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Our March cover

The secrets of gundog success

NEXT ISSUE



Senior correspondent John Dunn has been out and about with the new Browning Maral Big Game Rifle and reckons it will prove a hit with shooters actively involved in feral animal control.

Lionel Swift takes a trip back in time and documents the fascinating history of the Trans-Tasman shot towers, one of which now has pride of place in one of Melbourne CBD's biggest shopping centres!

Daniel O'Dea has turned the spotlight on the Zeiss Victory V8 4.8-35x60 riflescope, not an inexpensive option but one he says will give a lifetime of premium service should your budget extend to it.



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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Our chance to rally round for bushfire victims

To witness the catastrophic toll taken by the devastating bushfires that have raged throughout Australia has been heartbreaking and recovering from such awful consequences will take considerable time. And with various SSAA connections directly affected, this would be a fitting opportunity for our members to become involved and support communities, clubs and property owners as they embark on the long road back to some sense of normality.

We must all recognise the enormity of what has happened and help out in whatever way we can and I have no doubt that, in the usual spirit of SSAA togetherness, our members will respond accordingly. The new year has rolled in and seemingly thrown up a host of issues from floods, fires, politics and biased media, giving us plenty to think about.

So it's now up to our members to rise to the challenges and get out and participate in every aspect of our wonderful sport. Standing together can simply mean taking a mate to your nearest SSAA branch and with more than 400 scattered across this vast continent there are plenty of options.

The Australian environment can be a harsh taskmaster and there constantly seems to be something happening from a natural world perspective. But amid the trials and tribulations our shooting fraternity should always be able to get out and about and enjoy themselves and I have every faith we'll do exactly that. We will stand together and prosper on our strengths.

On a less satisfactory note, it was disappointing to see Senator Bridget McKenzie bowing to pressure to resign from Cabinet duties in the aftermath of the media feeding frenzy around the so-called 'sports rort' affair. During her time as Sports Minister and latterly Minister of Agriculture, Senator McKenzie was a powerful ally to the shoot-

ing sports and it was at times distressing to witness her being hounded out of office.

Perhaps SSAA National CEO Tim Bannister summed things up succinctly in his appraisal of Senator McKenzie's standing and I'm happy to reiterate some of his thoughts when he wrote: "SSAA is disappointed in the resignation of Senator Bridget McKenzie from Government Cabinet and on behalf of its near 200,000 members thanks her for her energetic support of the shooting sports and our Association."

"Much of the media and anti-firearms fraternity has tried to bully and belittle her over her involvement in shooting, demonstrating their biases and discrimination towards almost one million Australian licensed firearms owners. Attempts have also been made to tie in SSAA and our Victorian branch with Federal funding where SSAA National and Victoria have not applied or received any grants from the Commonwealth."

"We wish Senator McKenzie well in her parliamentary career and have no doubt she will continue to be one of its hardest working and most dedicated members. As an Association we remind all politicians, the media and community at large that we will continue to support those who support us and speak out against those who don't."

• Page 82: SSAA club suffers in wake of deadly bushfires

G.E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



SSAA - Protecting shooters since 1948

An inspiration to us all

Last March I was admitted to Fiona Stanley (WA) Hospital's neurology department, diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome. I started to become paralysed from my feet up and was soon paralysed from my neck down and put into an induced coma with respiratory failure. Doctors told my family it was unlikely I'd survive 12 hours due to complications.

When they eventually woke me up I was told I'd be in hospital for the next 12-18 months. I had one goal - to get out of there in fewer than 100 days. I spent 45 days on life support and moved to rehab on Day 50. All I wanted was to return to normal life and go shooting again.

I had to learn how to do everything again - breathing, walking, talking, feeding myself, showering etc. On Day 87 I was discharged and no-one could believe my recovery and how quickly it was progressing. I know it may seem strange to have this as a goal after such a major life event, but getting back to shooting was huge.

I only write to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to the entire shooting community, especially the teams at Beretta Australia and Lithgow Arms for sorting me out with gear to make my life so much easier at the range, and Jonathan Davidson at Jarrahdale Sporting Shooters for the inspiration to push through.

The unbelievable support given to myself and my family through the entire ordeal has shown what truly amazing things can

happen when the shooting community comes together. Thank you.

Brent Biglin, via email

Private hunters in dreamland

In response to Leon Wright's excellent article 'The ethical dilemma of hunting' in your December issue, I couldn't help but feel a little envious of the situation he describes in his encounter with a neighbouring farmer who encouraged him to shoot an apparent excess of deer on the property: "Tell me that's the sixth one you've shot today."

As a newish hunter (bow and rifle) of a few years, I've no land connections to lean on for access. I thought my best bet would be an 'R' licence to hunt NSW state forests however, having spent the past few years traipsing up and down southern NSW forests where 'success' is glimpsing a deer every couple of trips or so, the number of potential targets Mr Wright infers in his article seems almost magical. With the aim of trying to feed my family on harvested meat, I'd love to have been part of such a trip.

I'm starting to believe private land is where the majority of success can be found for new hunters. Given the recent tragic fires up and down the east coast eliminating vast tracts of state forest with deer, this is potentially even more the case. Any good advice for gaining access to private land with deer as a SSAA and R-licensed member?

Jonathan Jorgensen, via email

.303 ammo puzzler

In his letter about an inheritance of .303 ammunition (*Australian Shooter*, August 2019), Steve Larkins asked the question: 'What aircraft was still in service that had synchronised guns when the ammunition was manufactured in 1950?'

The Wirraway had two synchronised Vickers .303 machine guns and remained in service until 1958 but the part that puzzled me is Steve says the ammunition is in webbing belts. For aircraft use I'd expect it to be in 'Prideaux' disintegrating links as you don't want great lengths of belt hanging out the side of the gun.

David Mottram, via email

Jet details off course

On reading my copy of December's *Shooter*, I saw on P91 a picture captioned 'Stephan Schutze recording an Australian Korean Sabre jet at Temora Aviation Museum in NSW'. The Korean War lasted from June 1950 to July 1953 and the first flight of an Australian Sabre A94-101 took place on August 3, 1953 by which time the Korean conflict had ended. Sabres didn't reach the squadrons until 1955.

Therefore, there was no such thing as an Australian Korean Sabre as the RAAF aircraft in Korea were mainly Mustangs, Meteors and Transports. The aircraft in the photo is an A94-983 Mk.32 delivered in November 1957, transferred to the Royal Malaysian Air Force in December 1971 and returned to the RAAF in 1978.

Barry Evans, via email



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q: If I receive a reimbursement payment for kilometres travelled while conducting a feral pest shoot, am I still covered by the Association's insurance.

Mark Mansfield, via email.

A: SSAA Members' Liability Insurance covers an individual member's liability for

all lawful recreational shooting activities, though unfortunately does not extend to cover any shooting activities where the member is being given a reward by a third party, such as monetary payment or travel expenses.

To be covered for this exposure you would need a separate Professional

Shooters' Liability policy. If you would like to receive a formal quotation for this or wish to discuss any other general insurance needs, don't hesitate to get in touch with us by calling 08 8332 0281 or visiting our website at ssaaib.com.au.



Overgrazing putting national park habitats at risk

A study by Adelaide University researchers has found protected areas are under serious threat of overgrazing by both native and introduced herbivores. Of particular concern is the degradation of protected land such as national parks which are generally regarded a cornerstone of conservation efforts. The protected status of such land areas is normally seen as a key to providing a shield from environmental degradation.

A summary of the study published in *The Conversation* found that some areas studied indicated protected land suffered similar levels of overgrazing found on private land with no legal protections at all. With the exclusion of livestock in the majority of protected areas, the prime suspects of overgrazing appear to be overabundant native grazers, mainly kangaroos. What's becoming clearer is that kangaroo populations need to be properly managed so their overabundance doesn't lead to overgrazing which impacts thousands of other native species.

Researchers suggested the loss of predators from many ecosystems has allowed herbivore populations to expand rapidly which in turn has led to overgrazing causing changes in habitat, a key threat to biodiversity. Overgrazing has caused native birds such as the diamond firetail to decline across south-eastern Australia, primar-

ily due to the loss of its habitat and the replacement of native grasses with exotic species which respond better after fire and overgrazing. Overgrazing has also reduced the abundance and diversity of many ground-dwelling reptiles.

To determine whether protected areas had been overgrazed, researchers assessed grazing impact on native vegetation across 1192 sites, widespread across South Australia's agricultural region. More than 600 plant species from woodlands, forests, shrublands and grasslands were looked at. When monitoring of these sites starting back in 2005 there were already visible signs of high grazing pressure in protected lands and that impact has grown over time.

As a consequence of inadequate management of grazing animals on protected land, monitoring has shown three things have occurred. Firstly, grazing impacts in protected areas increased substantially. Secondly, some protected areas showed equally severe effects of grazing that would normally be found on private land with no conservation protections in place. Thirdly, the character of landscapes is set to change due to the next generation of edible seedlings being lost from both protected and unprotected ecosystems.

Researchers argue that a few species should not be allowed to compromise the existence of native plants - even if they are

native species - and this is vitally important where we have land dedicated to the protection of biodiversity, such as national parks. Kangaroo management is a polarising issue where arguments regarding culling can divide communities but, that said, protected areas must be managed in a way to meet clear biodiversity targets and control overgrazing even by native species.

It has been widely accepted that introduced species such as rabbits, horses, goats, camels etc can badly impact Australia's native vegetation and we use a variety of control measures to manage populations - including culling - and strong incentives (regulatory) for control on farmland.

It's generally less contentious to control introduced species than endemic species like kangaroos and this is undoubtedly something which has to change. The time has come for us to step up and take the place of natural predators where those numbers have diminished.

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Maximum velocity loading for rifle cartridges

Should I load my rifle cartridges to obtain maximum velocity? That's a question I've been asked many times over the years and the answer I give now is different to what I would have given back in the day. What people really wanted to know was if reloading to achieve maximum velocities for field hunting was worthwhile, did we find greater benefit by using more powder to obtain that higher velocity?

I can well remember, many years ago, sitting at a bench with my Sako 22-250 endeavouring to extract maximum velocity from it. I was using 40gr projectiles and quickly obtained the magic 4000fps on the chronograph screen. I slowly increased the powder load until 4150fps appeared then increased to a load which showed 4200fps for the first shot.

However, the next two shots didn't record at all on the chronograph and I couldn't figure out why, the only clue being that another target placed about 10m behind the screen showed no bullet holes from the last two bullets fired.

After some discussion I decided to place another target about one metre behind the screen and fired another cartridge. Again no velocity recorded on the chronograph and on examining the target, no bullet hole was evident, just a lot of tiny shotgun pellet-like holes spread over the target. It was now obvious what was happening: the projectile

after exiting the barrel was falling apart due to centrifugal force - it was spinning too fast to remain intact. It was a good lesson learned and one I've never forgotten - you can spend a lot of time and burn a lot of powder chasing higher velocities to achieve very little benefit.

...you can spend a lot of time and burn a lot of powder chasing higher velocities to achieve very little benefit.

Another approach is to examine remaining energy and projectile drop figures for starting and maximum loadings, on targets at about 300m. For this we'll look at my favourite cartridge, the .243 Winchester, using 80gr projectiles with a ballistic coefficient of 0.28 being zeroed at 150m and shooting at a 300m target.

The start load for this cartridge was 35gr of AR2208 powder giving a velocity of 3150fps while the maximum load was 38gr of AR2208 giving 3400fps. I won't bombard

you with figures but at 300m the difference in projectile drop is 46mm and the remaining energy difference is 160ft-lb.

Given the average shooter under field conditions can't hold steady enough to notice the 46mm drop difference at 300m, obtaining only an extra 160ft-lb of energy hardly seems worthwhile. Furthermore, the extra powder used for maximum loads means we only manage 203 reloads from a 500g tin of powder instead of 220 reloads at the lower loading, while the higher pressure necessary to achieve this maximum velocity would reduce barrel and cartridge brass life to some extent. Another bonus of the lighter load is it's more pleasant to shoot and the reduced muzzle blast will not scare game and land owners for miles around.

If there was substantial benefit to be had using maximum loads for much higher velocity I would certainly recommend doing so, but after years of being there and doing that - then analysing the pros and cons - unless you are hunting dangerous game where every ft-lb of energy counts, I honestly can't see the benefit of using maximum loads for most field shooting.





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I'd never advise anyone to shoot in competition with anything other than a perfectly balanced shotgun

Q I'm interested in having my shotgun balanced correctly after being told it's too 'barrel heavy' which I'm led to believe causes me to shoot inconsistently. Can you confirm where the shotgun should be balanced and how to achieve this? Thanks in advance.

Liam Wilson, NSW

A Reputable manufacturers will take great care in ensuring their shotgun is balanced virtually on the hinge pin where the gun's action joins the barrel and fore-end. If you close the firearm and rest it on your closed hand, the shotgun should not fall either forwards or backwards.

You describe your shotgun as 'barrel heavy' which means the stock is too light for the barrels, something which is easily rectified. The simplest way is to unscrew your recoil pad and place some alfoil in your stock bolt hole. On top of the alfoil pack a lead fishing weight into the hole tightly - but not tightly enough it has to be forced as this may crack your stock - and fill the remaining void with some more alfoil so there's no chance of the weight coming loose.

Loosely put the pad back on the stock and after a bit of trial and error with different size weights you should get the shotgun to balance above the hinge pin. If you need to unscrew the action of the gun through the stock bolt hole, the weight can easily be removed and replaced again. Make sure it's in tight because if it works loose this will drastically change the actual measurable recoil felt through your firearm. A loose lead weight will act like an increased payload of shot reacting against your shoulder.

If by chance you're shooting a shotgun

that's too heavy in the stock and therefore, when testing the balance, the barrels flip upwards, you can either take some walnut out of the back of your stock or add a barrel weight or some lead tape underneath the barrels until the desired balance point is reached.

As previously mentioned, the balance point is located at the hinge pin and this should also be roughly the halfway point from your hand gripping the stock and your other hand supporting the barrels holding the fore-end.

You mention in your question you thought the unbalanced shotgun was causing you to be inconsistent in your shooting and this could certainly be the case. I'd never advise anyone to shoot in competition with anything other than a perfectly balanced shotgun and am always critical of custom stock makers who sell clients a new stock, fitted to the millimetre to perfectly suit a particular body shape, but no time has been spent rebalancing the firearm. I consider this attribute as important as length of pull, drop or cast.

Firearms can become unbalanced simply by fitting a new recoil pad. Many factory-made shotguns are fitted with very thin, lightweight recoil pads but adding a longer, heavy duty pad will often push the shotgun to appear back-heavy and therefore somewhat harder to control, particularly under pressure when adrenalin and an increased heart rate come into play.



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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS ?

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

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Q My brother-in-law has bought a Bergara break action single shot in 45/70 calibre. We want to reload using Hornady 325gr FTX projectiles but the ADI reloading manual quotes three different loads - one for trap door rifles with a pressure limit of 28,000psi, one for lever action rifles (limit 40,000psi) and one for modern rifles (limit 50,000psi). We can't find any information on what pressure the Bergara rifle can handle. Can you help and suggest a load using ADI Powder and 325gr projectiles?

Morris Gill, via email

A I believe the rifle you're talking about is a Bergara Model BA13, boxlock actioned single shot. It's a modern rifle with a strong action and would be capable of handling the loadings shown in ADI's Modern Rifles Tables.

However, to be on the safe side with a new rifle I'd start with 52gr of AR2219 powder behind the 325gr projectile which should give you about 2000fps. After firing, inspect the cartridge case for pressure signs and, if none, increase the load by 1gr increments until you're happy with it. Again for safety reasons do not load above ADI's maximum load quoted figures.

Barry Wilmot

Q I was wondering if it's legally permissible for me to set up a plinking range in my house. I have a long hallway (15m) and would like to practise with an air rifle.

Col Clacy, Qld

A Sadly, the days of legally being able to even plink with an air gun at home are over, pretty much throughout Australia. While we have separately emailed you the full answer supplied by the Weapons Licensing people in Queensland, the gist of their reasoning is as follows.

To gain approval for any kind of indoor or outdoor range, you need to be either a club, an incorporated association or an entity approved to run training courses. You'd then need to complete an application to establish the range, including extensive civil engineering and architectural documentation, detailing its proposed construction and location. After this, local government approval would be required.

Indoor ranges must be fully enclosed, have a bullet trapping system and ventilation to remove lead fumes. Shots must not be able to escape the range, so all the downrange areas outside of the bullet trap, for air rifles at least, must be clad with materials that pellets cannot penetrate. Examples are 75mm thick concrete, 103mm bricks, 100mm concrete blocks, 125mm hardwood or 150mm softwood. All lighting and pipe work must be protected and there must be no doorways downrange from your firing point.

While this may seem to be an excessive set of requirements, the authorities have a duty to protect the public from harm and medical history is littered with examples of air gun injuries. Most sensible shooters would ensure safety to their families of course, but as with so many other areas of life, legislation is formulated to protect us from the actions of the idiot minority.

Geoff Smith

Q I've just bought a shotgun with adjustable comb and want to know how to use it to make my gun shoot its patterns where I want them to go. It's a Sporter and I believe it should pattern about 50 per cent over and 50 per cent below the aim point.

Graham, Canberra

A This is a timely question as I just had an old mate of mine call about the very same thing. He asked what direction the pattern moves when you move the comb left or right. He'd patterned his 12-gauge over-and-under

Sporting shotgun and found it was shooting the centre of the pattern with both barrels 50/50 elevation but about three inches right of centre.

I told him the simple rule to remember is you adjust the comb in the same direction you want the pattern to move. If you want the pattern a little higher for, say, Trap shooting you move the comb up, if you want your gun to shoot a little flatter for Sporting or Skeet targets or shooting in the paddock, you lower the comb.

A good way to establish accurate pattern placement and gun fit is to shoot at a pattern plate or large piece of paper or cardboard positioned at eye level 16 yards from the muzzle. Fire three shots from each barrel at two separate pieces of paper for an accurate pattern position from each barrel then measure the centre of your pattern back to the point you aimed at.

If, like my mate, your barrel is shooting three inches to the right then move the comb 3/16ths of an inch to the left to make the pattern move to the left. In other words, at 16 yards you move the comb 1/16th of an inch for every inch you want to move your pattern, whether that be left, right, up or down. You determine direction by looking down on the stock with the gun facing forward. With adjustable shotgun ribs, however, it's the opposite where lowering the rib at the front raises the pattern and raising the rib at the front lowers the pattern.

Paul Miller

Q I'm just about to start reloading .223 Rem for my Howa Mini Action. I have 68gr boat-tail hollow-point, 55gr full metal jacket (FMJ) and 70gr spitzer projectiles. Are ADI Benchmark 1 and AR2209 powders good choices and is it okay to reload these three projectiles with the same amount of powder - the 68gr and 70gr for hunting and 55gr for target shooting?

Ron Manning, via email

A From your question it sounds like you want to use components you already have on hand for loading into other cartridges. However, you may have to look at a new set of powder/bullet combinations which are fit for purpose for your new rifle, be it hunting or target shooting.

AR2209 is a slow-burning powder not generally considered a candidate for the .223 Remington and ADI's *Handloaders' Guide* doesn't list any loads for that powder. Benchmark 1 (BM1) is an excellent choice for projectiles up to around 52 grains. Your 55, 68 and 70gr bullets require something a little bit slower burning and, if you want to stay with the ADI brand, my choice would be Benchmark 8208 which has a burning rate between BM2 and AR2206H and will work equally well with all three projectiles listed. One big advantage of BM8208 is it's a very versatile powder and can be used in a wide range of cartridges from the diminutive .17 Remington Fireball right up to the .458 Winchester Magnum.

