteract the ferocity of the magnum cartridge, devices such as muzzle brakes and fancy thick recoil pads with internal springs are often used as a means of taming recoil. A good kick pad, or even better a stock with a large butt area will help distribute recoil more evenly. Certainly, muzzle brakes and heavy recoil pads will add more weight to an already heavy rifle and I find they neither contribute to nor take away from shooting ability.

If a thick recoil pad is installed on a shotgun, the extra weight is right where it will upset balance the most. It will not only retard swing but can take partial blame for high shots which miss or only wound game with the outer fringe of the pattern. Pair this with a heavy field load, which contributes to muzzle jump anyway, and you could be struggling.

Rifle shooting is generally not as instinctive as shotgunning being a more deliberate form of hunting where you steady yourself, line up your cross-hairs on a vital spot and squeeze off your shot. Unless you're picking off rabbits or hares with your rimfire as they flush metres from your feet. But we're talking about woods hunting with light standard calibre centrefire rifles so another prerequisite can be struck off our list - the heavy rifle.

So we've chosen a light rifle in standard non-magnum cartridge but which calibre? There's no such thing as a calibre for every season and every reason. For woods hunting of game like goat and deer, most short action calibres will suffice. The .308 Winchester and its derivative offspring, the .243 Winchester, .260 Remington and 7mm-08 Remington will do well, but I consider the .308 and 7mm-08 better

choices. The .358 Winchester, the .308 merely necked up to accept .35 calibre bullets is an excellent medium-range heavy game cartridge, but .35 calibre cartridges have never been popular.

The new .338 Federal, the latest .308 wildcat to go legitimate, looks like an awesome cartridge. A short action number with power aplenty for red and sambar, it's currently chambered in the Tikka T3 Lite and Sturm Ruger, Sako and Kimber have been quick to pick it up. I say short action cartridges are the way to go, but if a little more authority is required for large deer you'll find the time-proven .30-06 Springfield hard to beat.

In keeping with our light, short action theme, cartridges like the 7mm and .300WSM will be adequate for the biggest sambar stag. For goat or pig hunting in woods or hills a premium bullet is not required. A .243 Winchester, .243 WSSM, .257 WSSM or .260 Remington shooting soft-point bullets like the Winchester Power Point, Remington Core-Lokt or Speer Hot-Cor will do fine. If hunting deer out to a 150-200m maximum woods range, the 7mm-08, .308, 7x57mm Mauser will suffice, as will the .270 Winchester. However, if you're wary of their remaining energy out to 250m in the woods, a tougher bullet which will hold together and drive in deeply will give you more confidence and the Winchester Fail Safe and Barnes X are two of the toughest ever made.

So there we have it, a brief run-down on arguments for the woods rifle - a good quality mid-range variable scope, relatively light rifle with an efficient compact cartridge firing a well constructed projectile at short to medium ranges. These are in no way hard and fast rules, rather an overview of which combinations will do well, and I hope that by following some of my suggestions your chances of success in the woods just went up a few points. ●



Hawke Optics' Endurance 30 Wide Angle riflescopes

Con Kapralos



The acceptance of Hawke Optics into the Australian marketplace has been a success story for Guy Bedington at The Scope Store in Toowoomba, Queensland. Since taking up the Hawke Optics agency in 2015, the range has continued to grow and many hunters, shooters and outdoors enthusiasts are discovering the great array of products available.

The need to keep up to date with advances in materials science is relevant in giving the end user the best, and last year Hawke Optics refined its Endurance 30 brand with the Wide Angle lenses being one of several major innovations. *Australian Shooter* requested samples of the new Endurance 30 Wide Angle (WA) riflescopes and The Scope Store obliged, sending the 2.5-10x50 (model 16321) and 3-12x56 (model 16330). Both arrived in their customary white Hawke Optics cartons with full specifications on the side flap.

Features

The Endurance 30 Wide Angle series encompasses 13 types, all with a four-times magnification facility built around a 30mm one-piece main-tube, with either adjustable side focus or fixed 91m (100-yard) parallax. Magnification ranges offered are 1-4x24, 1.5-6x44, 2.5-10x50 and 3-12x56 (in

four different reticles) in the fixed parallax models whereas the side-focus versions take in the 4-16x50 and 6-24x50 (in three different reticles). The features of the new Endurance 30 Wide Angle collection are as follows:

- Ultra Wide Angle field of view - creates an extremely large field of view which is key to success for rapid target acquisition and ease of use.
- Four-inch eye relief with a bigger 'eye-box' - generous eye relief at all magnifications for faster targeting in any position and situation. A larger ocular lens allows for wide angle viewing and a bigger 'eye-box' while keeping a fine border around the riflescope optics and surrounding environment.
- Excellent clarity with high-grade, low-dispersion Crown glass lenses - these offer a quality optical glass used in precision lenses and exhibits low dispersion properties that minimise chromatic aberration or 'colour fringing'. Crown glass is also lead-free, resulting in lighter weight optical systems. Light transmission, improved brightness, excellent image clarity and contrast are hallmarks of Crown glass lenses.
- Reduced field curvature - decrease of effect of curvature and blurriness seen at the edges of the field of view.
- Parallax adjustment and distortion - free high-grade Crown glass lenses remove radical distortion, creating a flatter field of view. Pin-cushion and barrel distortion is removed to ensure optimal image quality.
- Multi-coated lenses - 18-layer multi-coated lenses with ion-assisted coatings for higher light transmission and the greatest level of abrasion ever offered in Hawke Optics' stable.
- Lightweight, aircraft-grade aluminium - use of 6061-T6 aluminium bar-stock with a hard treatment for superior strength. Corrosion resistant even if surfaces are scratched.
- High-level brightness reticle illumination - a new custom-designed illumination LED on all Endurance 30 models. The intense brightness ensures the reticle can be seen in bright daylight and the lower settings prevent low-light blindness from over-powered illumination.
- Waterproof, fog-proof and shockproof - all scopes are nitrogen purged to ensure they remain fog-proof, regardless of conditions.