On the second part of your question, I recommend you make a dedicated load for each bullet type and each application. I'd start with 22gr of BM8208 for the 55gr FMJ and work up from there. For the 68 and 70gr projectiles, 20 grains would make a good starting load.

Rod Pascoe

Q I'm hoping someone can help with sighting-in my scope, a Vortex 6-24x50 on a 308 calibre Sig Sauer 101 Alaska using MDT mounts recommended by the gunshop. I've sighted in other scopes with no problem but this one has me stumped. The elevation can't go any higher, the bell of the scope is not touching the barrel and I'm sure the mounts are tight but not too tight. When sighting-in, the cross-hairs are well below the centre, almost off the paper target. The scope was a gift from my son-in-law, sent from America and brand new.

Do I need higher rings? Could it have been damaged in transit? I am totally at a loss.

Shane Slater, Qld

A It's unusual to find a scope and mount combination that can't be sighted-in using the internal scope adjustments but, as you've found, it does happen. I spoke to Robert Tobler of RDT Products about your problem and we agreed a higher set of mounts won't solve it and suggest you try the following.

First up, check the bottoms of each ring are in the same plane. With the rings fitted to the rifle, take the top off each and ensure the bottom of each ring is level with the other using a straight edge such as a small steel rule. If they're not you may need to shim one or the other up until they're level then sight-in the rifle to see if that makes any difference.

If they are level then shims can also be used to bring the cross-hairs on to target. If you need additional *down* movement shim the front base, if you need additional *up* movement shim the back. How much shim to use is the vexed question and the following information comes from an old Bushnell shim guide Robert sent me.

With an 8.2cm (3.25") ring spacing a shim .025mm (.001") thick will shift the point of impact 6.35mm (.25") at 22.8m (25yds), 12.7mm at 45.7m (50yds), 25.4mm (1") at 68.5m (75yds) or 50.8mm at 91.4m (100yds).

With the same ring spacing a .127mm (.005") shim - the thickness of a Coke can - will shift the point of impact 31.7mm (1.25") at 22.8m, 63.5mm (2.5") at 45.7m, 127mm (5") at 68.5m and 254mm (10") at 91.4m.

A wider than recommended ring spacing will obviously change those numbers but at least they'll give you an idea about what changes can be made to the point of impact. Don't use any more shims than necessary as the shimming process can bend the scope tube and mess with reliability of turret adjustments. Hope this helps.

John Dunn



Sign up to the SSAA Lifeblood team

THIS YEAR BROUGHT with it a challenging start for many Australians but has also shown how well we can pull together in times of need. We believe SSAA members are particularly generous and that's why we're encouraging all members to once again consider donating blood. While this isn't an emergency scenario as the bushfires were, there's an ongoing need for blood donations and the good news is most people are eligible to donate.

As proof of that generosity, last year our SSAA Lifeblood team ranked number 47 throughout the country for most donations. Some of you may remember the program being called Red25 - this is effectively the same program but now called Lifeblood.

Coming in at No. 47 is a tremendous achievement but we think we can do even better. In 2017 we placed number 72 so we're trending in the right direction - but there's still lots of room to grow.

By the end of January this year we'd made 140 donations, saving around 440 lives in the process. That's a great achievement but we want to show the rest of Australia how generous and dedicated the sports shooting community is. After all, the SSAA is now more than 195,000 strong so placing in the top 10 should certainly be achievable.

If you're a SSAA member and are already donating blood - or you'd like to start donating - make sure you become a member of the SSAA Lifeblood team. You can join the group and have your donations contribute to our tally by asking your consultant when you call to book your appointment or by joining the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia team online.

Every donation helps and, if you're unable to donate, you can always encourage friends or family who are eligible to join our Lifeblood team.

More at www.donateblood.com.au



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 12 Gauge, 5 Shot, Straight Pull
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 12 Gauge, 5 Shot, Straight Pull
CATEGORY A
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 6, Shot, Stainless Steel
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 Available In: 4.25" & 6" Barrel
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KRISS DMK22 22lr
 10 Shot Spare Magazine
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KRISS Vector CRB22 22lr
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MAUSER M18 308win 5 Shot Blued Finish,
Synthetic Stock Detachable Magazine,
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243win & 308win
10 Shot Magazine
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Grey Ice Ceracoated Finish Synthetic Stock,
Detachable Mag, Threaded Muzzle Available
In: 223rem, 6.5 Creedmoor & 308win
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Stainless Steel, 1 Fluted Barrel, Laminated
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22lr, 10 Shot, Two Mags
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Supplied with Two Hand Grips
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9mm, 124gr, Coated, LRN
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Con Kapralos



The CZ 527 MDT Varmint in .223 Remington is a rifle which blends the old with the new. Checking CZ's European and US websites there's no mention of this model and a call to Winchester Australia confirmed it's for our domestic market only. Such is the interest in rifles with chassis stocks the CZ 527 Varmint barrelled action, with its classical design features, would be a perfect candidate for the MDT LSS-XL2 (Generation-2) aluminium chassis. Winchester Australia supplied us with a review rifle in .223 Remington calibre for fans of the CZ marque.

Up close

The CZ 527 is probably the most popular barrelled action in the world for shooters

after a small calibre platform with the micro-length Mauser action and its Control Round Feed method of case manipulation from the magazine to the chamber and out through the ejection port.

The review rifle, supplied with MDT LSS-XL2 aluminium chassis, FAB Defence buttstock, Core-CP adjustable comb and baffle tube together with the CZ 527 Varmint barrelled action in .223 Remington is made to be shot off a bench or prone, its forte being long-range target or varmint hunting. It measures 1030-1110mm (dependant on buttstock position) and weighs 3.96kg.

Receiver

This measures 73mm x 30mm and is primarily of a cylindrical profile with four

noticeable squared sections, two on top of the receiver containing the milled 16mm dovetail grooves for scope mounting, another squared section on the rear left of the receiver containing the oversize bolt release button and the fourth on the rear right for the safety lever.

The ejection port on the right measures 55mm x 20mm and forward of the receiver ring is a small gas port which deflects hot gases away from the shooter's face as a safety measure.

Bolt

This is 145mm x 15mm and has a true micro-length Mauser Control Round Feed (CRF) design. A full-length rotating claw extractor and ejector slot in the locking lug mates up with the ejector blade in the



CZ scope-mounting dovetails on the receiver accept rings made by CZ and other manufacturers.



Micro-length Mauser-style bolt on the CZ 527.



BROWNING B525 SPORTER

During the making of a B525, the gun moves from one gunsmith to the next to be entirely hand finished, thanks to the expertise acquired over many years by each of the gunsmiths.

This is the only shotgun on the market at this price level that is hand fitted during production to such a high-performance level, making each shotgun truly unique.

Besides its Back-Bored Vector Pro barrels, its 10mm battue rib and the oil-rubbed finish of its grade 2 walnut elements, it also possesses 4 Invector + chokes and the Auto Safety system. Just as efficient for sporting clays as for hunting, the B525 Sporter does not lose in aesthetics everything it has gained in reliability.

RRP **\$2,195**

Available in 30" and 32" barrel lengths.



CZ 527 MDT Varmint rifle in .223 Remington



The FAB Defence buttstock is adjustable through five positions.

The FAB Defence buttstock and Core-CP adjustable comb.

wall of the receiver and case ejection is unparalleled. Loaded ammunition from the detachable five-round magazine slides up on to the bolt face and is controlled from that moment until the bolt is drawn back and the case ejected.

The bolt body and locking lugs are highly polished steel with only the bolt handle and shroud matte blued. The bolt handle shank is well profiled and facilitates the 90-degree bolt lift, ensuring the handle clears any scope ocular housing. A small round bolt knob, devoid of chequering, helps the operator cycle the bolt easily.

Safety and trigger

To the rear of the bolt handle notch is a flat in the receiver which contains the two-position safety lever which, in the uncocked 'fire' position, is set horizontal with a small red dot on the receiver flat apex indicating the firing mechanism is not blocked and the bolt unlocked.

When the rifle is cocked, pushing this large lever forward towards the vertical blocks the trigger mechanism and bolt handle simultaneously while covering the red dot on the receiver flat, a visual indication it's now 'safe'. This two-position safety

works but something more refined would have been better with a smaller lever and less lever travel from 'safe' to 'fire'.

The trigger is of a single set design and fully adjustable for weight of pull, a thin alloy trigger blade extending into the triggerguard area another uncomplicated feature.

Magazine

This is of a single stack manner and holds five rounds in .223 Remington. Being made entirely of steel, it clips into place in the magazine well of the MDT chassis securely and is removed by pressing the button on the left of the chassis body.

Barrel

Made by the cold hammer forging method, the barrel is of a #6-contour varmint profile, 610mm (24") long and matte blued to match the rest of the action. It has no iron sights and the crown is neatly finished in a recessed target-style profile. Internally, the one in 9" twist is superbly finished and should shoot all .224 bullet weights well, though it's principally designed for .223 Remington loads with bullet weights from 60gr and heavier. The CZ 527 MDT Varmint is offered only in the .223 Remington calibre.

Stock


This is what gives the rifle its purpose and MDT of Canada is at the forefront of rifle chassis design and manufacture. The LSS-XL Generation-2 unit is pure quality,





The all-steel five-shot detachable box magazine sits securely in the magazine well.





This Month's Vortex Specials


 Vortex Fury HD500 Rangefinding binos 10x42, 5-5000 yard reflective measurement Was \$2495 this month just **\$1999**

 Vortex Crossfire HD 10x42 Binos Was \$425 this month just **\$299**

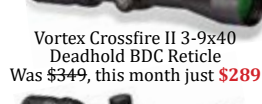
 Vortex Impact 850 Laser Rangefinder Was \$425 this month just **\$349**

 Vortex Razor HD 4000 Rangefinder Up to 4000 yards ability Was \$895 this month just **\$759**


 Vortex Diamondback Spotter Vortex Diamondback 20-60x80 Angled Spotting scope Was \$895 this month just **\$715**

 Vortex Diamondback 4-12x40 Deadhold BDC Reticle Was \$450, this month just **\$349**

 Vortex Crossfire II 3-9x40 Deadhold BDC Reticle Was \$349, this month just **\$289**

 Vortex Crossfire II 4-12x40 Deadhold BDC Reticle Was \$395, this month just **\$310**

 Vortex Crossfire II 6-18x44 Deadhold BDC Reticle Was \$535, this month just **\$385**

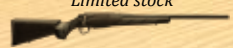
 Vortex Viper PST Gen 2 5-25x56 FFP MOA or MRAD EBR7C Reticle Was \$2200, this month just **\$1680** Bonus Free Vortex Lens Cleaning Pen


 Vortex Strike Eagle 1-8x24 AR-BDC2 Reticle Was \$790, this month just **\$579**




Insane Tikka Clearance

Limited stock

 Tikka Lite 20" threaded 6.5CM Was \$1215, now just **\$895**
Add a factory muzzle brake for just \$100
Add a spare factory 6-shot mag for just \$55

 Tikka Varmint Stainless 20" threaded .308 Win Was \$1700, now just **\$1359**
Free factory muzzle brake valued at \$200
Add a spare factory 6-shot mag for just \$55

 Tikka CTR 20" threaded .308 or 24" threaded 6.5CM Was \$1965, now just **\$1595**
Add a factory muzzle brake for just \$130 - normally \$260
Add a spare factory 10-shot mag for just **\$120** - normally \$240



Crazy Steyr RFP Deal

 Steyr RFP 22LR semi-auto pistol Cased with one mag Was \$715 - just **\$299**

 Steyr Ranger .308 Last available, now discontinued. Reduced to clear, amazing value. Normally \$3600 High round mag kit & 2x10-rnd mags Adjustable cheekpiece, muzzle brake, integral bipod Further reduced to **\$2395**

 Steyr SSG-04A1 .308 and .300 Win Mag Was \$5170, limited stock at **\$3875**




 Nite Site Spotter Xtreme Hand-held Night Vision System Just **\$899**, save \$1000, was \$1099



Sauer Sale

 Sauer 100 XT, all available Cals Just **\$995** with free spare mag and rings


 Sauer 100 Classic, all available Cals Just **\$1095** with free spare mag and rings


 Sauer 404 Classic XT 270, 308 or .30-06 Reduced to **\$3249**




Massive Trijicon Clearance


Trijicon Accupower Scopes


 Trijicon Accupower 2.5-10x56 Green or red duplex was \$1340, just **\$970**


 Trijicon Accupower 3-9x40 Red or green duplex or MOA dot was \$1385, just **\$795**


 Trijicon Accupower 4-16x50 Red or green duplex, red mil-square or red MOA was \$1675, just **\$1145**


Trijicon Accupoint Scopes

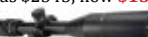
 Trijicon Accupoint 1-4x24 amber duplex Was \$1845, just **\$1195**

 Trijicon Accupoint 1-6x24 Green duplex or green circle dot Was \$2345, just **\$1599**

 Trijicon Accupoint 2.5-10x56 Duplex or mil-dot in amber or green Was \$1825, just **\$1145**

 Trijicon Accupoint 2.5-12.5x42 Green duplex or MOA dot Was \$2175, just **\$1490**

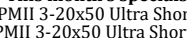
 Trijicon Accupoint 4-16x50 Green mil-dot or MOA-dot Was \$2345, now **\$1599**


 Trijicon Accupoint 5-20x50 Green or amber in mil-dot or duplex Was \$2560, just **\$1570**


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This month's specials

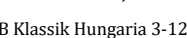
 PMII 3-20x50 Ultra Short S&B PMII 3-20x50 Ultra Short P4FL Was \$5760, limited stock at **\$2995**

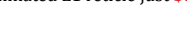
 PMII 5-20x50 Ultra Short S&B PMII 5-20x50 Ultra Short P4FL Was \$5075, limited stock at **\$2995**

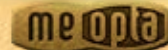
 S&B PMII 1-8x25 Shortdot CC CQB2 Was \$4510, limited stock at **\$3495**

 S&B Exos 1-8x24 FD7 Was \$3095, limited stock at **\$2695**

 S&B Summit 2.5-10x40 A4 or A7 reticle Special price while stock lasts Normally \$2200 just **\$1690**


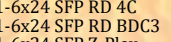

 S&B Hungaria 8x56 A4 or A7 reticle just **\$895**

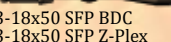
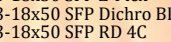
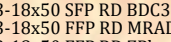

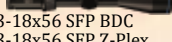
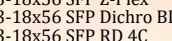
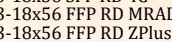
 S&B Klassik Hungaria 3-12x50 Illuminated L1 reticle just **\$1299**


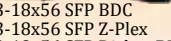
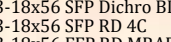
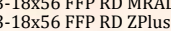
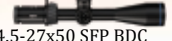
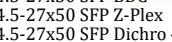


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 Optika 6 1-6x24 SFP RD 4C \$750
 Optika 6 1-6x24 SFP RD BDC3 \$750
 Optika 6 1-6x24 SFP Z-Plex \$680

 Optika 6 3-18x50 SFP BDC \$820
 Optika 6 3-18x50 SFP Z-Plex \$820
 Optika 6 3-18x50 SFP Dichro BDC \$880
 Optika 6 3-18x50 SFP RD 4C \$880
 Optika 6 3-18x50 SFP RD BDC3 \$880
 Optika 6 3-18x50 FFP RD MRAD \$940
 Optika 6 3-18x50 FFP RD ZPlus \$940

 Optika 6 3-18x56 SFP BDC \$880
 Optika 6 3-18x56 SFP Z-Plex \$880
 Optika 6 3-18x56 SFP Dichro BDC \$940
 Optika 6 3-18x56 SFP RD 4C \$940
 Optika 6 3-18x56 FFP RD MRAD \$999
 Optika 6 3-18x56 FFP RD ZPlus \$999

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 Optika 6 4.5-27x50 SFP Z-Plex \$940
 Optika 6 4.5-27x50 SFP Dichro 4D \$999
 Optika 6 4.5-27x50 SFP RDR 4C \$999
 Optika 6 4.5-27x50 SFP RD BDC3 \$999
 Optika 6 4.5-27x50 FFP RD MRAD \$1100

 Optika 6 5-30x56 FFP Dichro BDC \$1260
 Optika 6 5-30x56 FFP RD Mil-dot 3 \$1260
 Optika 6 5-30x56 FFP RD MRAD \$1350



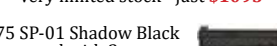
 CZ 455 Thumbhole Carbon .22LR Reduced to **\$935**

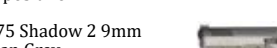
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CZ 527 MDT Varmint rifle in .223 Remington

the chassis consisting of the aluminium backbone which supports bedding of the barrelled action, integral aluminium triggerguard, ventilated fore-end design with M-LOK compatibility and rubber AR-style grip attached to the backbone via a hex-bolt through the grip.

The magazine well is built into the chassis body and accepts the CZ five-shot magazine. It clips into position easily and can be removed by pressing a button on the left of the chassis body. The barrel is naturally free floating along its entire length.

A single sling swivel stud is attached to the underside of the fore-end but with the M-LOK slots it's easy to install any bipod-mounting hardware. To the rear of the chassis is the buttstock, a FAB Defence unit attached to the chassis via a baffle tube which is adjustable for length of pull (LOP) with five pre-determined positions. By pressing a small latch on the underside of the buttstock, LOP can be moved from 295mm to 380mm with three positions in between the minimum and maximum.

A rubber pad is fitted to the buttstock and provides a slip-free surface when shouldered, not to dampen recoil. The buttstock also has provision for attaching a side-sling mount which could be handy shooting Precision Rifle Series disciplines where the rifle is carried then shot from a stationary position. There's also provision for adjusting comb height using the Core-CP comb and this adjustable unit pivots from its rear and moves upwards at the front.

At the range

The rifle was supplied with a Meopta Meostar R2 2-12x50 RD riflescope and matching CZ rings tailored specifically for the 16mm dovetailed receiver. The gun was cleaned thoroughly to remove any factory

Range testing - 5-shot groups in mm at 100m

Factory load	Best	Worst	Average*
Winchester Super X 55gr Jacketed Soft-Point	22	40	31
Winchester Varmint X 55gr Polymer Tip	15	32	22
Browning BXV 50gr Varmint Expansion Tip	24	40	32
Winchester Super X 64gr Soft-Point	18	39	29

* Average calculated from five 5-shot groups

preservatives and once the optics were bore sighted and initial point of impact adjusted, accuracy testing was done at 100m.

Being a small centrefire varmint cartridge, five 5-shot groups were fired for each Winchester and Browning ammunition brand supplied, the barrel cleaned between changes in ammo. The table above outlines the best, worst and group averages for each, shot in pleasant range conditions conducive to shooting good groups.

One small issue did impact adversely on what was otherwise an excellent rifle. When setting up the Meopta Meostar scope in matching CZ 527 rings, the presence of the Core-CP adjustable comb, even at its lowest setting, made it impossible to line up my dominant eye with the scope's eye-box, regardless of length of pull setting.

Higher scope rings would have been an easy fix but mounting a scope as low as possible is the way many Australian shooters like to set up their optics, high-mounted scopes a European trait not many of us subscribe to (I had to remove the adjustable comb by following a YouTube video). While a user manual was supplied for the MDT chassis, no guide was supplied for the FAB Defence buttstock or Core-CP adjustable comb, something Winchester Australia might note.