Endurance 30 2.5-10x50 WA with LRC reticle

The Endurance 30 with 2.5-10x50 specification is a superb all-round hunting riflescope. It has all the features common to the new

Hawke Optics' Endurance 30 Wide Angle riflescopes

range but the model 16321 features the glass-etched LRC illuminated reticle as well as the ¼ MOA exposed and lockable turrets on both windage and elevation.

The scope is well proportioned, measuring 334mm and weighing a modest 637g with a lovely matte black finish that's hard wearing and scratch resistant. The turrets, as mentioned, are of the exposed and lockable design and are superb in their function. With the cap pressed downwards the turret is locked and can't be dialled, while lifting the turret cap upwards the turrets can be dialled and, in this instance, 110 MOA total adjustment for windage and elevation at 1 click equalling ¼ MOA (at 100m) was appreciated.

The turrets are easily reset to zero by loosening the stainless screw on the turret cap, easing the cap then lining up the index mark to the '0' level. No zero stop is provided but with the turret caps being lockable a zero stop isn't required.

The other main feature of this model is the illuminated LRC reticle. This scope, with its glass-etched reticle being in the second focal plane, means the reticle subtensions stays the same size despite changes in the magnification range. The LRC reticle is brilliant in that it has an optimised magnification setting for a host of popular centrefire calibres and bullet weights for achieving a 200-yard zero and 100-yard hold-over intervals out to 500 yards.

The theory behind the LRC reticle takes some explaining but it's easy to understand and employ in a hunting scenario. Just pick your hunting calibre, use the optimised magnification setting for the load and sight-in for a 200-yard zero. You can then use the



The 3-12x56 (top) and 2.5-10x50 - both superbly finished.



Ocular housings on the Endurance 30 WA range.

Low-profile, capped turrets on the Endurance 30 3-12x56 WA.



hold-over points on the reticle out to 500 yards but specific to the optimised magnification setting. Got that? Easy!

The six levels of illumination for the LRC reticle are controlled using the rheostat dial adjacent to the turrets and have an 'off' setting between each illumination step. The 2.5-10x50 WA retails for around \$900.

Endurance 30 3-12x56 WA with LR Dot reticle

The model 16330 is right at home for the shooter looking to engage objects at long range, be it targets or game or alternatively as a general purpose hunting riflescope which can be used at night under the lamp. It shares all the features found in the

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Hawke Optics' Endurance 30 Wide Angle riflescopes



Exposed and lockable turrets on the Endurance 30 2.5-10x50 WA.

Endurance 30 WA catalogue but sports the low-profile, 'no-sag' capped turrets as well as the simple but effective LR Dot reticle. It measures 347mm and weighs in at 685g with the same matte black finish found throughout the Endurance 30 WA assortment. The windage and elevation turrets as mentioned are of the low-profile, capped variety and removing the aluminium caps exposes the dials.

Both dials are marked '1 click = ¼ MOA' at 100m and total adjustment for both dials is 110 MOA. Dial clicks are positive and audible. The glass-etched reticle in the second focal plane is illuminated with six individual intensities operated with the rheostat dial adjacent to the turrets, with an 'off' setting between each level. The LR Dot reticle is simple with an illuminated central dot and two holdover indicators below the dot before the vertical lower post.

Users can access the Hawke X-Act reticle information on their website or download the app on their smartphone and gain the most

out of the reticle for their chosen calibre and shooting application. The Endurance 30 3-12x56 WA retails for around \$935.

At the range

Both Endurance 30 WA scopes were tested and the 3-12x56 fitted to a Howa M1500 sporter in .243 Winchester, the 2.5-10x50 to a Howa M1500 sporter in .30-06 Springfield. Both performed superbly with crystal clear images out to 300m, the Wide Angle lenses making use much more satisfying. Colour and contrast through the 18-layer multi-coated lenses was excellent and the 4" eye relief and bigger 'eye-box' was welcome, especially through the .30-06 and its stout recoil.

The 2.5-10x50 model was taken through a tracking test at 100m to validate that windage and elevation adjustments were

true and correct. Starting at the top left corner and firing two shots, the point-of-impact was moved around the target and culminated at the original 'start-point', where the final two shots neatly imprinted next to the first two. Such excellent tracking is testament to the design and quality engineered into the Endurance 30 WA folio.

I liked the 2.5-10x50 with its exposed and lockable turrets and LRC reticle so much it will stay on my Howa M1500 in .30-06 for good. Having already three older Endurance scopes on my hunting rifles, the Endurance 30 WA takes things to another level. The Endurance Wide Angle range is one to consider if your favourite rifle needs a high-performing scope without the astronomical price tag. For more visit thescopestore.com.au ●

Specifications

Hawke Endurance WA	2.5-10x50	3-12x56
Model number	16321	16330
Magnification	2.5x-10x	3x-12x
Main tube diameter	30mm	30mm
Objective diameter	57mm	64mm
Objective lens diameter	50mm	56mm
Ocular diameter	46mm	46mm
Eye relief	102mm	102mm
Field of view (at 100m)	16.6-4.2	13.8-3.5
Parallax	Fixed: 91m	
Turrets	110 MOA - ¼ MOA exposed and locking turrets	110 MOA - ¼ MOA low-profile 'no-sag' capped turrets
Reticle	Second focal plane - LRC	Second focal plane - LR Dot
Illumination	Six levels with 'off' setting between each	
Weight	637g	685g
Length	334mm	347mm
Accessories supplied	4" sunshade, lens covers, CR2032 battery, lens cloth	
RRP	Around \$900	Around \$935

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Handgun testing

a question of preference

John Moore



Three different ways sandbags can be used in testing.



How do you test your handguns and ammo? That's not a rhetorical question, I'm interested in knowing how those of you who load and test your own handgun ammo go about it. I have a lifetime's experience in setting up and testing rifles and ammo loaded for them, so I think I know how to approach this.

But while I've shot handguns off and on for a long time, such as a S&W K38 and Ruger Mark II self-loader in 22LR, I've never really set out to test them. This changed a few years ago when I started to shoot Metallic Silhouette and a fine revolver in .357 Magnum found a home in our gun safe. I needed to load ammo with the accuracy and energy to topple the targets, especially the rams.

Recently my shooting pal and I decided to add a 44-calibre revolver to our safes as well. At the time there was only one bullet mould available, an RCBS 245gr PB SWC, so I bought this and also experimented with paper patched bullets while I waited for several 44-calibre moulds to arrive from the US. However, my mate doesn't make his bullets, he buys them.

Some time ago he bought a box of 158gr Speer SWC for his .357 and recently some Hawkesbury River Bullet Co 240gr SWC

for his new 44. Both are hard cast with Speer around 12 Brinell Hardness Number (BHN) and HRBC about 15 BHN and both appear to be coated with a hi-tech type of baked-on dry lube, something I've not seen before. I've been able to trial with these and found their accuracy to be excellent but how should I hold or rest the handgun when testing? I tried to find some references as to how to do this without any luck and asking around I received a number of responses.

But before I look at those let's go back to basics. We remember Newton's third law of motion 'for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction'. Recoiling starts when the bullet begins to move down the barrel, not when it exits the muzzle. Given the short length of handgun barrels we know a slight movement of the barrel sends bullets wide of the target. Perhaps this was why, when I was a lad, I was told handgun shooters can shoot rifles but it's not always the reverse. And I expect that handguns, with less mass, tend to lift under recoil more quickly than rifles.

The longer the bullet takes to exit the barrel, the more barrel lift it will experience. At short target ranges I find lower velocity loads often print higher than higher velocity loads which exit the barrel quicker.

Those who reload for double rifles know this. With these rifles it's not enough to have a load that groups well from each barrel - both groups need to have the same point of impact.

What do you do with an over-and-under double rifle where the top group prints above the bottom group? If you can safely do so, increase the velocity a little and the groups will draw together. This is called regulating and hand-made double rifles of yesteryear often had the load for which they were built and with which they would regulate stamped on them.

Anyway, back to the advice I received. One response was from Veral Smith, the master bullet mould maker from LBT, Idaho. He said anchor the butt and just touch the barrel on something sufficient to stabilise it - don't rest it, just stabilise it. Another suggestion was from my local gunsmith who uses a strong double-handed grip with his forearms and wrists well supported.

I thought I'd try their methods and added two more supporting the butt on one sandbag and the barrel on another, and supporting the handgun on a single sandbag as is sometimes shown in magazine articles. I'm aware of the Ransom Rest, a mechanical rest that seems to be

the favoured test bed for serious analysis, but haven't seen one in the flesh. I have more time now than years ago but am still pretty busy, so I need something that's fast to set up and simple to use. I decided to experiment.

To do this I'd need a very accurate low velocity load, accurate so I could easily detect any differences between the methods tested, and low velocity as this was going to involve shooting quite a few groups and my wrists don't like lots of recoil.

The throats in the cylinder and grooves of the 357's barrel all measure .358. With the 44 the throats are .430 and grooves .429 and I shoot .358 and .429 diameter bullets. Barrel lengths for the 357 and 44 are 9" and 7½" respectively, both have right-hand twists, the 357 at 1 in 14" and the 44 at 1 in 20". I test at 50 yards and find I can see the holes easily through binoculars.

The loads I used are around 1000fps for the 357 and 800fps for the 44 and I found both can shoot into 1.5-2" which I regard as excellent accuracy. I assembled these loads using small quantities of fast-burning shotgun powders, in both cases some old Nobel powders I have on the shelf. I used Nobel 64 in the 357 (seems to be similar to AP70) and Nobel 78 in the 44 (similar to AP30).

I don't crimp these light loads and because I sometimes load higher pressure loads and both revolvers have a very heavy hammer fall that punctures some pistol primers, I use rifle primers exclusively in these handguns.

The tests were shot with the revolvers fitted with red dot sights (I've had cataract operations and can't use conventional iron sights on rifles or handguns any more). These sights aren't cheap but I find them

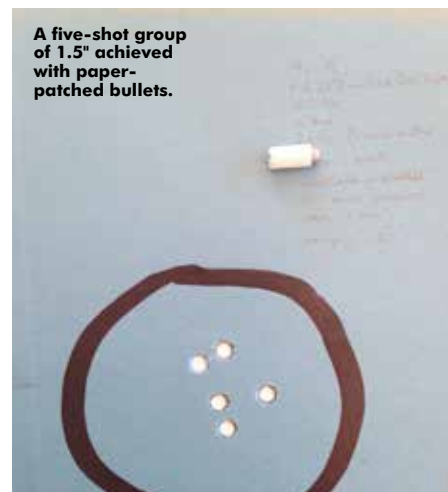
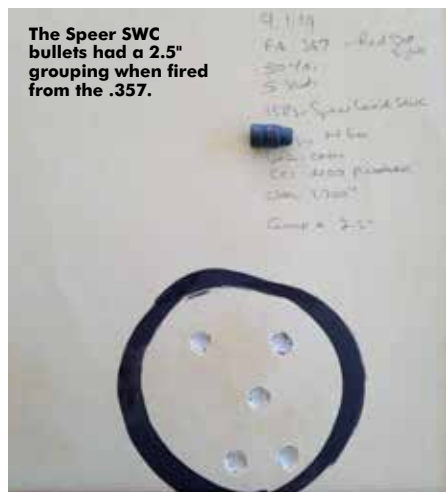
first rate. Some time ago I found a sturdy square table and an old office chair at the tip shop, so these were donated to our local range. I used these along with two sandbags, some pieces of wood for packers and a portion of cloth to protect the sandbags from the gunk that's blown out of the revolvers. When I test ammo I fire a few shots to start with to dirty the barrel and help me relax. Then I start the testing with results as follows.

Method 1: Veral's method - five shots at 50 yards into 1.5" to 2", often less. Method 2: My local gunsmith's method - groups of around 2". This is essentially the same as Method 1 except I'm less stable when I shoot this way. Method 3: Butt and barrel both well supported - groups approaching 3", stringing up to the left. Method 4: A single sandbag supporting the revolver, placed just in front of the trigger guard - groups around 3".