Overview

The CZ 527 MDT Varmint should be on the shortlist of the shooter and hunter looking at a chassis-stocked rifle made to shoot medium to long distances over a bench or prone from a shooting mat, the MDT LSS-XL2 chassis paired with the FAB Defence buttstock a perfect platform for the varmint barrelled CZ 527. With decent factory ammo or tuned handloads, shooting accurately out to 500m and beyond should be within easy reach using a quality optic like the Meopta Meostar or ZD range. The CZ 527 MDT Varmint in .223 Remington retails for \$2250 and is available from your Winchester dealer. More at winchesteraustralia.com.au. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Ceska Zbrojovka (CZ), Czech Republic

Model: CZ 527 MDT Varmint

Distributor: Winchester Australia

Action: Bolt, 90-degree lift, micro length Mauser Control Round Feed, integral 16mm dovetails for scope mounting

Barrel: Cold hammer forged, #6 contour, 610mm (24"), one in 9" twist rate, recessed target-style crown

Metal finish: Matte blue

Calibre: .223 Remington only (tested)

Magazine: Detachable box, all-steel construction, five-shot capacity

Stock: MDT LSS-XL Generation-2 aluminium chassis, FAB Defence buttstock with baffle tube, Core-CP adjustable comb

Safety: Top tang mounted, two-position

Trigger: Single stage with set option, fully adjustable

Overall length: 1030-1110mm (dependant on buttstock position)

Weight: 3.96kg (bare)

RRP: \$2250



Range testing the CZ 527 was a pleasure with the Meopta Meostar riflescope fitted.



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The Offsider

a hunting buddy for life

Chas Harding



I came to serious gundogs in my thirties and was fortunate to have as my mentor a gundog trial champion and dedicated bird hunter. Under his tutelage I learned the following three basic principles - and one sad reality - behind a good gundog.

Bonding

Dogs threw their lot in with us thousands of years ago and together we've hunted ever since. This inbuilt desire to bond with humans is hardwired in their DNA and it's this trait you work on from the day the pup comes home.

To help promote this bond the pup should have only one boss - you. You feed, water, protect, travel, walk, socialise, discipline with respect and play with him. By sharing your life 24/7 with your dog through weeks 8-14 you'll have laid the foundation for a life companion whose devotion to you is complete.

The technique I use with pups to develop the 'look for the boss' trait is to walk them on a vacant country golf course down open fairways where there are usually a few big trees. I let the pup run around and, while doing his own thing, step behind a tree where I can watch him. Soon he'll realise he's on his own and a little panic will set in and as soon as I see this I step out from behind the tree as if nothing has happened. He'll run to me with relief in his eyes, the fear of being alone gone.

I repeat this several times during the walk, each time letting the panic level rise slightly before nonchalantly showing myself and after a week of this he doesn't do his own thing all the time but often stops to check where I am. In week two I do the same but with the wind at our backs. Now when he's out front and I step behind the tree I let him pretty well panic and he'll run back into the wind towards where he last saw me. Unknown to him his best asset - his nose - is working in tandem with his best ally - the wind. He doesn't know it yet but is tracking me by scent.

Always make a fuss of him when he finds

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The Offsider - a hunting buddy for life

you. Remember, you are each other's world. After several weeks, remembering not to totally panic him, you'll find he doesn't go far without looking for you and if he does chase a plover he'll come back using his nose and the wind.

The benefits of this learned behaviour is essential for his life as your hunting dog. You know he can track a wounded bird, swim downstream after a floating duck, be unsighted in thick scrub yet always find his way back, tracking you with his nose. And when his eyes and ears through age start to fail him, his nose won't let him down. It's a great feeling knowing the offsider can always find you and, more importantly, wants to find you.

Control

There are four non-negotiable commands your dog must always obey. Drill this concept of compliance into him and he'll be a pleasure to have and work with in any company or situation. The commands are 'come', 'sit/stay', 'heel' and 'no' and if you get your dog bulletproof on these, without exception, he's always under control and you and he will be a happy team.

One thing: It's vital to have a 'release from command' word - I use 'okay' as a signal he's in relax mode, time to be a free dog. Training books are available to help teach these commands - *Game Dog* by Richard A. Wolters and *Retriever Training* by Tom Dokken two of the best.

And a few points on training: Never give a command you can't enforce - best to say

nothing or the dog will think 'I don't have to do that'; as a trainer you'll have days where things just don't work so cease training by ending on a good note like an easy 'sit'; repetition over time is the way to success but don't overdo it in the same session; make sessions relatively short but regular and reinforce previously learned behaviour; always end with a bit of play and praise for a job well done.

He is your dog

My mentor made it clear your dog is to do what *you* want and *not* what others expect it to. He trains his dogs to run/swim in a straight line to the bird and return on the same line or collect the furthest away bird first if there are several. Others may just be happy to have two birds in the bag, even if stones have to be thrown to indicate their position and he goes the long way round to get them.

I'm pleased he told me that as my dogs would never have completed a trial course but they do exactly what I want them to and that's what's important. What follows are several things I've taught my gundogs, over and above the four essentials, as I feel these skills greatly enhance their versatility and enjoyment.

I preface this with the recommendation to always help your dog out if you can in the tasks you set - work him into the wind, give him a hand on a high ute if asking him to get in the back, especially as he ages etc.

Hand signals: In conjunction with the verbal command I teach three hand

The ability to 'sit/stay' is imperative when stalking on.



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- Remington 700 BDL short and long action
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The Offsider - a hunting buddy for life

signals - 'sit', 'come' and 'back'. Many times when creeping up on duck dams or stalking deer in the open you want your dog to stay while you go on alone, and the less movement visible by your quarry the better. You're close to the quarry so can't whistle or speak and the ability to sit him by hand signal is a godsend.

Similarly, once you've completed a stalk you may be so far away he can't hear you, especially if windy, then the hand signal to 'come' delivered from distance is a great tool. These signals are easy to instil. As you voice the command when they're learning as pups, simultaneously make the appropriate hand movement and they learn either/or together. For 'come' I spread my arms horizontally like an open embrace, very visible, and for 'sit' I raise both arms vertically, again visible from afar.

'Up': This one makes your life easy. Wet, muddy dogs that need lifting into ute trays during a day's hunting become very tiresome and it's a pleasure to know your dog can leap on command with confidence, especially at night. Start with low objects and gradually increase the height.

'Over': This one's great on tight mesh fences, electric fences and post and rail fences. Shooting on a dairy farm or small-holding with multiple and electric fences will have you teaching your dog this if he doesn't already do it. Again, start low and help him out by holding wires down if you can.

'Back': I find this command the trial dog

people use essential in good retrieving. The ability to send the dog away for some distance (200-300m) until he catches wind of the subject is right up there for me. The signal I use is right arm raised vertically. Get him out there where he can use his nose.

Night work, lights and noise: At night my dog becomes invaluable. We do lots of shooting with a spotlight in crops, long grass and run country where animals are hard to find once downed. The dog has to work in close proximity to lots of centrefire rifle fire without flinching, be immune to bright lights in his eyes as he returns with game and be able to find multiple unsighted downed animals in various directions and distances around the vehicle.

The latter is simply nose work in the dark and easily taught with single/multiple staged retrieves upwind at night. Bright lights on and off in his eyes is taught as a pup at meal time - feed him using a head torch and flashing a powerful light over and across him, he loves his food and soon won't even notice.

Constant centrefire rifle fire needs careful introduction. Again at feed time when he's young, make irregular sudden noises, gradually increasing their intensity and duration. Another good idea is to take the pup to the range and, at some distance from the firing line, play with him and give him a few dummies to retrieve. His mind will be on other things and noise just another part of life. Move him closer as he gains confidence

until close to the firing line and let him see you're not concerned.

I take lots of pleasure from all facets of the offsider's work but one of the best is to see him run a broad acre crop in darkness with torch beam shadowing as he searches for the unknown. He has the confidence to know you've sent him for something and knows it's his job to find it.

When he turns on the scent, zig-zags upwind and finally stands over the animal, looks back into your light with tail wagging and eyes bright, he knows his job's done. He's happy and you are indeed a happy dogman. He knows as you do you couldn't have found that animal without his help and he loves knowing he's part of the team.

The sad reality

The only downside to gundogs is their short working lifespan. You have them at their peak from years three to seven if you're lucky and my advice is to make the most of those years and hunt with your dog at every chance. Take the lows with the highs, not every day goes as planned but when it does and his performance is perfection, these memories will last forever.

It's hard not to be sentimental about your gundog, a truly fine companion and if you're blessed with good ones throughout your shooting life then toast the gundog gods at every opportunity. ●





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original 1928 Rigby rifle design, on the magazine floor plate is the engraving of 'W.D.M.B.', as per Bell's original rifle. Other features include hand

selected walnut with Rigby oil finish, a spoon bolt handle, Mauser flag safety, an ivory front fore sight and custom design rear half moon sight, regulated at 100, 300 and 400 yards, as per the original rifle.

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The project -

building a TSP X chassis rifle

Daniel O'Dea



Components laid out prior to assembly.

Aussies love a DIY project as sometimes just the idea of personal input adds joy over simply buying something out of the box, not to mention the pleasure involved in customisation and having a finished venture just the way you want it or built to your budget.

In last month's edition we looked at a new modular rifle chassis designed and manufactured right here in Australia by Southern Cross Small Arms - the TSP X. There are lots of fine off-the-shelf chassis-style rifles these days from almost all the major manufacturers but in reviewing the TSP X chassis I thought it might be good to take a closer look at what you need to put together your own chassis build.

In addressing this project I wanted to keep it both simple and within reach of those on a budget, preferably without the need to employ gunsmithing services or buy a complete donor rifle to start with. As such, I'm looking at this as a basic 'build' rather than 'custom' rifle project, the main difference in my analogy being in a custom project you might start with an action and raw barrel blank you've tuned, profiled, chambered, head-spaced, fitted etc by a qualified gunsmith, while in this example we're simply taking off-the-shelf components for DIY assembly.

These days, seeing the opportunity modern chassis rifles present, some major

manufacturers offer barrelled actions as opposed to completed rifles, with just such build projects in mind. Howa are one who offer complete barrel action assemblies of various calibres and profiles at a very reasonable price, and as the TSP X chassis has a Howa-compatible variant I thought this would be a good start.

I was looking to build a medium-weight rifle for medium to long-range work and having used several rifles already in the calibre this was the ideal opportunity to jump on the 6.5 Creedmoor bandwagon and build it in that. Research revealed Howa had exactly what I was after, a Howa 1500 barrelled action in 6.5 Creedmoor with a medium-heavy profiled barrel, heavy enough but not axle shaft diameter.

To make it even better the barrel was threaded for a muzzle brake and the unit came with Howa's HACT two-stage trigger system, all the bottom metal and an oversized tactical bolt knob. With the TSP X chassis I wouldn't need the bottom metal (magazine box and floorplate) but some other chassis systems can use these or alternative parts. With the TSP X I'd only need an AI pattern magazine.

The only other parts I'd need would be a rail and rings to mount a scope and looking to take advantage of the long-range capabilities of the 6.5 Creedmoor round, I felt a 20MOA rail would be in order. For those

wondering what exactly a 20MOA rail is, it simply means that rather than the scope rail being perfectly flat and parallel to the bore axis, it cants downwards slightly towards the front of the barrel which, in turn, provides more usable elevation (in this case 20MOA) in scope adjustment.

So, if say your scope as standard has 30MOA up and 30MOA down turret adjustment, by using a 20MOA rail you end up with 50MOA adjustment for elevation (up) and 10MOA adjustment for inclination (down) allowing turret adjustment for elevation out to much longer ranges. US manufacturer Warne has a large selection of scope mounting options including their relatively new and well-priced Mountain Tech range of lightweight precision rails and rings. This range includes a 20MOA rail option for Howa 1500 and Weatherby Vanguard variants so that and a set of 30mm rings would do nicely.

The Howa 1500 6.5 Creedmoor barrelled action selected comes threaded 5/8" x 24 to accept a muzzle brake and with any longer-range rifle, anything that mitigates muzzle lift and recoil is an advantage as it's good to be able to spot your shots through the scope. As such I felt an effective muzzle brake would be in order. ACT-based GC Precision Developments not only make a range of precision long range rifles but suppressors (for LE and Permit) and

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The project - building a TSP X chassis rifle



Step 1: Remove standard fixed magazine and floorplate from barrelled action.

high efficiency muzzle brakes and I run one of theirs on a Remington 700 in .308 Winchester set up for long-range work. GCPD recently unveiled a newer 'User Timed' three chambered muzzle brake I was keen to try so this would be a great opportunity.

A few calls and emails and everything was ordered from the relevant suppliers. Another thing I'd need for the project would be tools, thankfully nothing too exotic just a handful of various sized hex (Allen) keys and a torque wrench, all of which I had. When everything arrived I started the build.

Unboxing the Howa barrelled action the first job was to remove the bottom metal - magazine floorplate, internal box and spring - which as mentioned was superfluous. Next step was to unpack the TSP X chassis which comes with a detailed schematic diagram and step-by-step instructions along with all bolts and components. Starting on the assembly the outlined steps were as follow:

Step 1: In using a Howa action you must remove it from the stock and bottom metal (based on working from a donor rifle) and as I'd started with a barrelled action and had already removed the bottom metal, I was ahead of the game.

Step 2: Invert the action and position the TSP X chassis inlet, confirm alignment then inset the provided front and rear action screws and tighten. Suggested torque setting for Howa actions is 65in/lb which happens to be the fixed torque setting on my Warne TW65 torque wrench, so I used that.

Step 3: Assemble and secure the butt-stock to the TSP X chassis inlet and once the minor stock components are assembled (cheekrest etc) simply line up the recess and lug of the two assemblies and insert and tighten the single M8 x25mm bolt.

Step 4: Attach the fore-end which, like the stock, is a simple matter of lining up and bolting the assemblies together, in this case with two M6 20mm bolts. However,



Step 2: Barrelled action locked down in the TSP X chassis inlet.



Step 3: TSP X stock bolted in place.



Step 4 has the fore-end mounted and tightened down.



The final step is fitting up the magazine and grip adapters (hex keys show bolt locations).

there's another minor step in the case of the Howa action which is inserting the recoil lug set screw and giving that a tweak to lock up the bedding.

Step 5: Position and secure both the magazine and grip adapters that bolt to the chassis inlet via another handful of bolts, the grip adapter with a single M6 35mm bolt from the top just behind the receiver

tang and two small M4 x 10 each side of the magazine release, and the magazine adapter with another two 20mm bolts. The grip itself being a standard MSR/AR Milspec uses a single 1/4 28 UNF threaded bolt as opposed to all the other metric bolts in the build.



HUNTER

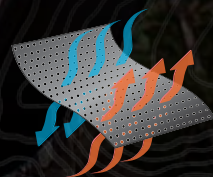
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The project - building a TSP X chassis rifle

The instructions include torque settings for all bolts while a medium strength thread locking agent such as Loctite 243 is recommended and was used in this instance. I'd note the assembly does vary slightly for the TSP X chassis depending on action type but, as with this one, all are pretty simple to put together.

To complete the build I installed the Warne 20MOA Mountain Tech rail to the Howa receiver using the Torx T-15 socket capped screws provided with a dab of Loctite and torqued down with my Warne TW1 25in/lb wrench. The Mountain Tech 30mm rings were then fitted and an on-loan Zeiss 5-30x50 V6 scope mounted.

Last thing to do was remove the muzzle thread cap and install the GCPD high efficiency muzzle brake. Unlike units which have to be timed (lined up) using a crush washer this unit comes with its own locking ring (jam nut). To install you screw the jam nut to the muzzle thread until it contacts the end face, then with anti-seize grease applied to muzzle thread screw the muzzle brake itself on until it contacts the nut.

Back it off to line up horizontally and while holding it in place use the supplied spanner to tension the jam nut, locking the muzzle brake into position. Not much force

is needed and this system allows for quick removal if required for fitment of other accessories such as suppressors where allowed under permit.

I'd successfully completed my own chassis build, turning a bunch of precision parts into a functional modern-day chassis rifle. As a proud creator naturally, I couldn't wait to get to the range and start running it in and working up some loads. Early days so far, but all looks promising with some starting loads providing sub-MOA groups and I look forward to wringing the best out of it.

In summary, building the rifle on Southern Cross Small Arms' TSP X chassis was a simple and enjoyable process, fairly intuitive, instructions easy to follow and all with basic knowledge and tools. To state the obvious, always ensure any firearm or action is completely unloaded with bolt removed before starting such a build and, equally importantly, ensure any upgrades or modifications fall within state regulatory requirements. ●

Build components

Barrelled action: Howa 1500, Medium profile in 6.5 Creedmoor with HACT trigger system and Tactical bolt knob. osaaustralia.com.au.

Chassis: Southern Cross Small Arms, TSP X Howa Short Action Chassis. scaa-au.com.

Magazine: AI Pattern Accurate Mag (note: genuine AI mags recommended) osaaustralia.com.au.

Muzzle brake: GCPD high efficiency 'User Timed' three chambered. gcpdarms.com.

Scope rail: Warne Mountain Tech 20MOA Howa Short Action 1913 rail. tsaoutdoors.com.au.

Scope rings: Warne Mountain Tech 30mm lightweight low-precision rings. tsaoutdoors.com.au.

Scope: Zeiss V6 5-30x50 osaaustralia.com.au.

Tools used by author

Hex keys: 2.5mm, 3mm, 4mm, 5mm, 6mm, 3/16"; torque wrench; Warne TW1 and TW65 scope mount torque wrenches; Loctite 243 thread locker; Tipton gun vice.

Daniel looks forward to using this new build on medium-sized game.





Commonsense prevails on NT rifle class

Nadia Isa

Northern Territory Police have performed a U-turn on a decision to reclassify certain rifles in the territory, which it said operate like semi-automatics. The announcement to re-categorise the rifles from the least restrictive A and B licence categories into C and D was made late last year.

SSAA (NT), along with the NT Firearms Council and SIFA has been lobbying Northern Territory Police and Police Minister Nicole Manison against the reclassification and SSAA member Andrew Armstrong took the matter to the Firearms Appeals Tribunal last month.

The matter heard by the tribunal was the Commissioner's declaration to reclassify: 'All linear repeating firearms chambered with rimfire ammunition to be Category C firearms'; and

'All linear repeating firearms chambered with centrefire ammunition to be Category D firearms'.

"The NT Police representative indicated

the Commissioner would be withdrawing the declaration with the possibility of a future review if deemed necessary," said Mr Armstrong. "But given this matter was brought before the tribunal, we have asked that the appeal be considered and upheld in order for the matter to be finalised, even though the police have indicated the declaration is to be withdrawn."

The directive by the Northern Territory Police Firearms Policy and Recording Unit was announced in October last year, advising the Savage A22R .22 rifle along with centrefire rifles such as the Verney Carron Speedline were being reclassified from A and B categories to C and D respectively. Owners were told they must 'dispose' of those firearms within three months, which was then extended by an additional three months after lobbying by SSAA (NT).

In letters to NT Police Commissioner Jamie Chalker and Minister Manison, SSAA (NT) said the declarations to reclassify the

rifle were made without consultation with relevant stakeholders.

SSAA (NT) also said the reclassification raised significant concerns for its members and asked that declarations be revoked.

The letters included seven main concerns to be considered as a matter of urgency, including: "At no time was our organisation, or anyone representing shooters, consulted or spoken to whatsoever about re-categorisation of these firearms. This matter took us by complete surprise and came without any apparent justification or reason."

In a statement to the SSAA, an NT Police spokesperson said: "NT Police are repealing the declaration with a view to engaging in more consultation with all parties involved, in order to make a considered and informed decision on the classification of these types of firearms." ●





Pedersoli High Wall

fun and flair combined

Senior Correspondent John Dunn

For the past five decades or so the Italian family firm of Davide Pedersoli has probably built and sold more reproduction muzzle-loading and black powder cartridge firearms than any other producer in the world. The Pedersoli range of re-enactment, target, hunting and sporting arms and accessories is extensive and widely recognised for quality and durability.

What began as a niche market has become an international success story that offers something for everyone who enjoys the nostalgia and challenges of shooting older-style firearms. Long noted for their Sharps and Remington rolling block reproduction rifles, some years ago Pedersoli added another classic American single-shot to their line-up - a replica of the legendary Model 1885 Winchester High Wall.

Brief history

John Moses Browning of Ogden, Utah was issued patent #220271 on October 7, 1879 for "an improvement in breech loading firearms" - a single-shot falling block rifle that was quickly and widely recognised as an exceptional firearm for the times.

Sales were brisk from the earliest days of production and as the rifle's reputation grew it came to the attention of Winchester salesman Andrew McCausland who bought one, bundled it up with a reloading tool and sent the package to Winchester. About a week later Winchester vice-president Thomas Gray (T.G.) Bennett was on a train to Ogden with authorisation from his board of directors to buy full rights to the rifle. The rest, as they say, is history.

In 1883 Browning sold his patent to Winchester for the sum of \$8000 and from

that transaction the 1885 Winchester was born, based on the Browning patent but refined to suit mass production. This was also the start of Browning's long association with Winchester, one which would prove extremely beneficial and profitable to all concerned.

Winchester made the Model 1885 single-shot from 1885 until around 1920, and during that time it was available in both High and Low Wall configurations which offered a range of barrel and stock options in calibres that began with the humble .22 Short rimfire and finished with the somewhat larger .50/110 centrefire.

In the 100 years since production wound down, demand for the Model 1885 has never really ceased and these days, in all its variations, the Winchester single-shot is a collectable firearm in its own right. There

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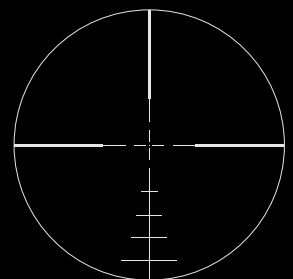
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Pedersoli High Wall fun and flair combined

always seems to be someone, somewhere looking for an action to use as the basis for a custom single-shot rifle. The growth of Western Action shooting and Black Powder Silhouette has created a renewed demand for such rifles and there are increasing numbers of hunters accepting the challenge of taking to the field with retro-style firearms in old-fashioned calibres. These days 'High Wall' has become more of a firearms style than a specific type and the demand just won't go away.

Pedersoli High Wall Classic

Anyone who likes older-style firearms with traditional metal finishes and a good walnut stock will appreciate the Pedersoli High Wall Classic. To a single-shot tragic like me it was irresistible, especially when you consider an original in similar condition will cost at least two or three times more. At first glance the rifle appears to be a replica of the thin side High Wall coil spring action introduced around 1908. It looks the part but when you peer a little closer you find that's not quite the case as the action has been completely redesigned.

It's still a lever-operated falling block that looks and works similar to the original but the mechanism is far more complex. Most if not all component parts are completely different and the rifle can't be disassembled as easily as Browning's master-piece of simplicity. That's not a criticism of the Pedersoli as the same can be said



of the Miroku 78, Uberti and Browning/Winchester High Wall clones which all lay claim to some Browning heritage.

The Pedersoli receiver and finger lever are beautifully colour case hardened as they were on the higher quality versions of the original Winchesters, the colours and patterns in such a finish unique to individual rifles and tending to give an air of eminence to any firearm they're applied to.

To load the rifle the finger lever is pushed down and forward, thus lowering the breech block and allowing a cartridge to be inserted into the chamber. When the lever is drawn back up against the stock, the breech closes and the hammer is pushed back into the safe or half-cock position, ready to be thumbed back to full-cock as required.

An adjustable single set trigger is fitted which allows it to be used normally if preferred or set by pushing it forward if required. A set trigger greatly reduces the amount of trigger pressure required to discharge the rifle, a recognised plus in terms of potential accuracy for target shooters but also in some hunting situations.

The full octagonal PMG (Pedersoli Match Grade) carbon steel barrel on the High Wall Classic is 813mm or 32" long, measuring 27mm across the flats at the breech end and 23.5mm at the muzzle. The broached rifling has six grooves with a 1:18" twist and external finish is matte black except at the muzzle which has been left in white.

Sights consist of a ramp adjustable rear, fashioned in the original Winchester style and a small blade fore sight, the top flat of the barrel carrying the inscription "D. PEDERSOLI TARGET-HI-WALL" just forward of the rear sight with the tang of the receiver drilled and tapped to accept a Vernier-type target sight if needed.

The two-piece stock is walnut with what appears to be a low sheen polyurethane finish. The fore-end is 25.5cm long, essentially round in cross-section with a wrap-around panel of chequering and is secured by a single screw into the bottom flat of the barrel. The butt has a chequered pistol grip and straight comb with a nice cheekpiece for right-handed shooters, the buttplate steel with matte finish to match the barrel and wood-to-metal and metal-to-metal fits on the rifle excellent.

This is no small rifle having an overall length of 123cm and weighing 5.3kg. As its name would imply that makes it more suitable for range work than hunting, though it would be useful for sit-and-wait hunting for larger game if the walk-in wasn't too far. ➤

High Walls have become more of a firearm style than a specific model. The Pedersoli with a Miroku M78 (top) and 2018 Winchester made by Miroku. Uberti also make a High Wall reproduction.



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Pedersoli High Wall fun and flair combined

Range testing

To give the rifle the best possible chance of showing what it could do, I knocked the rear sight out of its dovetail and fitted a Pedersoli aperture sight to the tang. I don't see open sights well any more and knew the aperture option would be easier.

Initial testing was at 50m using a variety of old handloads I had in my ammunition cabinet. Results varied, due in no small way to the mix of projectiles of different weights but the outlook was promising. The primary aim of the exercise was to gain a feel for the trigger which I used as normal and also in its set configuration.

I shot decent groups with Federal and Remington factory ammunition so by the time I was ready to move the targets out to 100m had some fairly lofty expectations on the sort of results I might achieve. The rifle didn't let me down and I'm sure the set trigger made a huge difference. Let-off was consistent and predictable, allowing a good sight picture to be maintained without straining.

The best group with Federal factory loads at 100m measured 50mm, the worst 63mm and I'm not sure I can hold any better than that. A target-style front sight would undoubtedly be an improvement given the factory-fitted sight is more suitable for hunting than anything else. Whether that would make any difference to the results is debatable but I expect it would.

Recoil wasn't an issue given the weight of the rifle and factory loaded .45/70 ammo doesn't come back really hard anyway. I enjoy shooting this rifle, accuracy is more than acceptable and I've no doubt in the right hands with some purpose developed handloads it would perform more than adequately as a competition firearm.

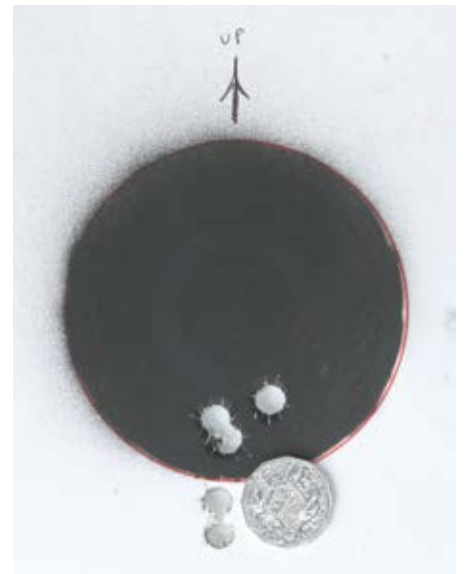
I suspect that's what it was designed for, though under the right circumstances it would also be useful as a sit-and-wait



Same name but different - the Pedersoli (top) with an original 1885 Winchester High Wall Winder Musket in .22LR.

hunting rifle. That's unlikely on my watch as to me it's more of a fun gun than anything, something to be enjoyed when the mood takes without being too serious about results.

There's a great deal of nostalgic satisfaction to be had from shooting older-style single-shot rifles like the Pedersoli High Wall, akin to stepping back in time to an age when life, technology and the world were all much simpler. That may not suit everyone but I'm sure there are lots of hunters and shooters out there who'd agree. ●



Best group so far with the Pedersoli - 50mm at 100m using Federal factory ammunition.



This is a big rifle in every respect, much too heavy to cart around the hills but fun to shoot on the range.

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Memories can be more valuable than trophies

Sam Garro

There's no set rule as to what represents a worthy trophy animal or specimen. Certainly there is a scoring system through Douglas Points (DP) or Safari Club International (SCI) which sets a level of achievement, including record-breaking scores, but irrespective of how average or grand the trophy may be it's only relevant to the individual and the importance it carries for them.

Trophy hunters have existed ever since man first hunted the wilds, collecting animal bones, hides and parts to fashion weapons, display and wear as body ornaments and more. Today, the desire to hunt and pursue trophy animals prevails among different ethnicities and cultures and in individuals of varying persuasions, backgrounds and professions.

A representative trophy animal

What represents a sought-after trophy to a hunter is a matter of personal perspective and what he or she is satisfied with. Many strive for the biggest and most

symmetrically shaped antlers or horns and high-scoring pig tusks of 30DP or more and repeat trips for such hunters are not uncommon until their quest is achieved. There's nothing wrong with that but in reality it's not easy to achieve and may mean passing up opportunities with no guarantees in future.

Record trophies can be harvested at the most unexpected time and with little effort, a matter of being in the right place at the right time. On the other hand some prefer a nice-looking head with reasonable, evenly-shaped antlers and are unconcerned with the biggest, while a few prefer irregular or oddly-shaped racks viewed as unique, others with the least luck happy to settle for any type of antlers, horns or tusks. Whatever the trophy you end up with, if it has meaning for you it's worth preserving and mounting.

Relevance to the hunter

As touched on, it's what matters to the individual that counts. One gentleman had

a European mount made of his sambar deer skull that resembled more a spiker with only six to seven-inch single vertical antlers - for him size didn't matter it was the experience and what he went through to take his first deer in the Victorian High Country.

Another only managed to score deer with malformed antlers, perhaps associated with genetics of deer of that area, but he kept them as they meant something to him. Another hunter shot and wounded a mature buffalo just before dark and returned the following morning in the hope of finding it dead and retrieving the horns only to find and disturb a different buffalo sleeping on a grassy bed. Fearing an attack was imminent he quickly delivered a felling shot to the head. It was only a young bull with small horns but the story behind it was worth taking those horns for.

A young hunter scoring his first trophy animal is more likely to be excited and overwhelmed by the whole experience and not necessarily by how big or grand

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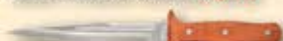
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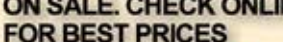
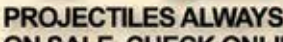
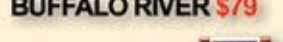
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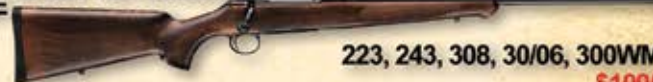
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Memories can be more valuable than trophies

the animal's tusks, antlers or horns may be and we tend to become more discerning with time and experience.

After the event

A set of reasonably sized boar tusks or jaws, antlers or horns may be taken only to be stowed away in a draw or corner of the garage, rarely to see the light of day then over time deteriorate to the point they're unsalvageable. It can often be the case the owner doesn't know how to preserve and mount them, when learning how is not that hard to do.

As an example a property manager had scored an impressive tusky boar measuring just under 30DP on a property he'd been managing in outback Bourke, NSW. After removing the head he stowed it intact in a chest freezer until he could decide what to do with it. Nine months later when we met I offered to boil the head out and mount the skull on a timber shield with picture inset and he was ecstatic with the finished work which takes pride of place on his wall.

Den or game room design

To avoid continually rearranging pictures,

mounts and collectables on walls or shelving, give some thought to the placement of items before commencing. Draw a layout diagram or picture where you'd like to position mounts and collectables for balanced and maximum visual effect.

The internet or eBay can be a convenient avenue to source firearms and hunting-related collectables. While I'm unlikely (never say never) to experience a sojourn in Africa or hunt British Columbia, I appreciate their game animals through my bronze wildlife statues acquired at gun and collectables shows. Travelling hunters collect knives, wooden statues, native craft-work, pelts and much more to decorate and remind them of special places visited.

As the collection grows the display area will change. The extent of trophy rooms and their displays can range from the conversion of a garage, erection of an additional room to, in the extreme, establishment of a separate building or house to accommodate life-size trophy mounts in their natural surroundings.

Quality of mounts

My own game room is filled with a collection of modest trophies comprised

predominantly of European skull mounts and two wild boar head or shoulder mounts. While my trophy wall displays may appear impressive, it's more down to the way they've been mounted and presented, not because they're record-breakers. My buffalo horns measure 93DP and not 110DP or better, deer antlers sport 3x4, 4x4 and 5x4 tines and not 6x6 or more and none of my feral goat horns have a spread of 40" or better. But each and every one holds a special attraction and place as they were hunted under fair and open range conditions and, importantly, for the memories attached.

Different elements

A trophy room or den is also about bringing together the different elements and incorporating those which have contributed directly or indirectly to your hunting existence or way of life. Hunting books and magazines that provided interesting and informative reading over the years, bullet boards, hunting scenes or pictures of famous hunters and authors, primitive or native hunting implements such as spears and boomerangs and wildlife statues are all considerations. ➤



Den walls displaying trophies and collectables.

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Memories can be more valuable than trophies

At one point I had furniture purposefully built to house the various items and collectibles, especially the many photo albums, bronze wildlife statues and my expansive collection of African safari hunting books by such noted authors as W.D.M. Bell, John A. Hunter, Frederick C. Selous, Arthur Newman, Australia's own John Dawkins and others.

Mount types and choices

Trophy mounts come in various forms, shapes, stances or poses from full-bodied, head or shoulder mounts to European full skull or cap mounts, the extent and style for the individual's preference and how much the pocket allows. These days, perhaps more than in the past when times were more accepting, we have greater consideration for youngsters who may be influenced or are more sensitive to, for example, the sight of a full or shoulder deer mount, hence the preference at times for European-style skull mounts.

But it also depends on the environment they're raised in and what they're accustomed to. My boar shoulder mounts don't draw admiration as they're unattractive critters associated with crop and property damage, so I don't have an issue with shoulder mounts.

Making the effort

Often at the end of an arduous but successful day's hunt you may feel exhausted and just want to return to camp. You snap a few photos and take some meat with the intention of returning the next day

to retrieve those tusks, antlers or horns. The following morning you're distracted by events or lose interest in retrieval, at other times, with the best intentions, you're prevented by inclement weather and return empty-handed.

There's also no guarantee the animal will remain intact due to marauding animals such as wild dogs, foxes and birds of prey and back home you wished you'd made the extra effort to retrieve them. Often you give up a potential trophy animal in the hope of scoring something better which may or may not eventuate.

Trophy hunters

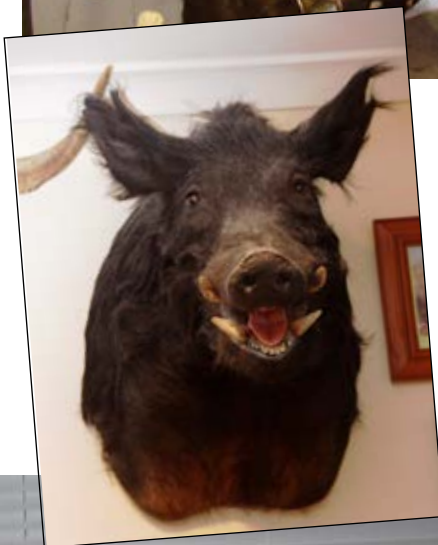
Aussie hunters travel to far-flung locations in pursuit of exotic and spectacular species just as hunters from Europe, South Africa, America and other places come here to hunt our deer species, feral game and Asiatic water buffalo.

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In the end, the den or your little corner of the house or shed where you keep your trophies and hunting gear is a place to appreciate and admire your hard-won spoils, a place to reflect on past hunts and special moments and even gather inspiration for your next hunt. ●



Sam collecting his NT boar from taxidermist.



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Meanwhile . . . back in the USSR the Baikal IJ-58 shotgun

Royce Wilson

From the legendary AK-47 and Mosin-Nagant M91/30 to the iconic TOZ-17 .22 rifle and Tokarev TT-33 handgun, Soviet firearms have a well-earned reputation for being rugged, simple, reliable and effective. Their hunting guns are just as sturdy as their military creations and few firearms illustrate that point quite as well as the Baikal IJ-58 double-barrelled shotgun which was made in large numbers, widely found throughout Australia, yet doesn't receive much attention despite having a fascinating story.

The Soviet Union was noted for being somewhat authoritarian so most people rather understandably assume that civilian firearms ownership was completely banned in the USSR. Surprisingly, it was not. While gun ownership was heavily restricted in the cities and ownership of handguns and military weapons almost completely out of the question for the average citizen, Soviet Russia was an enormous place and tens of millions lived in remote and rural areas where hunting wasn't just something fun to do but a vital way of putting food on the table and keeping wild animals out of the communal potato field.

After Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 gun laws were relaxed markedly, to the point

where anyone could buy a shotgun over the counter. This changed in 1959 with a Council of Ministers decree ending that but granting the right to hunt with approved firearms (shotguns) to any Soviet citizen who was a member of the officially endorsed local State Society of Hunters and Fishermen (there was only one in each area), passed tests on firearms and hunting safety and paid the appropriate fees.

There don't appear to have been restrictions on how many shotguns someone who went through this process could own, but it's unlikely to have been more than could be counted on one hand. Not that there was much variety anyway as, besides the subject of this article, the other major options for most hunters were the TOZ-B hammer SxS shotguns made by Tula, some single-barrel shotguns and, for those with a few more roubles, the Baikal IJ-54 SxS shotgun, a higher-grade gun featuring a W.W. Greener-style cross bolt on the action.

In short there was a respectable internal market in the USSR for hunting shotguns, which provided a double opportunity for the Soviet government beyond selling guns to domestic hunters and farmers. One thing the Soviet Union was perpetually short of was cold, hard cash. One thing it

was perpetually not short of was guns to sell, most of them made at Tula Arsenal in Moscow and the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant about 1200km east of the capital.

Marketing and branding were not strong points of the Soviet economy - the country's prestigious watch-maker Poljot was officially known as Moscow No.2 Watch Factory - and someone realised that if they wanted to sell sporting guns abroad they were going to need a catchier name than 'People's Commissariat of Defence Factory No.180' (the actual name of a 1930s Soviet hunting arms factory). Somehow the tag Baikal, after the Siberian lake, was arrived at with Vostok (Russian for 'east') chosen as the brand for target rifles and pistols being exported to the West.

The fact there was already a company named Vostok making wristwatches doesn't appear to have been considered an issue, although unlike Vostok-branded guns the wristwatch concern is still going today. The Baikal brand became best known for inexpensive shotguns, the overwhelming majority of them made at the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant who were more innovative than their counterparts at Tula. It has been suggested they were possibly stimulated by being further from Moscow and



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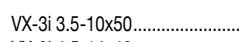
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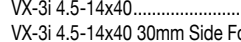
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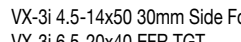
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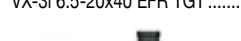
VX-3i 3.5-10x50..... \$930



VX-3i 4.5-14x40..... \$930



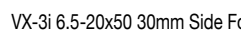
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Leupold RX-1300 TBR/W Camo	\$440
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The Baikal IJ-58 shotgun



Baikal IJ-58 12ga double-barrelled shotgun, this one fitted with aftermarket recoil pad.

more motivated to gain access to coveted Western goods from trade junkets and the like as a result.