So if you're like me, looking to test your handgun and its ammo and aren't sure how to do it, try these variations and see what

you think. I'm now confident with what I'm using, Method 1, involving a strong double-handed grip but with the bottom of the butt firmly anchored on a sandbag and the barrel just stabilised by a piece of cloth on another sandbag. This suits me and how I shoot and delivers reliable results. This method is cheap, simple and quick to set up.

All I need to take to the range with me are the two sandbags, some pieces of wood and a cut of old cloth. When I set up to shoot I position the front sandbag so when I let the barrel rest on it, the sights settle a couple of feet below the target. Then I gently raise the barrel so it retains just a touch of stability, not support, so it doesn't wobble too much and fire. Doing this helps me carry out the same thing each shot. Also, the point of impact I find when testing this way seems to be the same as when I shoot offhand at the M/S targets. In the photos, for clarity, I've left out the cloth I use to keep the sandbags clean. I'm keen to hear if readers have any thoughts on the matter. ●



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Top shot Joel gets in on the Action

A healthy turnout battled gusty conditions during SSAA Queensland's 2018 Lever Action state championships at the Mackay range near Eton. The competitors enjoyed first class facilities, the local branch having made good use of recent grants, with shooters from WA and NSW joining locals and those from Townsville through to Brisbane.

First match was Classic Calibre in which only open sights combined with centre-fire cartridges introduced before 1939 are permitted, eight targets shot from 25m to 100m in a variety of positions with times varying from five minutes to 15 seconds for rapid fire.

Joel Evans from WA mastered the conditions to emerge victorious ahead of Jim Buckley (NSW) and Bob Luther (Townsville).

In the Open category a countback was needed to separate the top three, Evans again clinching top spot ahead of Don Chesworth and Buckley, those three also filling the podium places in the Two Gun competition, Evans, Buckley and Chesworth taking the honours in that order.

Top juniors over the weekend were Alexis Calder (O-15) and Jenipher Wright (U-15), with the veteran awards going to Buckley, Chesworth and Kerry Guinea. ●



Joel Evans, right, receives the Open trophy from Mackay branch president Tony Watson.



U-15 champion Jenipher Wright receives her prize from Tony Watson.

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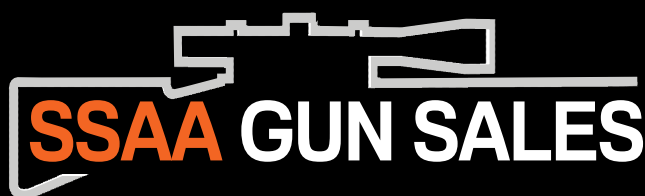
2019

May 4-5		Australian Knifemakers Guild/Melbourne Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
May 18-19	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
May 25-26	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	330+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles & more	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
June 15-16	Gympie Showgrounds, Gympie	Gympie Arms and Collectables Fair	Gordon McRae 0428 865 205
July 6-7	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
July 13-14	Ballarat Sports & Events Centre, Wendouree, Ballarat	Eureka Arms and Militaria Fair	Nick Smith 03 5342 4433 or ballaratarms.com.au
July 20-21	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria etc	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
August 3-4		Sydney Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
August 10-11	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
September 7-8	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	330+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles & more	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 14-15	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	info@waarmsandarmour.com.au
September 21-22	Maitland Federation Centre, Maitland	Hunter Valley Arms Fair	huntervalleyarmsfair.com.au
October 5-6	Westgate Indoor Sports and Leisure Centre, Altona North	Melbourne Arms and Militaria Fair	Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243
October 7		NSW South Coast Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
October 19-20	Melbourne Showgrounds	SSAA Shot Expo	ssaashotexpo.org.au
October 26	Illawarra Sports Stadium, Berkeley	Illawarra Outdoor & Adventure Expo	Chris Sainsbury 0448 129 932 or ssaashotexpo@gmail.com
November 3-4		Adelaide Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
November 9-10	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events\$razorbckguns.com
December 2		Canberra Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com

2020

September 12-13	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	info@waarmsandarmour.com.au
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This application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I undertake to do all in my power to preserve the good image of the sport and the Association. I understand that members breaking the Code of Conduct may be subject to suspension or expulsion. The Code can be found at ssaa.org.au/code

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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

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

First name

Middle name

Last name

Residential address

Town/suburb

State Postcode

Postal address (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

Town/suburb

State Postcode

Phone (Home) (Work)

(Mobile) (Fax)

Email

Date of birth Male ☐ Female ☐

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

Add four issues of the Hunter magazine per year

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

**ADD the
HUNTER**
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Complete this section ONLY if you wish to use your membership of the SSAA to support your Genuine Reason for having a firearms licence. Register your SSAA activities by marking one or more of the following boxes:

- ☐ TARGET SHOOTING
- ☐ HUNTING (club membership)
- ☐ COLLECTING
- ☐ HUNTING OTHER (R licence, property owner/permission)

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

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Card number

Expiry date Signature.....

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

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

**Sign up online -
it's quick and easy!**
ssaa.org.au



Miranda Barrett

Communications Officer Sam Talbot



Miranda Barrett has only been in Australia for five years but in that time has learned the English language, made friends, discovered the joy of shooting and become a proud member of the SSAA.

Miranda, 16, is originally from a small town in northern Thailand, where her mother Michelle also hails from. Coming to a new country and leaving her old life behind meant Miranda didn't have many friends and had to go in search of new pastimes.

One day last year her stepfather Chad, who has been shooting most of his life, took Michelle and Miranda to the shooting events at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Miranda was hooked and it wasn't long before she was joining Chad at the range.

"Dad started shooting at my club as a SSAA junior when he was 15 and recently introduced me to the sport along with my mum, who now shoots Clay Trap," said Miranda. Chad is a handy shot himself having competed at national level in Olympic Trap for many years, winning

multiple medals, and he's still a AA Olympic Trap shooter.