Russian hunters needed a shotgun that would work in the harshest conditions and could be repaired with whatever tools were on hand and Baikal delivered exactly that. Vast quantities of single and double-barrel shotguns were made and sold under the Baikal brand, both domestically and internationally, one of the most ubiquitous being the IJ-58 shotgun (the other being the IJ-18 single-barrel shotgun found on rural properties across Australia), introduced in the late 1950s-early '60s.

Due to discrepancies translating from Cyrillic to English the guns are sometimes also referred to as IZH-58s but for the purposes of this article I have stayed with the nomenclature as stamped in English on guns exported to the West - IJ-58. This shotgun was made in four models - the IJ-58, IJ-58M, IJ-58MA and IJ-58MAE. The IJ-58 was the original but soon changed to the IJ-58M version, incorporating minor design improvements.

The IJ-58M and MA are the most commonly encountered variants, fitted with ejectors, and differ mainly in that the safety catch on the MA would engage automatically when the gun was broken open, many users disabling this and reverting the safety

to a completely manual operation. The MAE version had an automatic safety as well as ejectors and much nicer engraving on the action. All models had dual triggers and chrome-lined 28" barrels along with a nominally full and $\frac{3}{4}$ choke, although realistically it's often closer to 'full' and 'even fuller' chokes. They were generally chambered for 12ga $2\frac{3}{4}$ " shells although some examples were also made in 16ga and 20ga.

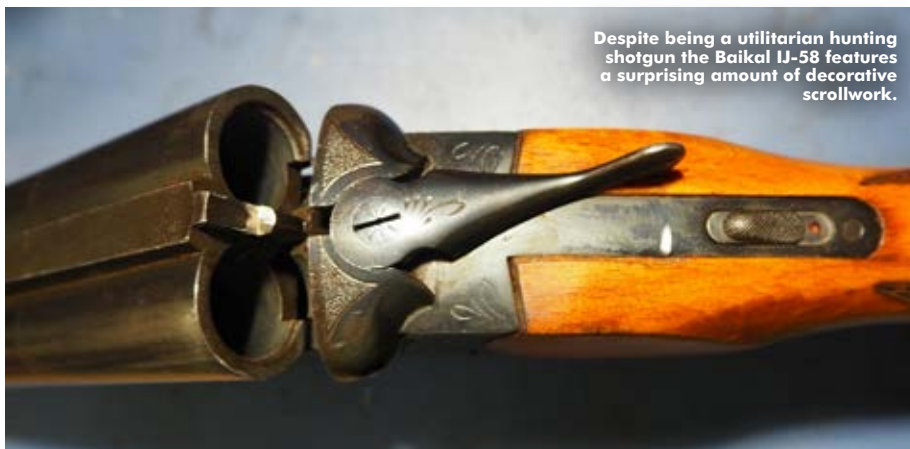
The guns were never going to win prizes for aesthetics as even when new it was jokingly said Baikal shotguns had been made from scrapped tractors and old Trans-Siberian railway sleepers. But they were built like a Soviet tank and that's a reason there's so many of them still kicking around, namely they're hardy, simple and dependable.

No-one knows exactly how many IJ-58s were made as anything relating to arms production in the Soviet Union was a military secret and people who went around talking about those tended to vanish into Gulags (if they were lucky). Most



Typical proof markings indicate the gun was made at the Izhevsk factory and proofed for both black powder and modern nitro ammunition.

This 1931 ad from Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, was aimed at the US market and shows a hunter trying to bring down a bear with a TOZ-B hammer shotgun.



Despite being a utilitarian hunting shotgun the Baikal IJ-58 features a surprising amount of decorative scrollwork.

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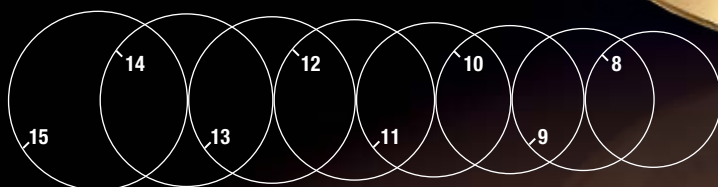
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The Baikal IJ-58 shotgun

of the companies importing Soviet firearms into the West no longer exist (much like the Soviet Union itself), so the best anyone has been able to come up with is “a lot”, probably in the hundreds of thousands.

The design was phased out around the time the Soviet Union collapsed, replaced with a more or less identical successor, the IJ-43 which is still in production today, along with several other Baikal-brand shotguns. These are currently made by the Kalashnikov Concern in Izhevsk and are popular in the UK where they’re regarded as affordable, no-frills guns which work reliably no matter the weather.

Sadly, due to embargoes imposed by Australia, Baikal shotguns (and indeed any Russian-made firearms) are prohibited from being imported here at present. Fortunately there are lots of them already in the country and readily available from the popular used gun websites for (at time of writing) around \$400 in good condition.

The IJ-58 is very much a field shotgun and well suited for hunting rabbits, foxes, pest birds and all the other things you’d use a 12ga side-by-side for. Weighing about 3.2kg they’re not especially heavy (which is why a recoil pad is often desirable) and are fitted with narrow sling swivels designed for 2cm-wide slings which can be hard to find at gunshops but are available online from eBay and the like.

IJ-58s are proofed for 1.25oz (36g) loads so will happily take almost all standard 2¾" shells but despite having chrome barrels are not rated for steel shot, so aren’t suitable for duck hunting in areas restricting the use of lead shot. Quite a few IJ-58s have had their barrels cut down to around 18-20"



This 1988 Soviet stamp (from a series commemorating hunting dogs) shows a Russian spaniel with duck-hunter using a Baikal IJ-58.



Side view of an IJ-58MAE action showing higher quality engraving work on this model.

for use as coach guns, both for Single Action Shooting and bush hunting, and for the bush are usually loaded with 00SG or SSG shells where, due to the lack of choke, they’re most effective at close range.

Whether it’s dropping bunnies and foxes

or dusting clay targets, Baikal IJ-58 shotguns are workhorses in the truest sense of the word and have been providing decades of unswerving, solid service from the steppes of Siberia to the forests of the UK to the Australian Outback and will doubtless soldier on for decades to come.

Further reading

There’s not a huge amount of information on Soviet-era shotguns available due to a combination of secrecy and the language barrier, but Russian researcher Aleksei Morozov maintains an informative blog entitled *The Sporting Bookworm* at sporting-bookworm.wordpress.com which contains a lot of useful facts on Soviet hunting firearms and was an invaluable source of reference for this article. There are also facts available on various shotgun-focused discussion forums including shotgunworld.com, doublegunshop.com and YouTube.

Like most Russian guns, part of the IJ-58’s attraction is learning about their history and discovering it’s more than just ‘an old Russian shotgun’ - and that they’re still as effective and dependable today as they were more than 50 years ago. ●



Left side of an IJ-58 action showing the engraving, scrollwork and ‘Made in USSR’ marking.

Specifications

Make: Baikal
Model: IJ-58 (also known as IZH-58)
Type: Double-barrelled shotgun
Action: Boxlock break-action
Calibre: 12ga (also 16ga and 20ga)
Barrels: 28", full and ¾ choke
Country of origin: Soviet Union
Produced: 1960-1990

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2020
The year of
Working Smarter



Build your own reloading bench

Chris Redlich

When space is limited we more often than not make do with what's available. Not satisfied at being relegated to the shed for reloading, I negotiated some space in the office of our new house to conduct one of my favourite hobbies in comfort.

A reloading bench doesn't need to take up too much room but must be functional. There are no set dimensions but strength is vital and while you may get by using an old timber table, there's no substitute for the strength steel has to offer. A laminate top such as melamine supported by a steel square hollow section (SHS) frame will enable a solid platform to mount the press and handle the rigours of repetitive reloading.

What you'll need (clockwise from top left): Earmuffs and safety glasses, welding visor and shield, leather welding gloves, inverter stick welder, filter mask for painting, spray gun, F-clamp, wire buff and carpenter's roofing square.

My frame design uses vertical supports angling back to the wall, a method which reduces floor space obstruction and allows for the transfer of weight through the press back to the wall.

Considerations

1: Ease of movement around the bench; 2: Dimensions (length and width) suitable for the work required; 3: A level top is paramount for positioning of precise electronic and manual scales.

After some serious thought I decided on a bench top 2m x 400mm, a conservative size but adequate for rifle cleaning and all my reloading needs. I drew a rough sketch of my proposed bench and began the build, the following steps and photos provided as a guide to help the DIY handyman in building a home reloading bench.

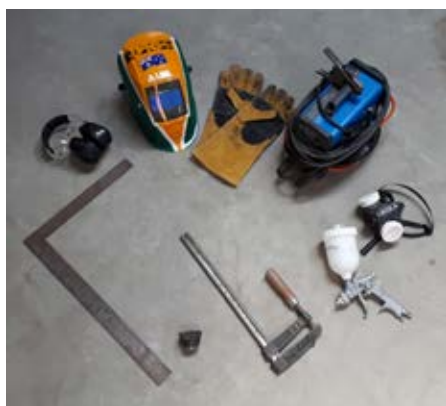
Step 1

Locate studs in the wall for positioning of vertical wall brackets. Studs are usually

spaced at 450mm centres but not always and a stud finder, available at most hardware stores, is handy for this. Make a note or slight marks on the wall of the stud positions, draw a sketch of the desired position and transcribe the measurements to it. Over my bench size of 2m long I needed three vertical supports at approximately 900mm (every second stud). Important: Ensure the bench support fasteners won't conflict with power cables hidden in the stud frame (an electrician can help with this).

Step 2

With all available dimensions to hand you can begin the build. Using an abrasive metal cut-off saw I cut the 40x40 and 30x30 x 2mm SHS to my allocated dimensions for all square and angle cuts. Make sure the steel is secure and hands are clear of the blade before cutting. With all cuts made, grind off of any excess burrs around the edges.



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Build your own reloading bench



Step 3

Find a clear flat work space and set out the steel for tack welding together. A gas MIG welder is perfect for light SHS but for those with a stick welder it's important to keep the amp adjustment low. Before you attempt any form of welding, ensure you have the correct safety shield visor to avoid weld flash or eye damage. Tack weld the frame to the desired dimensions, including both vertical and horizontal frame, and check the square with a carpenter's roofing square.

Step 4

Once the frame is tacked you can start fully welding it together. When welding light steel it's important to evenly distribute the heat of the arc to avoid blowing holes in



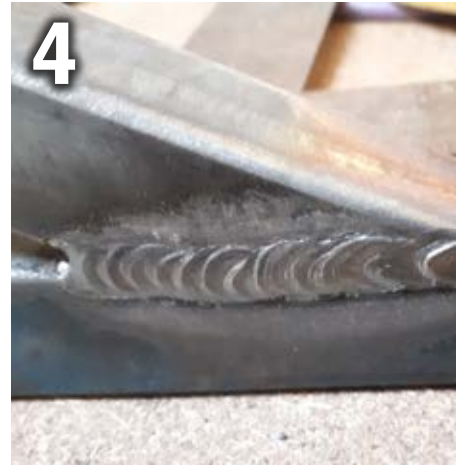
the steel. Weld one section of a join in rotation with all the others until all welds are completed, allowing the frame to cool down and not become distorted.

Step 5

Using a chipping hammer, remove all slag from welds and dress back any ugly welds to an acceptable look. Grind the welds flush on the surface where the bench top sits then finish off steel surfaces and welds with a rotary wire buff to remove any unwanted impurities and aid paint preparation.

Step 6

Measure and mark holes for bolting the frame to the wall. Centre punch the hole position and drill a pilot hole before



finishing with the correct diameter as this will help avoid wandering of the drill bit. I drilled 10.5mm holes to allow clearance for a 10mm diameter fastener.

Step 7

Before painting it's important to prepare by filing off all burrs and wiping the surface with a rag and paint thinner to clean and remove unwanted oil and grease. It's individual choice how you paint the surface but I used a spray gun with gloss enamel steel paint. Wearing a safety filter mask, select a well-ventilated area and apply two coats to all surfaces with even spray strokes for a good finish. I allowed 48 hours' drying before the next step. Note: The enamel paint could have been applied by brush.



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Build your own reloading bench



Step 8

Position frame against the wall until the vertical wall supports align with the stud positions as set out in Step 1. Enlist a helper to mark fastener positions to the wall and once again drill a pilot before the finishing hole. I used 10mm x 100mm coach screws as fasteners which required an 8mm finish hole. Bolt to the wall checking verticals for plumb and horizontal frame for level before tightening.

Step 9

With frame completed, cut the bench top to size and scribe to the wall. Using a good quality polyurethane adhesive apply even strokes of glue to the horizontal steel surface. Place the top carefully to the glue and clamp in position, wiping off any excess and allow adhesive to cure before removing clamps. Alternatively, screws can be used to fasten the top but I prefer a clear surface.



10

the press to be transferred to the wall. The bench is now ready for use.

Conclusion

I realise not everyone has the resources to undertake a project like this but my intent was to assist those who may be considering a similar venture and how to tackle it. I hope the process serves as an inspiration to build your own, saving you money and providing the joy you get from building something for yourself. Approximate material costs: \$130. ●



9

Step 10

The bench is almost ready for use but prior to mounting my press I took into consideration the space needed for rifle cleaning. I mounted the press directly over the right-hand vertical support and bolted it to the frame, thus allowing all forces generated by



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SW22

given some timely tweaks

Daniel O'Dea



Some years ago I reported on the release of the Smith & Wesson SW22 pistol in *Australian and New Zealand Handgun* magazine. At the time this innovative .22 target pistol was heralded for its modular design which made it easy to field strip for cleaning and to customise to the owner's specification. Smith & Wesson had collaborated with aftermarket suppliers in the US such as Volquartsen and Tandemkross so at the launch you could pick up the SW22 Victory and also select from a variety of reputable accessory parts to modify your new pistol.

Those familiar with the manufacturers would be well aware they have their own factory custom shop in the Smith & Wesson Performance Center which carries out duties such as fine-tuning and custom-engraving and delivers an extensive array of their own offerings which are basically core Smith & Wesson items tweaked and bettered.

For a comparison think in automotive terms the equivalent of Holden Special Vehicles, where you could send your standard Holden for engine or body improvements or alternatively buy a ready-made HSV product such as a Senator or Clubsport direct from the dealer. Performance Center is in effect Smith & Wesson's HSV.

As a short recap, in the Smith & Wesson SW22 we have a brushed stainless steel self-loading target-style pistol chambered in .22LR with a reasonably heavy profile barrel of 140mm (5.5") all weighing in at a shade over 1kg and being fed by a 10-round magazine. In the case of Smith & Wesson's Performance Center version, various improvements have been applied.

For the model as tested, the barrel has been upgraded to a 152mm (6") fluted target version, threaded and fitted with a custom muzzle brake that uniquely features five semi-spiral drilled flutes.

The next major enhancement is a Vortex Viper 6 MOA red dot sight. I'd note that in the kit with the pistol is a set of fully adjustable green fibre optic iron sights which can be swapped where the pistol might be used in target disciplines that disallow optical sights. The same rings true for the muzzle brake where a threaded end cap is also included.

Next we have Tandemkross 'hiveGrips' which wrap around from the front grip strap and have deep finger grooves to the front edge and also boast what's described as a target thumbrest, a groove directly behind the magazine release which wraps the thumb nicely into the grip. A raised hexagon pattern in the rubber grip surface provides a stable grasp and overall the gun feels comfortable in the hand.

The trigger has been upgraded with a flat-faced target format with adjustable trigger stop. In describing the trigger I'd say it has a bit of free play, almost to the stage where thereafter you hit a wall. Further take-up has some partial creep followed by a crisp, clean break. Ideally you could do without that creep but most importantly the trigger broke cleanly and consistently, a good start but perhaps it could benefit from further fine-tuning for the most serious target work.

At the end of that target thumbrest groove, standing proud is the next Performance Center addition in the extended magazine release. This raised



The pistol comes fitted with ergonomic Tandemkross 'hiveGrips'.

round knob is about 11mm in diameter and is easy to move on to. When pressed, the magazine literally springs out of the well, presenting an excellent advancement for swift magazine changes of action-styled rimfire events. Likewise the magazine well itself is bevelled to speed up the reload process while other small details such as the custom polished feed ramp, steel reinforced polymer safety catch and supplied Picatinny rail finish off the package nicely.

The pistol comes with two 10-round single stack magazines which, like some similar .22LR pistol mags on the market, have a thumb button and exposed race for



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SW22 given some timely tweaks

the follower which can be used to depress the spring tension for simplicity of loading. This is a great facet as some .22 magazines can be finicky to load and I'm sure we all agree it's more fun emptying our pistol mags than loading them.

The Vortex Viper red dot sight that comes with the Performance Center SW22 is a mere 46mm long and weighs just more than a couple of ounces including the mount, meaning it's compact and lightweight and in no way upsets the balance of the pistol. It has a low profile so stays close to the bore line, although naturally still sits higher than traditional iron sights. Unlike magnified optics, such red dot sights are parallax free and give unlimited eye relief which makes them a great choice for handguns. Adjustment values are 1 MOA and the Viper offers an adjustment range of 120 MOA.

The sight comes supplied with a Weaver/Picatinny mount to go straight on the Picatinny rail provided with the Performance Center SW22. Some handguns with sight cut slides have proprietary mounting solutions but using the standard Weaver/Picatinny mount adds more flexibility should you wish to use the sight on other firearms at some stage.

Also in the box is a hard rubber sight cover, a hex key and adjustment tool, a microfibre lens cloth and CR2032 battery which powers the optic for 10 levels of red dot illumination via two small arrow buttons which also serve as 'on' and 'off' buttons. Likewise, the Viper has a 14-hour auto 'off' feature to preserve battery life. The sight is waterproof and shock proof and according to the box comes with an unlimited, unconditional lifetime warranty so you have to ask: How can you go wrong?

Off to the range, first job was to sight in the Viper red dot, a simple procedure



One of the major enhancements of the Performance Center upgrade is a 6 MOA Vortex Viper red dot sight.



Two point of view images taken from the same perspective show the first as in camera focus and second in dot focus.

using the adjustment tool (a small screwdriver shaped like a hex key) to dial in the required elevation and windage. It's important to note the windage and elevation screws also have an adjustment lock screw at the back edge of the sight. Both these need to be moved out one-and-a-half turns prior to adjustment and once sighted in must be tightened again to maintain the sight's zero.

Shooting with a red dot is lots of fun although I have learned a couple of things from experience, having used many such sights. Firstly the dot, depending on your eyes, may not always appear as a perfectly round dot but this is completely normal. Also, I find the lower I run the illumination brightness the clearer and more precise/concentric the dot appears, so I generally set the illumination as low as I can with the dot still clearly visible considering the ambient lighting conditions.

In other words, for best results don't run

it brighter than you need to. I'd also say it might take you a little practice on presentation of the pistol to automatically pick up the dot in your sight picture as naturally the optical sight alignment is higher than for iron sights. Once you become used to it, shooting with a red dot can be a blessing for those who find obtaining a clear sight picture with iron sights doesn't come as easily as it used to.

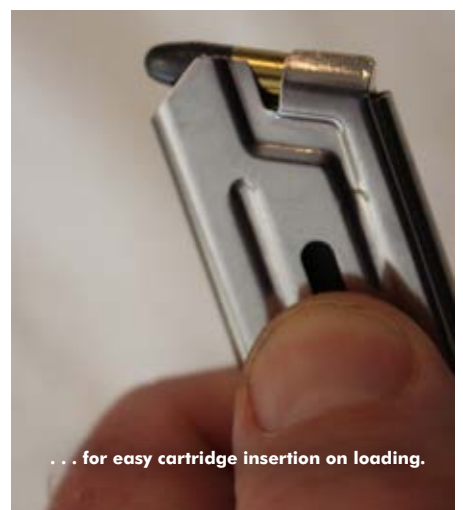
Like its less fancy brother (the standard SW22) the Performance Center version is a joy to shoot, having sufficient weight to feel stable but not enough as to induce fatigue. It's balanced and points well, controls ergonomic and easy to reach with the safety sitting nice and low allowing for a thumb over grip. Safety and slide release also sit proud for operation and the slide has deep grooves aiding good purchase for cocking. The slide's resistance/spring tension is low, making it a simple task for charging the pistol.



The 10-round magazines come with a follower retracting button.



Simply slide back with the thumb . . .



. . . for easy cartridge insertion on loading.

Accuracy was good with plain old standard velocity .22LR ammunition and I was happy with the groups I shot. The gun functioned flawlessly with smooth feed and ejection as you'd expect from any Smith & Wesson pistol, let alone one from their

premium Performance Center. After all, they've been in the business for more than 160 years and counting. Overall this is a good package, adaptable to many sports pistol shooting applications which won't disappoint prospective new owners. ●

Specifications

Pistol: Smith & Wesson Performance Center SW22

Action: Self-loading single-action

Trigger: Flat-faced target trigger

Calibre: .22LR

Capacity: 10 (2x single stack magazines)

Barrel: 152mm (6") Australian compliant

Thread barrel: Custom muzzle brake

Optical sight: Vortex Viper 6 MOA red dot

Iron sights: Fibre optic front and rear adjustable

Length: 287mm (11.3")

Grips: Tandemkross 'hiveGrips'

Slide: Stainless steel

Frame: Stainless steel

Weight: 1.08kg (38oz)

The pistol is modular by design and can be stripped completely with the hex key provided.



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Smart scope a Leupold winner

Paul Miller

Having just re-read an excellent article by Don Caswell on the Leupold Custom Dial System (CDS) (*Australian Shooter*, February 2016) I thought readers might be interested in a high quality scope in the VX-3i series of Leupold options. Speaking with Ken Stevens from Nioa, Australian importers of Leupold scopes, we agreed a scope in 4.5-14 magnification covers a huge variety of Aussie hunting selections from reasonably close quarters to longer range shots requiring considerable precision and lens clarity.

Ken suggested the 30mm-bodied model with side focus and CDS dial. Nioa provide this (after-purchase) laser printed dial free of charge with each of their CDS-capable models when the buyer supplies specific ballistic data for their rifle and cartridge combination.

The VX-3i series with matte finish are handsome scopes and this particular model with its 40mm objective allows for lower mounting on your rifle. It sat snugly in the 30mm medium rings I bought after-market for my left-handed Ruger Hawkeye in 25-06 several years ago. I previously had the earlier VX-3 6.5-20x40 but felt the 6.5 power was a bit high for close-range work so it now lives on my 220 Swift. The

4.5-14 power range seems perfect for this sensational dual purpose cartridge I use for harvesting the occasional deer and long-range feral game shooting.

The Custom Dial System is clever and easy to understand. With CDS scope installed, sight the rifle in with your most accurate and effective hunting load at either 100yds or 100m and provide Nioa ballistic technicians with the speed of your load, projectile weight and its ballistic coefficient. You also need to measure the height your scope's line of sight is above the centre of your rifle's bore.

Other conditions are factored in like the average elevation (yards or metres) you normally hunt at and average expected temperature. The better the information fed into the system, the more accurate the dial will be for your particular load and circumstances. For factory loads you provide those details but chronographing them makes a lot of sense to gain actual data as different length of barrels can effect velocity and this is the most critical input for the CDS.

Finding a scope's centre height to the bore's centre line involves four steps and I provide this information courtesy of Sinclair International US, sourced online.

1: Measure bolt diameter and divide by two - example $0.700" \div 2 = 0.350"$;

2: Measure scope tube diameter and divide by two - $1.000" \div 2 = 0.500"$ (for 30mm tubes use 1.81" and divide by two);

3: Measure the distance from top of the bolt in the rifle to bottom of the scope on the rifle - example 0.750";

4: Add the numbers in steps 1-3 ($0.350" + 0.500" + 0.750" = 1.600"$).

Most loading manuals and scope companies use 1.500" as the default for their trajectory tables as it's a common measurement, but if shooting at longer ranges like 500yds-plus then the above formula will give the CDS the ability to be even more accurate in trajectory across longer ranges, assuming you have the necessary skills to be shooting at game over these distances. Popping targets for fun or competition is one thing but humane despatch of any animal is another altogether and no matter the technology available, we need to be mindful of hunting ethics - a clean despatch is always the uppermost consideration.

When the Custom Dial System arrives, simply remove the factory dial used to accurately sight-in the rifle at whatever distance and store it somewhere safe. Put the new dial in its spot, align your zero with the mark on top of the scope tube next to the turret and carefully tighten the three screws holding it in place. If your zero is

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Smart scope a Leupold winner

Zero your rifle at 100yds or metres, align laser-cut dial with zero white line on the scope then tighten set screws on the dial.



100yds or metres, align the 1 with the mark - it's that simple - you should then be able to quickly dial the distance with the help of a rangefinder. For this system to work you need to know the exact gap you're shooting at so a quality rangefinder is essential.

The Leupold 1200 TBR I use lets you choose a setting that best matches a particular load, then this amazing piece of equipment almost instantly calculates the true ballistic range when you press the button to find a distance. It does this at any angle up or down so you have a space you can dial into the scope that has allowed for the elevation.

Putting the system to the test was fun and involved placing targets at known distances and random ones in between. I tested the dial at all the known ranges and bullet placement was near perfect. I then shot the unknown distances, adjusted for those and again all results were right in the zone for a merciful despatch from rabbit-sized game and up. I limited myself to 400yds as that's my personal boundary.

Looking at the new VX-3i and comparing it with my older VX-3 and Vari-X111 Leupolds was interesting. It was hard to tell the difference in quality of picture and sharpness - they're all that good - the big advantage of this scope over the others is the CDS and lens coating that supposedly provides the highest level of protection to external damage.

The 30mm body also allows considerably more adjustment both vertically and horizontally at 110 Minutes of Angle compared to the current 25mm (one inch) VX-3i models that have between 55 and 65 MOA adjustment. This is only relevant if shooting at long ranges. For hunting purposes and the distances involved both scopes have plenty of adjustment, this scope being a fine hunting accessory with a balance of

physical size and magnification capability. If you want to shoot long-range SSAA disciplines there are scopes better suited in the Leupold stable designed especially for these demanding fields.

This one has the standard duplex reticle but the new Wind-Plex version is also available which allows you to hold off by way of dots on the horizontal bar up to 10 MOA, an interesting idea worth searching online or watching on YouTube.

I prefer the simple duplex to any of the complicated range-finding or other reticles we've seen in recent years with a multitude of aiming points but the Wind-Plex is easy to use and relatively uncluttered and many shooters will love it.

According to Leupold: "The Extended Twilight Max lens system delivers the highest average light transmission in all wavelengths for exceptional contrast and low-light performance in all conditions. Edge blackened lenses reduce diffusion and glare to improve resolution and contrast. Second generation Argon/Krypton gas more effectively resists thermal shock and the dual spring precision adjustment system ensures match-grade repeatability and strength. Top it all off with DiamondCoat 2 external lens coatings for scratch resistance and you can see why VX-3i is the last word in riflescopes."

So we can see the marketing people at Leupold are not backwards in describing their products. The reality is there are many things to like about this scope including the ability to mount it low on a hunting rifle, the opportunity to use it at longer ranges for casual target shooting with the 110 MOA adjustment, more than adequate eye relief, glass etched reticle in the second focal plane and matte finish to minimise potential for scaring your intended game.



If your target is at 300yds twist the dial to align the 3 with the mark on the scope body and aim dead on.



As distance increases so do the number of clicks between the 100 markers to allow for additional elevation required.



Separate dials can be ordered for different projectiles when relevant data is provided then the rifle re-sighted to that zero.

The power range is a great compromise as stated earlier and the redesigned power ring is positive and comfortable to use. The same can be said for the turret/saddle-mounted focus. A lifetime warranty for any owner (not just the first) gives peace of mind for buyers of Leupold scopes in Australia, with the Nioa Custom Leupold shop and their highly trained technicians available, in the unlikely event of a problem, to fix and return your scope in the shortest possible time.

This CDS scope retails for about \$1100 and includes provision for a complimentary custom dial, laser-etched to your exact ballistic requirements by the Nioa ballistic team who turn these around quickly once they have your data. You can also order extra dials for different loads for about \$60 each.

This is a serious scope for hunters who demand the maximum from their equipment mechanically and technologically. It's essential you use a quality rangefinder to eliminate guesswork and ensure the optimum accuracy this scope is capable of delivering in the hands of a competent shot. Excellent value and highly recommended. ●

To get the most from this scope requires an accurate rifle, exact data and a precision sight-in at whatever zero range you specify to Nioa's Leupold technicians



Specifications

Magnification: 4.5-14x40mm objective lens
Adjustment click value: ¼ MOA
Exposed turrets: No
Turrets resettable to zero: Yes
Finger adjustable turrets: Yes
Fast focus eyepiece: Yes and lockable
Lens coating: Fully multi-coated
Custom Dial System: Yes
Field of view at 100yds: (feet) 18.7' at 4.5x, 4.4' at 14.5x
Optimum eye relief (inches): low 4.4', high 3.7'
Weight in ounces: 15.6
Sunshade: No
Bikini cover: Yes
Elevation and windage adjustment: Both 110 MOA
Reticle: Duplex or Wind-Plex
Reticle construction: Glass etched
Airgun rated: No
Warranty: Lifetime
Price: Approximately \$1100 including one CDS dial



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A successful night's shoot with 55gr tipped and hollow point Varmageddons.



Nosler puts varmints on notice

Chris Redlich

As the name suggests, Varmageddon bullets have put the varmints of this world on borrowed time and the distressed-looking groundhog wearing a sandwich board proclaiming 'The End is Near' is a light-hearted but effective way of Nosler marketing their projectiles specifically for high-volume varmint hunting.

Importantly, unlike the Nosler Ballistic Tip bullets which I'm sure every hunter in Australia at some stage has had success with on all manner of thin and thick-skinned game, Varmageddon bullets are designed to be used on thin-skinned game only.

Nioa forwarded a box each of 53gr tipped and 55gr tipped and hollow-point .224 diameter projectiles for testing in my .22-250 Rem and .22PPC, two calibres I use frequently for destruction of varmints and the ideal choice to test these bullets. Varmageddons come with a choice of black polymer-tipped projectiles or hollow-points in the .224 calibre range of bullets though not all have the hollow-point option.

Reloaders will be familiar with the boat-tail design of Nosler Ballistic Tips but Varmageddons have a flat base and consist

of a lead-alloy core encased by an ultra-thin copper jacket designed to have what Nosler refers to as 'violent expansion' on impact, expansion initiated by either the black polymer tip or hollow-point with a large cavity separating the lead-alloy core from the projectile tip.

This is where the Varmageddon design really distinguishes itself from its ballistic tip cousin. Nosler developed these bullets

Nosler developed these bullets for hunters who shoot for pelts and fur skins and maintain accuracy out to long ranges.

for hunters who shoot for pelts and fur skins and maintain accuracy out to long ranges. In theory the bullets penetrate the soft-skin varmint and self-destruct rapidly inside without destroying the skin on the off side with an unsightly exit wound. In Australia we don't have woodchucks or coyotes roaming the land but these bullets are suitable for wild dogs, foxes, feral cats, hares and rabbits and for professional marksmen are ideal for head-shooting kangaroos.

Load testing

I loaded both the 55gr hollow-point and black tip projectiles for my Maddco-barrelled Remington Model 700 in 22-250 Rem and, working my way up, settled on 32gr of ADI BM2 powder for both. At the 100m range it was hard to split the groups as most loads performed beautifully, averaging .550 MOA, the 32gr ADI BM2 marginally edging the others. Both the hollow-points and black tips printed equally on paper which gave me plenty of confidence to batch load the rest for hunting, on one occasion I even managed to put two bullets through the same hole. The Varmageddons weren't fussy with varying powder weight loads.



Varmageddon bullets loaded for the .22PPC, left, and .22-250 Rem.



Loading the highly accurate Varmageddon bullets for the .22PPC.



Another feral cat taken care of.



Outstanding accuracy from the .22PPC (mongrel).

The 53gr black tipped projectiles proved a good choice for my .22PPC (mongrel) a custom Zastava in a Boyds thumbhole stock with Remington barrel. Working my way up from 27gr of AR-2206H with three-shot groups at 100m, I settled on 27.5gr printing an awesome .224 MOA group. Achieving this kind of accuracy with little fuss, I couldn't wait to field test both calibre/load combinations on varmints.

22-250 field test

My son Carl and I headed to our hunting property for an evening of spotlighting and soon discovered how effective Varmageddon bullets really are. In no time we'd made light work of the local hare population's dinner plans and with 20 shots and 20 confirmed kills the bullets were proving their worth, both hollow-points and black tips equally effective though I did find that anything around 100m or less was left with a large exit wound.

An audible thud on impact (a Varmageddon trademark) and puff of hair drifting on the night breeze confirmed their 'violent expansion' design, understandable as a 22-250 Rem spitting a bullet at 3700fps

is no diesel engine at a drag race. I suspect the same 55gr bullet from a .222 Rem travelling at 3000fps wouldn't be as destructive but I wasn't in a position to whinge about horsepower and wasn't shooting for skins.

Interestingly, anything I shot at 150-180m was left intact and apart from a drop of blood indicating an entry wound, the rest of the pelt was unharmed reinforcing the Varmageddon's suitability for skin-shooting. The furthest shot that night was around 235m and I successfully dropped the crop raider on the spot with a single head shot, the extraordinary accuracy gained during range testing giving me the confidence I needed to take long-range kill shots.

Reinforcing the ammo's popularity was my mate who has a permit to cull kangaroos on his family property. He loaded 55gr tipped projectiles for his 22-250 Rem and reported a spectacular 400m kill. Using a rangefinder he made the necessary height adjustment and the roo dropped on the spot, numerous rounds that night providing similar devastating results.

With the drought and exploding kangaroo numbers having a major impact on dwindling crop yields, farmers are

always looking for the edge in controlling pests and with Nosler advertising the Varmageddon's credentials for long-range varmint shooting, my farmer mate attests they live up to that claim.

.22PPC (mongrel) field test

More recently I field tested 53gr tipped Varmageddons in the .22PPC and again was suitably impressed by their accuracy. A hare crossed my path at 100m but made me work to take a shot, darting back and forth before pausing at 190m, long enough for me to feel comfortable with a head shot. At the report he dropped on the spot.

In the neighbouring paddock a feral cat on the move grabbed my attention and at an estimated range of more than 200m I took the shot. Again, the range testing accuracy achieved on paper gave me the confidence to take such a shot and I had rid the area of another native animal killer.

Conclusion

As with all Nosler bullets I'm not surprised by the Varmageddon's performance, accuracy every bit as good on varmints as it is on paper. I couldn't split the

Nosler puts varmints on notice

performance of the black tip polymer and hollow-point projectiles in .22-250 Rem, using both loads in the field test and at various stages of the shoot they were mixed in my magazine.

If you're restricted by overall length, the hollow-point projectiles offer a slight reduction in length, the lighter projectiles loaded in my .22PPC also proving a top performer. Whether you're a professional

culler or recreational varmint hunter after a premium, value-for-money bullet, these will not disappoint.

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Sighting-in the tipped Varmageddon 53gr bullets and .22PPC.



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Carcass cart the wheel deal

Con Kapralos



Charlie with the modified cart.

As a greenhorn on the deer stalking scene many years ago, I look back with some awkwardness and the odd laugh at how I did things then - and can say with certainty you learn from your mistakes. Back then I didn't know of the veritable feast of information available on the worldwide web and how it could have prevented me from making silly mistakes when discovering deer stalking.

I recall my first stalking trip. Previous deer hunts had been with the aid of a vehicle and couldn't be deemed hunting in the true sense of the word. I had all the right gear, calibre-wise and optics, but seemed to be wandering aimlessly having seen not a scrap of deer hide or antler. Deer were around as evidenced by the many footprints and scat but, several hours into my first stalk, I had nothing to show for it.

Resting on a log overlooking a shallow lake I rang my wife to let her know how my day was playing out. I then reached for my trusty Bushnell Elite 10x42s to glass the area immediately in front of me. The image of a red deer feeding in the middle of the shallow lake was more a shock than a surprise, trying to figure out how it materialised out of nowhere. I quickly cleared

a fence and planned a stalk through the chest-high bushes, probably a good couple of hundred metres to a spot where I could guarantee a clear shot at my quarry.

Lining up through the Zeiss Duralyt scope I sent a 130gr Federal Premium Ballistic Tip in .270 Winchester on its way, taking the animal cleanly. Feeling relief, exhilaration and achievement I waded through ankle-deep water as reality struck - where's my car and where's the nearest farm track? This red deer was way too big to carry out in one piece.


After gralloching the animal I harvested the hind legs and backstraps. Naively believing all deer legs were like fallows, the red deer's were huge by comparison and the only way I was going to retrieve them was to drag them half a kilometre through grass to the nearest farm track, hard work as most of it was mud and slush.

After considerable effort to reach the track I had another 1.5km to the car. Already exhausted, I got to the car, eventually retrieved everything and was back at camp one cold, wet but undefeated hunter. After processing the venison and putting it in the fridge, I pondered what had transpired thinking there must be an easier

way to carry out deer after a stalk. On the internet I found the Americans had just what I was looking for - a deer cart made by Ameristep. I sourced one from the US which surprisingly didn't cost much on postage and since that day the cart has been with me on every stalk. Its solid construction and thoughtful design is obviously the work of deer hunters, solid rubber tyres on spoked rims, foldable for easy storage and transportation, removable wheels - it's spot on for the job.

I'd used the cart unmodified for eight years until on one trip while harvesting a decent red spiker, my hunting buddy suggested we 'tweak' it somewhat. Adding mesh would help stop the carcass falling through gaps in the cart's frame and an ergonomic handle to allow two people to pull instead of one was a valid suggestion. I gave the cart to my mate who's a dab hand at modifying anything with wheels attached.

Now the old cart is working better than ever and even has a fresh coat of gloss black paint. The only comment to my pal on examining his handiwork? "The shorter the carry-out distance the better!" He agreed wholeheartedly. ●



The buck where he fell, taken with a single shot at 170m.

The buck of a lifetime

John Dunn

Sometimes it's better to hunt for the sake of the chase than for a particular animal and that thought crossed my mind as we drove to the crest of the hill and stopped to glass the broad flats beyond. We'd been hunting for three days and nothing had popped up to pique my interest.

The previous afternoon Pete Spurgin had taken a wonderful fallow buck with his vintage Winchester 1885 High Wall in .38-55 and to date that was the best deer we'd seen. We'd glassed fallow, red, chital and sambar and while they were all wonderful to observe, nothing really moved me, though I wasn't unhappy. We were constantly looking at deer and even when you can't find something to hunt, time spent watching deer is never wasted.