"Dad's my coach, he trains and competes in ISSF Olympic Trap and has spent time with me to teach me how to control my mind and body during competition, mostly how to focus on my individual shooting to achieve higher scores," said Miranda. "We try and practise Field Rifle at least once or twice a week at the range so I can improve."

Unlike Chad, Miranda prefers rifles to shotguns and while she has shot Olympic Air Rifle she prefers the SSAA disciplines which she finds more fun and interesting. "I like the various positions I have to shoot in Field Rifle and the challenge each of those positions brings. The firearms I use are a Steyr Zephyr .22 and Sako .222 and for long range targets I use dad's Steyr SSG08 Carbon in 300WM."

Miranda does most of her shooting at the SSAA Madden range as part of the Junior Target Shooters section where she has made most of her closest and best friends. "My friends who aren't shooters think it's cool that I go shooting. Most of them

didn't know we were a family of sports shooters and were surprised and thought it was really interesting.

"I'd like to compete at the Queensland Field Rifle events this year and in the future hopefully at national level. I'd love to be a champion shooter in my discipline and to represent my sport on a national and possibly international level one day would be awesome."

Miranda is determined to follow her artistic side as well. The keen singer and sketcher also has dreams of becoming a fashion designer and I suggested she could design shooting jackets, which she thought was a great idea. We wish her all the best and hope to try on one of her personally designed shooting jackets one day. ●



Field Rifle is her favourite discipline.

Sponsor a JUNIOR



Photo: Nicholas Loakim

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

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

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

Has the junior been a member before? Yes/No

Membership No.

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

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

First name Middle name Last name

Home address P/C.....

Date of birth Phone.....

Email

OFFICE USE ONLY

Details of sponsoring member

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

Membership No.

Payment options

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

☐ Cheque ☐ Money order ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Card number

Expiry date Signature.....

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

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

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

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National

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

February 1-July 31, 2019
All clubs/branches

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

Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships

February 1-November 30, 2019
Program: February 1-May 31: Special Snap. June 1-August 31: Group Three. September 1-November 30: Stopping Double Rifle. Rules: Championships shot as per current National Big Game Rifle rule book. Scoresheets showing competitor's name, club, rifle, scope power and result of each shot to be sent to Graeme Wright, PO Box 5085, Kenmore East, Qld 4069. Awards to third place and juniors. Entries in junior class to include date of birth. Contact: Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com

SSAA National Big Game Rifle Championships

May 25-26, 2019
Mickett Creek Range, Darwin, NT
Program: Eight core events as per 2017 National BGR rule book. Medals for each event, overall, veteran, junior and ladies. Supplementary events will also be run. Safety briefing 8.30am, first event 9am. Medals and prize presentation on Sunday. Practice available Friday, May 24. Nominations: Required by May 18. Nominations received after this date may not be processed. Facilities: Barbecue lunch both days, dinner on Saturday. Camping facilities on range. Contact: Barry Seabrook 0438 860 510 or Tony Orr 0409 862 393 email ntbiggamerifle@gmail.com

National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition

June 1-August 31, 2019
Program: 40-shot match in accordance with SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette rule book. Match must be nominated to your shoot captain before you shoot. Medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade and junior category plus three entry prizes of SSAA merchandise vouchers. Ties decided on countback of turkeys, rams, chickens and pigs. Score must show result of each shot (hit or miss), name, home club, grade, date of match and junior if applicable and emailed by September 10, 2019 to toblerkathy@gmail.com

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

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

SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships

June 8-10, 2019
SSAA Batemans Bay Deep Creek Shooting Complex, NSW
Program: Thursday, June 6 bench draw available. Friday, 10am practice and flag set-up. Saturday, 9am Light Gun. Sunday, 9am Heavy Gun. Monday, 9am Rimfire. Nominations: Close June 1. Fees: \$50 per class, juniors half-price, can be paid on arrival. Nominations to stateflyshoot@gmail.com or Anthony 0418 406 698. Rules: Current SSAA Fly Shoot rule book (maximum calibre on complex is 8mm). Prizes: Gold, silver, bronze for aggregate each class. Gold for Small Group and High Scoring Target each class. Gold, silver, bronze for 2-Gun Centrefire, 2-Gun Centrefire/Rimfire and 3-Gun. Gold, silver, bronze for juniors U-15 and 15-18. Facilities: Catering by SSAA Batemans Bay Club all weekend, camping \$5 per night, hot showers, toilets, cooking facilities and power. Contact: stateflyshoot@gmail.com, Anthony Hall 0418 406 698 or Bryson Payne 02 4471 3135. Full details on website.

SSAA Air Rifle Field Target National Championships

June 21-23, 2019
SSAA Qld Millmerran Complex, Gore Hwy, Captains Mountain, Qld
Friday, June 21: Practice. Saturday: 100-shot (2x50) Open Air Rifle Field Target. Sunday: 1x50-shot Open Springer Air Rifle Field Target. Contact: Chris Dale 0418 255 874 or fieldtarget@ssaa.org.au. Please see website for full details.

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

October 17-20, 2019
Mickett Creek Shooting Complex, Brandt Rd, Berrimah, NT
Program: Thursday, October 19: Practice. Friday: Pistols and rifles. Saturday: Rifles. Sunday: Rifles. Nominations: All pistol events \$50, all rifle \$60, individual \$15, all \$100. Rules: SSAA Combined Services Rulebook No.4. Prizes: As per program. Contact: treasurerssaant@bigpond.com or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au. Full details on website.

New South Wales

SSAA NSW Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB State Championships

June 7-10, 2019
SSAA Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW
Program: June 6 practice, June 7 Light Rimfire, June 8 Heavy Rimfire, June 9-10 IRB. Nominations: \$50 per day, juniors half price. Rules: SSAA National. Prizes: Medals all events including juniors. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, barbecue. Camping on range (please advise). Free breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee. Dinner for a small fee. Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billinghurst 0418 478 160.

Queensland

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.1

February 1-May 31, 2019
Program: Smallbore Conventional Pistol, Smallbore Unlimited Standing, Smallbore

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

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No. 2

April 1-July 31, 2019
Program: Smallbore Hunter's Pistol Metallic Sights - Standing (formerly 50m Iron Sights). Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by August 14, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3

May 1-August 31, 2019
Program: Hunter's Pistol Metallic Sights, Hunter's Pistol Standing. Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by September 14, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld Single Action State Championships

May 3-5, 2019
Kingaroy-Burrandowan Rd, Chahpingah, Qld
Program - Friday: Side matches. Saturday and Sunday: Main match. Facilities: Camping on range with hot showers and toilets. Contact: Ian Jacobs 07 4164 8179.

SSAA Qld Combined Services State Championships

May 4-6, 2019
SSAA Bundaberg branch
Program: Friday, May 3, practice. Saturday, Class 1, 2 or 3 pistols. Sunday, rifle. Monday, rifle. Rules: SSAA Combined Services rule book No.4. Nominations: All pistol \$40, all rifle \$60, all events \$90, individual events \$8, juniors half price. Closing date April 19. Current SSAA membership and grading cards must be shown. Barbecue Saturday night, refreshments all weekend. Facilities: Camping at range, toilets, showers. Contact: secretaryQ32@hotmail.com See SSAA (Qld) website for full details.

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 16-19, 2019
Fraser Coast Range, Churchill Mines Rd, Dundathu, Qld
Program: Open to all SSAA members. Events: Smallbore Conventional Pistol,

Smallbore Conventional Revolver, Smallbore Unlimited Standing, Smallbore Unlimited Pistol, Long Range Conventional Pistol, Long Range Conventional Revolver, Long Range Unlimited Standing, Long Range Unlimited Pistol, Hunter's Pistol Metallic Sights, Hunter's Pistol Standing. Nominations: \$8 per event to maximum \$60, juniors half price. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: State medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each event, grade and 10-Gun Aggregate. Facilities: Camping at range (unpowered). Contact: Jeff Bennett 0407 969 354 jbennettina@gmail.com or Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld Lever Action Rifle Silhouette State Championships

June 7-9, 2019
SSAA Brisbane, 292 Mt Petrie Rd, Belmont, Qld
Program - Friday, June 7: Sight-in from 10am. June 8: 100m Smallbore Lever Silhouette, 100m CF Pistol Cartridge Silhouette. June 9: 200m CF Lever Action Silhouette. Range open 8am daily, competition starts 9am. Nominations: Adults \$10 per event, juniors \$5, fees due by June 3, forms at www.ssaabris.org.au, nominations by email bookings@ssaabris.org.au. Facilities: Camping \$8 per person per night, hot showers and toilets, dormitory rooms \$12 per person per night, \$20 for linen if needed, snack bar Saturday and Sunday lunch. Contact 07 3395 0911 or bookings@ssaabris.org.au

SSAA Qld 4-Gun Benchrest State Championships

June 7-10, 2019
SSAA Springsure Range, Qld
Program: Thursday, June 6: Practice; Friday: Unlimited; Saturday: 100 and 200yd Light; Sunday: 100 and 200yd Heavy; Monday: 100 and 200yd Sporter. Nominations: \$40 per class to be received by May 26. Rules: As per SSAA rule book. Facilities: Canteen, barbecue tea on Saturday, camping at range \$40 per site for weekend. Contact: Roger Marshall 07 4984 1144 or 0429 841 205.

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4

August 1-November 30, 2019
Program: Long Range Conventional Pistol, Long Range Conventional Revolver, Long Range Unlimited Standing, Long Range Unlimited Pistol. Location: All SSAA (Qld) branches with approval to shoot Pistol Metallic Silhouette. Nominations: Results to state NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette chairman by December 12, 2019. Rules: As per SSAA (Qld) NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Guide Book. Prizes: Certificates to 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each grade. Each entry goes into draw for \$60 open order at Queensland Shooters Supplies, Ipswich. Contact: Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships

August 31-September 1, 2019
SSAA Bowen, Roddy Hughes Rd, Bowen, Qld
Program: Friday, August 30: 9am practice; Saturday: 9am Open Lever Action match, 40 rounds; Sunday: 9am Classic Calibre match, 40 rounds. State discipline meeting after completion of Open match. Branch delegates must have letter of accreditation

from executive. Nominations: \$35 one match, \$60 both, juniors half price. Form at ssaa.org.au/leveraction, send by August 19 to Allan McDonald asjmc2d@gmail.com Facilities: Canteen open during matches, breakfast/lunch \$10, dinner Friday/Saturday \$15. Camping at range with water, showers, toilets. Pets welcome. Contact: Allan McDonald 0428 790 940 asjmc2d@gmail.com; Kerry Guinea (State Discipline Chair) 0409 262 966 leveraction@ssaaqld.org.au

Victoria

SSAA Vic Junior Rimfire Silhouette Championships

May 19, 2019
Eagle Park, Little River, Victoria
Program: 8.30am weigh-in, 9am practice, 10.15am shooters' briefing, 10.30am 80 shots Rimfire competition. Nominations \$10. Rules: As per current rule book. Trophies 1st, 2nd, 3rd at U-18 and U-15 plus overall winner. Contact: Jeannine Taylor 0417 510 002 or Mark Butler 0409 135 740.

SSAA Vic Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 25-26, 2019
Eagle Park, Little River, Victoria
Program: Saturday, May 25, 80 shots Centrefire; Sunday, 80 shots Rimfire. Nominations \$20 per event. Rules as per current rule book. Contact Mark Butler 0409 135 740.

Western Australia

SSAA WA Lever Action State Championships

June 1-2, 2019
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Perry Road, Pinjar, WA
Program: Saturday, June 1, 9.30am: Classic Calibre followed by Revolver. Sunday, 9.30am: State Open. Nominations: Fees - Rifle \$35, Classic Calibre \$25, Revolver \$25 (\$75 all three), juniors half price. Download full programme and forms at plarc.com.au/events. State delegates' meeting in PLARC clubhouse at 7.30pm on Friday. Rules: Rifle competition in accordance with WA State Open Lever Action Rifle Championship Rules. Prizes: State medals and certificates. Facilities: Range open for practice on Friday, May 31 from 8am to 5pm and Saturday and Sunday 7-8.30am. Canteen Saturday and Sunday. Camping and caravans on PLARC range only, toilets on site. Meal and presentation on Sunday. Contact: Joel Evans leveraction@ssaawa.org.au. Full details on website.