We'd used a good part of the afternoon searching for a red stag with a drop tine the landholder had mentioned. I like non-typical antlers so he seemed like a prospect - if we could find him. We couldn't but did bump

into a broken-antlered stag and his hinds on the lee face of our hill. He'd been hesitant to leave, perhaps because of another as yet unseen stag with a deep voice roaring on the other side and if that was the drop tine stag there was only one way to find out.

A couple of hundred metres away a group of lesser red stags and spikers cleared the sheep fence and jogged away with that proud, head-up almost regal mode of shambling movement they have when they're not in a hurry but leaving anyway. Trailing behind was a mob of bleating sheep that bunched up in the corner of the paddock, squeezed through the gate in the frantic way sheep do then spread out to feed on the other side.

Half a kilometre or more away a drain bisected the flats. As we watched, the red deer splashed through the water, climbed over the mound on the other side and dropped out of sight behind it to join a scattering of reds already feeding there. One of them appeared a reasonable animal and as we checked him out we heard yet another roar even further away on the edge of the timber. Though he was little more than an active spot in the binoculars, he had to be worth a closer look.

Where a concrete bridge crossed the drain, Shaun Cooke stopped the car and grabbed his binoculars and spotting scope. One by one we climbed through the fence around the bottom of the drain mound then

clambered to the top to use the elevation. The edge of the bush was a good 1500m away and the stag we wanted was no longer in sight. Bit by bit we began the search, checking every dip and hollow or patch of vegetation that might shield him.

A couple of hundred metres away a big stag with scrappy antlers was feeding into the wind, oblivious to our presence, while off to our left the stags we'd pushed across the drain were doing likewise. Where a finger of bush jutted out into the grasslands some fallow does were mooching about in the timber while others basked in the afternoon sun. Closer in a couple of kangaroos hopped out for an evening feed as once again a deep-voiced red was roaring in the timber.

It was an idyllic landscape, easy to sit back and enjoy with no real need to do any more. Tucked in behind the spotting scope as he often is, Shaun swore softly then turned and asked me if I fancied a crack at a sizeable fallow buck. What fallow buck? There wasn't one when I'd looked earlier so where had he come from and more importantly, where exactly was he?

Shaun pointed him out and, just like him, I was amazed by the size of the animal. With his wonderful high-swept antlers he looked like a moose. Pete had a look and



Pete Spurgin with the results of a four-day hunt.

the verdict was unanimous - here was a fallow buck too good to walk past, he was big and we all knew it. There was no need to go into detail of counting his tines or mentally gauging his palms, the sensible thing to do was hunt him and worry about the finer points later.

We talked tactics and agreed a direct approach was the best option, the buck was 800m from where we sat and what

little cover there was ran out halfway to him so beyond that we'd probably have to crawl. There were kangaroos and other deer we'd have to work our way through and how they reacted to our approach would be crucial to the outcome. All we had in our favour was a quartering breeze and afternoon sun behind us.

With Pete atop the bank to survey proceedings, Shaun and I set out



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The buck of a lifetime

across the flat, heading for a thin stand of trees that looked the best available cover. Stopping to check ahead, our boy had moved and was now lying in his rut hole among the trees watching his does. The kangaroos had hopped out of our approach line and the red deer were still feeding. So far, so good.

We made another couple of hundred metres and huddled in behind the trunks of a skinny pair of tea trees. Our buck now had his eyes closed, most of his does were feeding and the kangaroos no longer a consideration. The red stag off to the right had no idea we were there but a couple of

those on the left had their heads up, curious but unable to smell us upwind.

We were still 400m from the fallow and there was no more cover except short grass and, given the slightly elevated position of the deer, that probably wouldn't be enough. Our only hope lay in a tiny mallee knoll ahead and off to our left, if we could reach that we'd have some cover and hopefully be within shooting range. To arrive there all we had to do was sidle through the clearing for 100m or so and resume a direct approach, the only flies in the ointment the red deer. If they were spooked this show was over.

We took our time, moving slowly, watching the red deer monitor our approach. A big hind lifted her head a little higher, snorted softly then turned and walked away. The others followed her lead and a few moments later they were all jogging steadily down the wind. We stopped and waited, anxious to see how the fallow would react, wondering if our stalk had been blown.

A few minutes later we were watching him through a skinny screen of mallee trunks. Shaun ranged the buck at 200m which was good but there were no gaps to shoot him through the trees. I slid forward

John Dunn and his buck of a lifetime. The rifle is a Ruger No.1 in 7x57 Mauser.



to the edge of the mallee and, sitting flat on my butt, rested the rifle on a horizontal stem and waited patiently, checking the buck through the scope. Soon he opened his eyes and trotted down into the clear to push two of his does back towards the edge of the timber. With his neck extended he gave a half-hearted grunt then thought better of it and stood there, the paddles of his antlers rocking from side to side as he looked around.

I told Shaun I was about to take the buck and if he'd any doubts about whether or not I'd done my job properly, he was to shoot the deer again and we'd talk about it later. He gave me a laconic affirmative as I heard him work a cartridge into the chamber of his .300 Winchester Magnum Mannlicher.

From a rock-solid rested position I put the cross-hairs on the base of the buck's neck and squeezed off my shot. I saw him crumple and by the time I'd reloaded and found him in the scope again all I could see was a single antler jutting up out of the grass, rocking gently as he kicked his last. We waited a few minutes to ensure he wasn't going to stand up then walked in to see what we had.

At our feet lay the largest antlered fallow buck I've ever seen in the flesh. His antlers were long, as were his broad palms,



Shaun Cooke pressure-cleans the skull cap after boiling it for 10 minutes.

their back edges bladed above a strong pair of guard tines. He carried four good points on either top with nice long brow and bey tines out front. Viewed front-on the antlers were over spread and broadly V-shaped, the tops turning in as they always do on mature fallow heads. He looked wonderful lying there in the last of the evening light

and as Pete had been the day before, I was more than a little awestruck.

As evening settled in and the light faded I sat beside my trophy, quietly thanked him for the hunt he'd given me and promised him pride of place in my trophy room. What else would you do for the buck of a lifetime? ●

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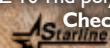
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It's staring you in the face!

Joe Norris

Have you ever wondered why some people seem to be able to spot game while you don't see anything until it's pointed out to you? I was on a deer hunt with my cousin and he was pointing out sambar left, right and centre while I struggled to spot any. Not that I'm inexperienced when it comes to hunting - he just seemed to find deer easily while I struggled.

Now as I'm from far north Queensland and he's from Gippsland in Victoria there is the issue of familiarity with local conditions, but that wasn't all of it. I just wasn't seeing the deer that were obviously right in front of me and it wasn't until we talked about hunting in general and sambar in particular I realised what I was doing wrong.

When I asked Dean how he could spy

so many deer when I couldn't see any, he explained he doesn't look for deer, rather for 'parts' of deer and outlines that aren't natural like horizontal lines, legs or an ear - anything that seems out of place. As soon as he said that I knew what I was doing wrong and immediately started to notice deer while hunting on my own.

I think part of the problem was I'm not used to the Victorian mountain bush but mostly I hadn't applied the basics I already knew. Of course, the fact Dean has spent many years hunting these animals and understands their habits and where he can expect to find them at any given time or weather conditions helps.

There are people who've hunted these magnificent animals for years and rarely seen one and I believe the reason is

because, like me, they were 'looking for deer'. Sounds crazy? Of course they were looking for deer but the fact is you rarely see the whole animal in the bush - usually just part of it at first - and it's not until you study the part you've seen that you can actually make out the rest of it in the surrounding bush.

I know this from many years of hunting pigs and wild dogs in my home state, so to travel to Victoria and expect to see whole deer just standing in plain view is totally unrealistic, yet that's what I was doing.

While hunting one morning we spotted a dark wattle that wasn't normal and putting the binoculars to use soon discovered a nice young sambar doe standing directly behind the tree, a perfect eater. As I was after a stag we let her walk but not until



A big dark shadow in the tea trees, the ears give it away as a huge wild pig.



First sighting of the sambar hind; The hind comes feeding out of the trees.



Red hind in plain sight but not easy to spot.



This sambar hind could easily have been missed.

waiting for her to feed out from behind the wattle, allowing me to take a clear photo. I'd have missed her if I was looking for deer instead of something out of the ordinary like a dark shape that didn't fit or a tree with too many trunks.

And while you need to look for parts of the animal you're hunting, that doesn't mean you shoot at it. Basic safety is to always identify your target, without doubt, before taking a shot. Usually you'll have time to identify the animal and be able to place an accurate, humane shot if you just wait and observe. And if you don't, you weren't meant to have that shot in the first place, so learn from it and move on knowing you're a wiser hunter for the experience.

I was checking a solar pump on my farm when I spotted a huge pig on the other side

of the dam. Actually, I spotted a huge dark shadow in the tea trees that could have been anything except it had an ear sticking up so I knew it was a pig asleep in the shade. That's when I got to thinking about writing this article because if I hadn't been looking for odd shapes I'd have missed the pig just as I was missing deer in Victoria.

Now I don't think applying the 'look for odd shapes' method is the be-all-and-end-all of hunting. Knowing how the target animals live and what they eat, where they're likely to be at any given time is crucial, but when it comes to actually spotting one it's far more likely you'll see part of the animal before you get to see a whole animal, so it makes sense that's what we should be looking for.

During that sambar hunt in Victoria I

took some photos of deer I didn't want to harvest, most of them clearly showing parts of a deer, and it was only by waiting for the animal to move I was able to take a photo that clearly showed deer. Only photos of deer taken in farm country really showed the whole animal.

While I've always used the old American Indian method of hunting - walk little, look lots - it helps if you're looking for the right thing and to my mind that's to be looking for parts of the deer first, then clearly identifying your target and deciding if that's the animal you want to take home, be it for meat or as a trophy.

So next time you're on a hunt just ask yourself 'what are you looking at?' The answer just might help you find what you're hunting for. ●

P30LS

9mm handgun from Heckler & Koch

Geoff Smith



Right-hand view.

The gun in its case with spare magazine and alternative grip inserts.



In 1949 engineers Edmund Heckler, Theodor Koch and Alex Seidel formed their own engineering company at a time when, having been defeated in World War Two, Germany had been heavily restricted in its legal capacity to manufacture firearms. Notwithstanding these limitations they secured contracts to supply the local police, border police and Bundeswehr or federal defence force.

More than 70 years on the model under review, the P30LS as modified for Australia, is a double action 10-shot, hammer-fired, polymer-framed gun supplied with two magazines in a foam-lined case with spare grip inserts and instruction manual. It's a locked breech, short recoil design based on Browning's HP35 system.

Straight out of the box the luminous three-dot sights stand out and the controls all appear to be conveniently located. The rear sight is adjustable for elevation and windage. The black appearance of the fibre reinforced polymer frame matches the black nitride finish of the slide and barrel and the gun is designed to be ambidextrous.

The safety catch at the rear of the frame is easily worked and operates by blocking the operation of the trigger bar and sear.

The de-cocker button safely drops the cocked hammer to enable holstering the gun with a live round in the chamber. When a live round is chambered the outwards shift of the extractor claw reveals a red upper surface to indicate the chamber is no longer empty and under dark conditions this can also be detected by feel.

For Australian compliance the barrel length is 129.1mm from muzzle to breech face and the muzzle features a removable left hand-threaded cap, the barrel having right-hand twist polygonal rifling. The gun's relatively light weight (816g unloaded with magazine attached) coupled to the well-designed grip makes it a pleasure to shoot.

One asset claimed for this gun is it will shoot reliably with a wide range of ammo and tests conducted employed factory loads with projectiles ranging from 115gr through to 147gr and a variety of handloads which also performed well.

With a live round chambered, the action

cocked and safety off, the gun is aimed at the target and trigger squeezed. The trigger pivots on a pin set fairly low in the frame and its upper end pulls the trigger bar forward. The trigger bar is on the right of the frame viewed from the rear and as it moves forward it releases the sear to drop the hammer. The disconnecter sits alongside the trigger bar and its upper section is in a recess in the slide's underside. On firing, as the slide moves out of battery in recoil, the disconnecter is pushed down ensuring the hammer will re-cock and not fire again until the trigger is released and re-operated.

The hammer, once released, will drive the firing pin into the primer of the cartridge so long as the trigger is being pulled, a safety factor to ensure the firing pin can't strike the primer if, for example, the gun is dropped. On firing, the barrel and slide are locked together and begin their rearwards travel under recoil. The barrel can only travel back a short distance before the ramp at the base of the breech pulls it downwards, unlocking it from the slide. The

slide is free to recoil backwards, ejecting the fired case as it opens until its travel is stopped by the recoil spring and buffer.

The spring then pushes the slide back towards the barrel and as the slide closes it collects a new cartridge from the magazine and pushes it into the chamber for the next shot. The barrel tilts back up until it's re-locked into its battery position and should the slide be even slightly out of battery, the gun won't fire. After the last shot is fired the magazine follower lifts the slide release which ensures the slide remains open.

Field stripping is simple. After removing the magazine the slide is withdrawn until the square notch on the left lines up with the axle of the slide release lever. The right-hand slide release has a button in the middle of the axle and this is pushed to the left. The left-hand side slide release lever is pulled outwards a few millimetres until it stops, when the slide can be lowered then pulled forward from the frame.

Turning the slide over reveals the recoil spring and its guide rod and buffer which are pulled outwards to expose the barrel. The muzzle cap is unscrewed and the barrel can be lifted up and back out of the slide. The gun is now dismantled as far as needed for cleaning and maintenance into its five main parts. Reassembly is in reverse order and it's important that when replacing the slide, some downwards pressure is applied at the rear end to engage it into the guide lugs on the frame. The guide lugs on the frame contain hardened inserts which are cunningly moulded into the reinforced polymer of the frame.

The grip frame features interchangeable backstraps and side plates so the fit to the shooter's hand can be optimised. To change grips, the roll pin at the base

of the backstrap is pushed out with a pin punch and the backstrap slides downwards to remove it, the grip panels then able to be slid backwards out of the grip frame. The appropriate sized pieces are slipped into place and secured by tapping the roll pin back into position. The ambidextrous magazine release levers are part of the base of the triggerguard. Just forward of the triggerguard on the base of the frame is a Picatinny rail to mount lights, laser sights and other accessories.

In actual use the gun performed superbly with factory and handloaded ammunition, 10-shot group sizes over 25m mostly within the black and these became noticeably smaller. Overall this is a fine looking firearm which points and shoots extremely well. The test gun was supplied by H&K's Australian wholesalers, Hermann's Sporting Guns of Mirboo North in Victoria.

• This is an edited version of a review which first appeared in *Australian & New Zealand Handgun* Issue 18. ●



Specifications:

Heckler & Koch P30LS (Australian version) short recoil self-loading handgun

Double action, polygonal rifling

Calibre: 9x19mm (9mm Luger)

Magazine capacity: 10 rounds

Barrel length: 129.1mm, overall length 208mm, width 39mm, height 139mm

Weight: unloaded with magazine installed 816g

Supplied with spare magazine, polymer case, alternative grips, detailed instruction manual

RRP: \$1569



Le chop chop

M1833 French naval cutlass

Mark van den Boogaart

The ocean-going entrepreneur's toolkit circa 1833.

The romantic view of 19th century war on the high seas was billowing sails, brass-buttoned coats, pointy hats and a smoking cannon. Yet it was ships, especially blue water warships, which were the ultimate expression of a country's military technology and wealth. Because of the inherent cost of such a ship and its ability to project a nation's power well beyond its physical borders, the last thing anyone wanted was for it to be sent to the bottom of the sea.

It was a far better option for an enterprising captain to capture the enemy ship, share its valuables with officers and crew then collect a sizable reward for the intact ship from their respective government. That way the government could promptly rename and re-crew the ship and integrate it into their own fleet. Of course with that kind of monetary motivation, a naval battle would inevitably turn from a majestic event of exploding timber to a bloody hand-to-hand brawl over ownership.

In this scenario flintlock, sword, axe, pike and club all took precedence over

heavy cannon and while Britannia may have ruled the waves, it's the French cutlass which was regarded as the finest naval sword of the era. The M1833 - like its predecessor the AN IX 1801 series of French naval cutlasses - was one of the most widely dispersed patterns of 19th century swords. Sold, replicated, copied and in several cases simply stolen by countries throughout Europe and the Americas, they were highly regarded and have become equally collectable.

The word cutlass, uniformly recognised as the 'sword of a sailor', is believed to be derived from the French *coutelas* and earlier Latin word *cultellus* (small knife). A cutlass, like the weapon of the soldier or trooper was very plain, in fact due to its constant exposure to salt water the cutlass was probably even more utilitarian than its landlubber cousins. At times they were also of inferior quality and in the case of a number of British cutlasses were just cut-down cavalry sabres.

The thing is, as a collector I find the utilitarian rather than ornate really appealing

so it stands to reason I'd be on the hunt for an M1833. But an antique French naval sword isn't something you see every day, so my search eventually moved overseas. After a few months of enquiry I managed to locate a very good example of an M1833 at a reasonable price.

A few weeks later I finally had the chance to examine my purchase. Measuring just over 825mm with a blade of 625mm and total weight of 1.4kg, the cutlass with its slightly upturned cut-and-thrust blade, or *falchion* as it's more correctly known, is a fighting sword designed for close quarters combat.

As with any new antique purchase I try hard to determine its age. The good news is most French swords carry the manufacturer's name on the spine of the blade and in the case of the cutlass it reads *Manuf re R le de Châtellerault Aou* or Royal Manufacturer, Chatellerault, Aou.

Unfortunately what's missing is the date stamp, specifically the month and year of manufacture have been worn away over time with only the letters *Aou* remaining,



Cutlass and scabbard - due to its quality the scabbard is likely a newer replacement.



The surprisingly effective grip.



The manufacturer's name with partial worn date stamp.

which I assume was once *Aout* or August in French. Without a year of manufacture I began to look elsewhere and apart from the large etched anchors on each face of the blade luckily the ricasso, the point where the blade connects with the hilt, carries two ordinance inspection stamps.

One stamp is an 'A' with star above surrounded by a laurel, the other possibly a cursive 'R'. After some research I identified the 'A' as belonging to Charles-Elis Arcelin who served as Armoury Director from November 1841 to September 1842. Looking more closely there's also a cursive 'B' on the inside of the bowl guard, this the stamp of Francois Antoine Bisch, a Second Class Controller who held the role from January 1829 to February 1845.

In considering the information available relating to the ordinance inspection stamps and partially obscured August date stamp, I believe the cutlass was manufactured in August 1842. As for the R that's not so clear. There's a similar R attributed to Jean Paul Reallon who was Armoury Director in 1876, and my best guess at this

time is either I'm reading the R inspection stamp incorrectly or the cutlass at some point returned to Chatellerault and was restamped. Other stamps include a clear '2' on the inside face of the bowl which is most probably an issue to service stamp. The same face also carries a number of other stamps but all are illegible.

Like the blade, the hilt is impressive comprising a fully enclosed D-shaped guard which protects the whole hand and the curve of the bowl extends past the spine of the blade, giving the sailor effective protection against an attacking edge from sliding up their arm. The cutlass is clearly an offensive weapon, its bowl the great-granddaddy of all knuckle dusters which would deliver a fearsome blow.

The grip, reflecting the harshness of the salt water environment, is a section of straight iron with eight sides, not an evenly constructed octagon, having two wider faces, and although it has no covering, etching or curvature it does fit the hand very well. Unlike the blade, the hilt assembly is covered in black

japanning, essentially 1830s rust protection. Unfortunately many of the ordinance stamps on the bowl are blurred by this protective coating, though the trade-off is the japanning has protected the metal for almost 180 years.