SSAA WA NRA and Air Rifle State Championships

June 8-9, 2019
SSAA Port Bouvard, Dawesville, WA
Program: Saturday, June 8: Scoped 10m Air Rifle Precision 8am registration; 8.45am practice; 9.20am briefing; 9.30am match. Scoped 3-Positional 10m Air Rifle 11.30am registration and practice; 12.05pm briefing; 12 matches. Sunday, June 9: NRA 3x40 Small Bore 8am registration; 8.30am practice; 9.05am briefing; 9.15am matches. Nominations: \$10 per event, \$25 all three. Post to Port

Bouvard Pistol & Small Bore Rifle Club, PO Box 363, Mandurah, WA 6210.
Email secretary@portbouvardpc.com.au. Rules: SSAA Scoped Air Rifle and NRA rule book. Prizes: Medals for first three in each grade per event, certificates for position win plus points towards WA Hall of Fame. Facilities: Canteen, light lunch free for competitors both days. Contact: Ronnie Pope 0459 545 374 or fieldrifle@ssaa.org.au

SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

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

Northern Territory

SSAA NT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 4-6, 2019
Alice Springs Shooting Complex, Butler Rd, Alice Springs
Program: Saturday, May 4: 80 shots Rimfire Silhouette Rifle. May 5: 80 shots

Centrefire Silhouette Rifle. May 6: 40 shots Rimfire Hunting Rifle then 40 shots Centrefire Hunting Rifle. Nominations: Rimfire Silhouette and Centrefire Silhouette \$20, Rimfire Hunting and Centrefire Hunting \$10, juniors and seniors half price. Online registration form at <https://ssaalicesprings.wildapricot.org/2019-NT-RMS-Championships>. Rules: SSAA RMS rule book, bring grading cards and firearms licence in NT. Prizes: All grades and junior divisions. Facilities: Camping and caravan sites in complex with toilets, showers, accommodation in Alice Springs. Contact: Russell Wilkie 0408 165 752. Full details on website.

ACT

SSAA ACT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

June 8-10, 2019
SSAA Majura, Hector McIntosh Grove, Majura, ACT
Program: Saturday, June 8 Rimfire and Air Rifle. Sunday: Centrefire. Monday: Rimfire Hunting Rifle, Centrefire Hunting Rifle. Nominations: Dave Home 02 6231 2837 or 0423 043 663 or Mark Lovell 0401 867 839. Prizes: Trophies all grades including juniors, two-gun and teams. Facilities: Camping on range \$10 per person per night, canteen for the weekend. Contact: Mark Lovell 0401 867 830 or mnl1@live.com.au. See website for full details.

SSAA Official Calendar

INTERNATIONAL

August 19-24, 2019 12th MLAIC World Long Range Muzzleloading Championships

Bisley, England

Kim Atkinson 27honeysuckle@msn.com.au

NATIONAL

Feb 1-July 31, 2019 National Junior Rimfire Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships
Feb 1-Nov 30, 2019 Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships
May 25-26, 2019 SSAA National Big Game Rifle Championships
June 1-August 31, 2019 National Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire Postal Competition
June 1-Nov 30, 2019 National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships
June 8-10, 2019 SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships
June 21-23, 2019 SSAA Air Rifle Field Target National Championships
July 12-14, 2019 SSAA National Junior Challenge
October 17-20, 2019 SSAA Combined Services National Championships

All clubs/branches

Mickett Creek Range, Darwin, NT
National event
All clubs/branches
Batemans Bay Shooting Complex, NSW
Millmerran Complex, Captains Mountain, Qld
Springvale and Eagle Park Ranges, Vic
Mickett Creek Shooting Complex, NT

juniorsports@ssaa.org.au
Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com
0438 860 510 or 0409 862 393 ntbiggamerifle@gmail.com
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0418 255 874 fieldtarget@ssaa.org.au
0417 510 002 or j9.taylor55@gmail.com
treasurerssaant@bigpond.com
or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au

STATE

February 1-May 31, 2019 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.1
April 1-July 31, 2019 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.2
May 1-August 31, 2019 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.3
May 3-5, 2019 SSAA Qld Single Action State Championships
May 4-5, 2019 SSAA WA 2019 Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships
May 4-6, 2019 SSAA Qld Combined Services State Championships
May 4-6, 2019 SSAA NT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships
May 16-19, 2018 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 19, 2019 SSAA Vic Junior Rimfire Silhouette Championships
May 25-26, 2019 SSAA Vic Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships
June 1-2, 2019 SSAA WA Lever Action State Championships
June 7-9, 2019 SSAA Qld Lever Action Rifle Silhouette State Championships
June 7-10, 2019 SSAA NSW Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB State Championships
June 7-10, 2019 SSAA Qld 4-Gun Benchrest State Championships
June 8-9, 2019 SSAA WA NRA and Air Rifle State Championships
June 8-10, 2019 SSAA ACT Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships
July 11-15, 2019 SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships
August 1-Nov 30, 2019 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4
August 31-Sept 1, 2019 SSAA Qld Lever Action State Championships

Eagle Park, Little River, Vic
Eagle Park, Little River, Vic
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA
SSAA Brisbane, Qld
SSAA Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW
SSAA Springsure Range
SSAA Port Bouvard, Dawesville, WA
Majura Range, Majura, ACT
Port Hedland, WA

SSAA Bowen, Qld

Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
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Ian Jacobs 07 4164 8179
Paul@compac.com.au or 0407 428 175
secretaryQ32@hotmail.com
0408 165 752
Jeff Bennett 0407 969 354 jbennettinana@gmail.com or
Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
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0409 135 740
leveraction@ssaawa.org.au
07 3395 0911 or bookings@ssaabris.org.au
Kim 0429 335 389 or David 0418 478 160
047 4984 1144 or 0429 841 205
Ronnie Pope 0459 545 374 or fieldrifle@ssaa.org.au
0401 867 839 or mnl1@live.com.au
0407 440 431 or clas@ssaawa.org.au
Hazel Bozic 07 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au
0428 790 940 or asjmc2d@gmail.com



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NEW PRODUCTS



SSAA Shotgun Vest

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

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

Comes in blue and green.

Green

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

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SVB001 - Small
SVB002 - Medium
SVB003 - Large
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The ultimate outdoor jacket!



SSAA Renegade Jacket

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

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

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Green

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

Black

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

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

SSAA Softshell Vest

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

CSV001 - small
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CSV003 - large
CSV004 - XL
CSV005 - 2XL
CSV006 - 3XL

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SSAA Advantage shooting glasses



SGA001 **\$49.95**

SSAA Magnum shooting glasses



SGM001 **\$49.95**

See full details online!

CLOTHING

SSAA Buffwear



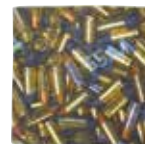
These SSAA Buffs offer a multitude of uses and can be worn to keep dust and dirt out of your face when riding the quad or as a basic headscarf.

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

\$17.95



CBW001
Iron Bark



CBW002
Bullet



CBW003
Coloured Leaf

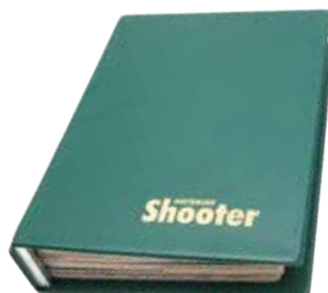


CBW004
Distressed Leaf



CBW005
Oz Flag

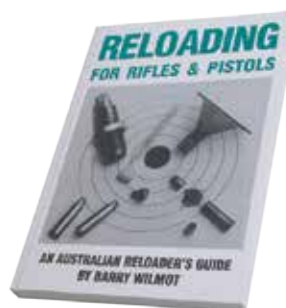
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SSAA cloth badge 7.5cm

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SSAA cloth badge
B0015
\$7.50



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Blade width: 3.5cm (at its widest part)
Handle length: 12.5cm
Handle width: 3cm
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SWAG05 **NOW \$199**

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FA003



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

Members-only competitions

WIN

For your chance to win one of these competitions, write your name, address, phone number and membership number on a piece of paper and place it inside an envelope, along with the name of the competition on the front of the envelope, as shown in the example. Alternatively, you can enter online. Competitions close May 31, 2019.

(Name of competition)
SSAA National
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Unley SA 5061

Enter online at
ssaa.org.au/win

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Australian Shooter March 2019

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Maddison Delforce, NSW

March Best Shots Mug
Melissa Jaillet, Qld

Women's Shooter

Lithgow Arms pink hoodie and t-shirt pack
Susan Parenti, Qld

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Just walkin' the dog

As we came around a clump of blackberries on the rise of the hill, something moved in the morning shadows under the hawthorns. In an instant it was up over the bank of a contour drain and gone before any sort of recognition registered in my brain. Too big for a rabbit for sure but beyond that, who could say? A hare perhaps, or maybe a feral cat, though the colour didn't seem quite right for either.

Dixie saw the movement and bounded forward to investigate, nose to the ground on a red hot scent. She'd barely disappeared when a fox came down the contour drain towards me, trotting confidently in the opposite direction to the dog. It came past me at no more than 20m and if it knew I was there it didn't seem to care.

As foxes go it was a pretty poor specimen. Mange had stripped it of its fine red coat, leaving no more than tufts of fur on the back of the ears and random patches of dark undercoat elsewhere. The exposed skin was grey-white, cracked and scabbed, the nipples on her belly standing out like fleshy studs. At best she was in poor condition but if she'd lost her trademark good looks and sleek finish, her natural sagacity remained unaltered.

As I watched she jumped from one edge of the drain to another, deliberately creating a gap in her trail. She disappeared for a moment or two in a clump of dead blackberries, jumped through a sheep mesh fence then zig-zagged away up the

hill at a steady trot. She was well and truly gone when Dixie hit the gap in her trail and began to cast around to pick it up again. Though she was trying hard she'd missed her chance, well and truly outsmarted by an expert I didn't really want her to catch up with anyway. I called her off as she came past, telling her what a good girl she was and that she shouldn't worry. We still had a bit of country to cover and we'd probably find something else for her to chase. She wasn't convinced but followed me anyway, obedience training

no way of knowing, proximity seemed to indicate they might be the offspring of the mangy vixen.

Magpies squalled. A white faced heron protested and flapped skyward. A small covey of brown quail jetted out. A lone blackbird called a warning and departed in a low flying hurry. A pair of rabbits squirted into the clear, white tails bobbing as they raced away. A feral tabby came out of the tussocks not far from where the dog had gone in and jogged across the flat.

In the middle of it all Dixie was

springing on her hind legs, trying to look over the grass and see what was happening around her, perhaps confused by the conglomeration of scents on the ground and in need of some direction. She came back to me when I whistled, panting from her exertions, her enthusiasm undiminished.

We walk every morning, the dog and I. For me it's about the exercise I need to combat the sedentary

existence this past summer has imposed. For the dog it's a run and a hunt and a swim in the creek. Some of our walks are much more interesting than others. We're never quite sure what we'll find and in some ways that's half the fun.

The payoff is the basic level of paddock fitness we'll both have when the winter hunting season rolls around. We'll need it. At the very least there are some foxes across the creek we'll have to have a look for.



holding sway over her barely suppressed excitement.

A few minutes later as we ambled around the edges of an old dredge hole sparsely covered with clumps of scattered tussocks and grey thistles she picked up another scent and dived into the cover with an excited yip. Her arrival sparked an exodus. A trio of half-grown fox cubs raced out on the other side and floated up the hill, one of them stopping briefly to look back and possibly sneer at the dog's obvious excitement. Though there was





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