With regard to japanning, its continued use post-manufacture was entirely up to the ship's captain who may have insisted it be removed to improve presentation quality of the crew's weapons, this particular example clearly coming from a ship where the captain wasn't so fussy about appearance.

The final piece of the puzzle is the leather scabbard which, with brass throat and end cap, is in excellent condition so is probably a later replacement as leather and salt spray most definitely don't mix. As a 178-year old sword it's a fantastic collectable and a great find. Like so many antique military collectables it's a little incomplete and its history is not so clear, but what can't be said is that this was a wallflower. It is, as it was designed, a weapon for a fighting man on a fighting ship. ●



SSAA club suffers in wake of deadly bushfires

Dave Rose

The SSAA Batemans Bay branch has been all but wiped out by one of the brutal bushfires which have devastated much of Victoria and New South Wales over the past few months. The NSW club's home range resembled a frazzled war zone after the New Year's Eve blaze and was strictly out of bounds while club officials considered their next move.

The family-orientated club built its own barn-style clubhouse in the mid-1990s with a kitchen as well as an indoor range for air rifle and air pistol. There were nine lanes for running target as well as automatic returns while sheds, toilets and other amenities were erected by volunteers to allow the club to cater for women and children.

"It has all been wiped out, devastated," said club president Bryson Payne. "Everything basically just melted with the force of the blaze. That includes aluminium on windows, all the sheds and concrete pillars. And on the rifle range part of the concrete roof collapsed through the sheer heat."

Mr Payne says little was spared as outdoor lighting, poles and transformers were burnt down, mowers, whippersnippers and tractor tyres also added to the list of items which had to be written off. Ironically the firestorm struck just one day after members had been busy raking up and clearing debris which could have taken hold during any approaching fire threat.

"We thought everything should be all right after that, but hot north-west winds blew the fire in," said Mr Payne. "It was an overnight thing which happened all of a sudden. Before

that the fires hadn't been spreading at night but next day the phones were going mad at six o'clock in the morning and the whole area had to be evacuated."

And it wasn't just the shooting range that was engulfed as about 550 houses were lost throughout the surrounding area. So where does the club go from here? Fortunately SSAA insurance was already in place so assessors will move in and offer an evaluation and once the insurance company gives the go-ahead it will be all hands on deck.

The club has a membership approaching

800 and Mr Payne reckons teamwork will turn things around. "It will take some time and hard work but I know we'll get it done," he said. "I'm an optimist and we have a willing work base of volunteers, including contractors. I reckon within about six weeks, if we fix the fences first, we could at least be shooting again."

But for the clubhouse and other buildings it's a different story. "If the clubhouse was back in operation by the end of this year I'd be more than happy," said Mr Payne. ●



The severity of the Batemans Bay devastation is evident in these photographs taken by club members.



Bushbuck scope covers

put a lid on it

Both Snap-Shots in use

Tobias Turner

Always on the lookout for new and innovative products to give me an advantage in the field, I was made aware of New Zealand company Bushbuck who are producing some interesting hunting gear and clothing. According to their website: “Bushbuck was created in 2012 by a husband and wife team with the goal to provide the highest quality gear at an affordable price.” After browsing their gear, clothing and accessories I was intrigued by a couple of products, the one in focus here being Bushbuck’s Snap-Shot scope covers.

The pictures on the website showed an interesting take on the traditional soft scope cover. I’ve tried a number of products over the years in a bid to keep debris, especially water, off the lenses while retaining effective functionality. Some products considerably slowed the process of taking a hasty shot, some were too bulky and/or snagged on packs and clothing and others were just too complicated, unreliable or prone to breakage.

The simplicity of this design is how the cover is made in two separate parts, each part feeding through the other then feeding over the body of the scope via an elongated slot. The ends have an insert to retain the circular shape matching the ends of the scope and a fixed strap so they can be pulled on or off.

The combination of this and the overall design made fitting the cover to the ends of the scope quite a simple process and they’re then securely attached to the scope (with a little practice I was doing this by feel without looking). The ends are slightly different sizes to accommodate the smaller eyepiece and up to a 50mm objective.

Fitting and removing the scope cover is therefore a two-step process but because the covers are attached around the scope, you can remove them quickly without fear of dropping them. One point I’ll make is to ensure they’re pulled to the opposite side of the bolt otherwise there is potential for them to be in the way when the action is

cycled, online comments suggesting this was a potential issue for others as well.

One advantage I found by having the cover in separate parts was the ability to only fit one end to the scope to suit your hunting style and circumstances. For example, when the rifle was carried on a sling over my shoulder or strapped muzzle-up to my pack, I’d only leave the front cover on to prevent rain and dust gathering on the front lens, making the process of taking a shot that much quicker as I was only removing from one end.

The reverse of this is just as advantageous as by fitting the cover to the eyepiece only, I would be afforded protection when carrying the rifle muzzle down, say in heavy bush after rain or dew and while getting in close on a stalk. I hunted all through the last Queensland roar and swapped the covers around to try different options. That time of year ended up being quite wet and I was thankful I had the scope in place. Mine were fitted to a >

Bushbuck scope covers



Snap-Shot removal

Leica 3-12x50 and there were no issues with size for this scope.

Another advantage I discovered was when hunting with my son I was able to put one on the front of my scope and the other half on the front of his, which has a 40mm objective. As we were hunting together our rifles were carried muzzle up so rain was never a problem on our scopes and it's almost like having two scope covers for the price of one.

One suggestion I'd make on design is that the cover for the rear lens - which would normally slip over the objective end - could perhaps be fitted with a press stud or similar. The issue I specifically faced with this was because my objective sits very low to my barrel and I had trouble squeezing the material between the two. I subsequently had to remove the scope to put it on which would be fine normally as I'd probably leave it on permanently but as

I was playing around with it for review, this was a minor issue.

You'll need some practice before your first hunting trip to build up the muscle memory of removing it, a hazard with any scope cover especially when taking a hurried shot. A number of times I had the 'black screen' effect and realised in an

instant the mistake I'd made. Given this product sells for less than \$40 posted to Australia, I'm impressed enough to recommend giving it a go as I feel any hunter will benefit from protecting their scope. They're available at bushbuckoutdoors.com and if you have any questions I found the people there to be most approachable. ●



Snap-Shot scope covers

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WOLF BLASS

A vintage calibre

Wine mogul Wolf still on target

Nadia Isa

International wine identity and Aussie icon Wolfgang 'Wolf' Blass AM has spent a lifetime cultivating his self-titled brand. After travelling to the Barossa Valley in regional South Australia on a return ticket in 1961, the German native never went home and in 1966 established Wolf Blass Wines, now a prestigious name in the industry worldwide.

A multimillion-dollar concern, Wolf Blass Wines has accrued more than 10,000 accolades and is one of the world's most successful and awarded wine brands. But outside the success of developing a world-renowned product, the 85-year-old is an enthusiastic shooter, visiting the SSAA club in Adelaide CBD almost every week.

Describing himself as an avid sports fan, Wolf Blass has participated in horse racing, skiing and Australian Rules football, is the number one ticket holder at the SANFL's Norwood Football Club and has the first Melbourne Cup trophy on display at his wine museum in the German-style town of Hahndorf in South Australia.

But Wolf says there's something unique about shooting, something the sport has which sets it apart from your more run-of-the-mill activities. "It's a real camaraderie experience, different from anything else," he said. Unlike other sports, Wolf says there's a social and intellectual aspect to shooting which makes it particularly special. "You talk about personal things and

business things away from what the club is about - that's the difference. It's a very relaxed atmosphere."

The Wolf Blass Pistol Shoot

Having established himself as a distinguished winemaker and excelling in his business, Wolf wanted to create a shooting event with his social group, the Greenock Tavern Luncheon Club, and in 1986 launched his first sponsored competition.

That inaugural event was held at the Adelaide Pistol and Shooting Club (APSC) in Korunye (about 50km from Adelaide) under the Wolf Blass Wines banner with the

Gawler Social Luncheon Club and Greenock Tavern Luncheon Club competing for the trophy. "As with most things associated with Mr Wolf, the day was colourful and hugely enjoyable," APSC captain James Innes recalled.

Wolf created the competition as a social event and enlisted the help of former Olympic shooter and close friend Michael Papps to advise and supervise on the day. "He was a strong motivator in explaining what the industry and association was all about," said Wolf. "We were learning how to handle guns respectfully and I think that's very important."



Aussie icon: Wolf Blass.



Wolf, right, presents the annual Pistol Shoot trophy to Elizabeth Pistol Club president Jason Wolf-Williams.



Wolf, centre, with competitors at the annual Blanchetown invitational shoot.

The competition involved three shoots a year, one of them at Blanchetown Pistol Club where secretary Maiga Schultz has fond memories of her late husband, Peter, competing in the event with Wolf. Nowadays the competition is the club's biggest annual fundraiser. Maiga describes Wolf as "fun-loving, easy-going and noisy". "He's an honorary member of Blanchetown Pistol Club and we always have a lot of fun with him," she said.

For his social club, the tradition of participating in a competitive shoot is an annual highlight. Wolf has been a member of Greenock Tavern Luncheon Club for 52 years, joining in 1968 not long into his new life in Australia. "Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of Wolf Blass, may it continue for many years into the future," said club secretary and treasurer Peter Frazer.

The shooting specifics

Fast-forward 34 years and the shoot is now by invitation only. There are two annual competitions between SSAA's Club 21 in Adelaide and the Blanchetown Pistol and Shooting Club in regional South Australia.

Wolf said each event includes trophy presentations and the all-important luncheon. "I just enjoy the friendship and social involvement with people from different types of work and profession, I think that's the major reason why I started the competition," he said. "Without the social interaction of the people it wouldn't be the same."

Spokesman for Club 21, Daniel Rowe, described Wolf as the "driving force" behind the two competitions and an eager supporter of them, reflected in its official name - the Wolf Blass Pistol Shoot. "His enthusiasm for the shooting sports along with his generosity has nurtured a series of annual shoots that bring us together with Blanchetown Pistol Club," said Daniel.

"A social club that Wolf is part of also shoots with us under supervision. That has proved to be a big hit with the members and has given them a great opportunity to try pistol shooting."

The competition at the Franklin Street range in Adelaide's CBD is 50 rounds, shooting .22 calibre self-loading pistols in five rounds of 10 at five, seven, 10, 15 and 20 metres - making the top score 500. "Very few shoot below 450-490 - not that we can be classified as top shooters," said Wolf, "but we all get so much enjoyment from it."

At Blanchetown, competitors shoot 10 rounds at 25m outdoors and after shooting the Greenock club, largely made up of Wolf's wine buddies, offer wine tasting as competitors enjoy a long lunch. Wolf said the most satisfying aspect of the event was introducing new people, allowing them to experience shooting in a safe and enjoyable way. "The highlight is bringing the amateurs in," he said. "Competitions are strictly supervised by range officers under the rules of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia."

A good group of people

Now in his eighties and having stepped back from the daily decisions of business life, Wolf visits his local range almost every week. "I'm shooting every Saturday morning when time permits," he said.

When asked what it is about shooting he truly enjoys, Wolf joked it wasn't even the sport that kept him coming back, but the people he has met along the way and those he continues to shoot with. "The people you're meeting, the members, coming from all walks of life. Doctors, engineers - it's a multicultural pastime. You can talk about politics, economics, what life is all about in an intelligent manner and that's what the club is all about, bringing out the best in people."

The business magnate also said the activity helps him relax. "To convert your business and the pressure that creates during the week, you start relaxing and focusing on something entirely different and leave with great enjoyment."


A member of his current club for 15 years, the veteran shooter is well-regarded on Franklin Street. "Wolf is a regular on Saturday mornings at Club 21 and has been for some time," said Daniel. "He's one of the real characters at our club and things definitely wouldn't be the same without him around."

Born in 1934, Wolf is a self-confessed 'senior' at the club and reckons that affords him certain allowances. "I'm sheriff of the competition, that's the fun thing. They allow me, as the senior, to be a bit different."

Ultimately for Wolf it's all a bit of fun. "I'm the oldest in the club and I'd probably be the worst shot - I haven't improved very much - but I just thoroughly enjoy being part of this group, full-stop." ●



A commemorative trophy presented to the Adelaide Pistol and Shooting Club.



Con puts in some range time with the American Rimfire Target Stainless in .22LR.

Ruger's latest offering bang on Target

Con Kapralos

The success of the Ruger American Rifle line in both centrefire and rimfire forms has been a feather in the cap of Sturm, Ruger & Co. It can no longer be considered a 'subordinate' option to the classic M77 rifle offerings as its attributes make it a rifle collection that's a pleasure to own and use while not breaking the bank. The rimfire line-up includes rifles covering hunting and target variants.

One addition is the American Rimfire Target with a stainless barrelled action. While the satin blued version has been available for a few years, Ruger heeded calls from its client base and added the stainless barrelled action edition with black laminate stock and 457mm (18") 'bull-barrel'.

It's available in .22LR, .22WMR and .17HMR with standard laminate stock and with the thumbhole black laminate stock in .22LR only. Nioa, Australian importer and distributor, sent *Australian Shooter* a review rifle in .22LR with standard black laminate stock along with a Leupold Freedom 3-9x33 EFR scope, rings and a selection of quality target ammunition from Lapua, Eley and SK.

Receiver

This is perfectly scaled to the rimfire calibres, 83mm long x 27mm wide and made

from cylindrical stainless steel bar stock, the upper profile of the receiver of a semi-hexagonal design and the rifle's serial number, maker's logo and model name on the left of the receiver adjacent to the ejection port.

The top of the receiver has an integral dovetail milled into it for scope attachment but Ruger wisely decided to also drill and tap the receiver top flat and supply this model with a single, full-length Weaver rail which makes scope mounting much more adaptable.

Bolt

This is of a three-piece construction made of stainless steel to mirror the rest of the barrelled action. It's 160mm long x 16mm wide and uses a single claw-type extractor with a spring clip which locates the rimfire round on to the bolt face.

Ejection is via a spur on the static action bedding block and protrudes through the bolt face and ejects the case when the bolt is pulled towards the rear, like the blade-ejector system found on so many centrefire rifles. The bolt handle is also stainless steel with a tactical-style oversize bolt knob which makes the bolt travel in the raceways of the action silky smooth and is also benefitted by a 60-degree bolt lift, making contact with the scope ocular housing avoidable.

Trigger and safety

The Marksman trigger is an excellent unit offering a compromise between a crisp trigger pull with added safety built in. There's a 1.4-2.3kg trigger pull adjustment range with an extra inner safety blade which must be depressed as you pull the trigger before the sear is operated. For target applications or field use it was excellent and as set at 1.6kg from the factory was good to use as-is. Only a serious rimfire target shooter would look for a trigger with a lower pull weight but the Marksman unit has everything for all-round target/hunting application. The safety is on the tang behind the bolt and is of a two-position configuration - forward and back. It's quiet to handle and sits in the perfect spot for the shooter's thumb.

One neat touch is the blued steel trigger-guard which protects the trigger blade. It's too easy these days for makers to choose the straightforward route and opt for polymer so it's encouraging to see Ruger still retain steel on the American Rimfire Target model.

Magazine

One of the Ruger American rimfire's major attributes is the BX-1 rotary magazine system. Ruger is well respected for its



Ruger American Rimfire Target Stainless in .22LR as supplied.



Bolt is the standard unit found on the Ruger American Rimfire line with exception of the stainless steel and tactical-style bolt handle.

Accuracy test at 50m - 5-shot groups in mm

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Average*
Eley Standard 40gr round nose 1090fps	15	20	18
Eley Tenex 40gr flat nose 1085fps	12	19	15
Eley Edge 40gr flat nose 1085fps	11	20	16
Eley Match 40gr flat nose 1085fps	13	22	16
SK Flatnose Match 40gr 1067fps	10	18	14
SK Flatnose Basic 40gr 1067fps	15	22	18
Lapua Midas + 40gr 1073fps	10	16	13
Federal Premium Hunter Match 40gr match HP 1200fps	18	25	21

* Average calculated from five 5-shot groups at 50m from a benchrest.

rotary magazines which still feature on the M77 models but have been introduced to the American rimfire line. With 10-shot capacity that's smooth to load and sits flush with the contours of the stock, it's by far the best rimfire magazine design. The magazine is removed via a release lever that protrudes just behind the well and when pushed forward drops the magazine.

Barrel

Shining star of the American Rimfire Target Stainless, the cold hammer forged stainless steel barrel is of a semi-varmint profile 457mm (18") long with a six-groove, one-in-16" rifling twist. It's of a parallel profile measuring 22.2mm at both knox form and muzzle and is attached to the receiver via the pinning method.

At the muzzle end, a threaded section for use with accessory devices (where permitted) is protected by a knurled stainless collar. A target-style crown is as expected on a target rimfire and protects the rifling while also providing superior bullet release from the bore and enhanced accuracy. The exterior of the barrel is finished beautifully and matches the receiver and bolt perfectly - a more attractive stainless rimfire rifle I've yet to see.

Stock

The striking black laminate stock is of a sporter profile but with a higher comb which makes cheek weld and scope acquisition with the master eye much easier. The pistol grip is full with a palmswell on both sides which enhances control of the rifle with the right hand. The stock is devoid of chequering with only the Ruger logo impressed into the base of the pistol grip, not a problem as the grip on the stock was perfectly adequate.

The fore-end was pure Ruger with the No.1 style tip and Alexander Henry profile adding a touch of class. Two sling swivel studs as well as a rubber recoil pad complete the stock and give it a 350mm length of pull. For users who prefer it, Ruger also offer this model with a black laminate thumbhole stock but only in .22LR.

Internally, the bedding system on the American Rimfire Target Stainless consists of the Power Bedding blocks which Ruger has patented. One aluminium V-block is inletted into the floor of the stock to which the front action screw passes through and the block mates up with recesses milled into the receiver underside.

The second bedding block is inletted into the floor of the stock directly behind the magazine well and serves to provide the

rear bedding platform for the action as well as securing the magazine release lever and ejector spur. The two bedding block system is as good as you could wish for in a rimfire rifle and certainly beats the barrelled action bearing directly on the stock surfaces. The barrel is free-floating along its entire length as would be expected on a target rimfire, the rifle having an overall length of 940mm and weighing 3.04kg.

At the range

Range testing over two sessions was challenging weather-wise with gusty winds on both occasions. Nevertheless, the rifle and optic turned in some excellent 5-shot groups at the 50m distance with the Leupold optic set at the maximum of 9x and parallax at 50 yards (being a US riflescope).

In all instances the rifle performed flawlessly with the BX-1 rotary magazine feeding the .22LR rounds faultlessly and extraction/ejection of fired cases seamless. Target rimfire ammunition commands a premium price but you can see from the results in the accompanying table why this is the case, even with range conditions not conducive to shooting tight groups.

Supremely consistent manufacture of these tested loads by leaders in target rimfire ammunition are the



Ruger's latest offering bang on Target

reason competitive rimfire shooters, World and Olympic champions choose the Eley, SK and Lapua brands to name a few. I'd happily rely on any of the brands tested in my own rifle and even the solo hunting ammunition tested in the Federal Premium Hunter Match performed well.

Summary

The Ruger American Rimfire Target Stainless continues the excellence already shown in the matte blue version but the stainless barrelled action mated with the black laminate stock makes for a visual treat that shoots as good as it looks.

For those intending to try informal rimfire target shooting or hunters wanting a superbly accurate rifle that's comfortable to carry in the field, you can't go past this one, available in .22LR, .22WMR and .17HMR with either the standard sporter stock or thumbhole variant in .22LR. Paired with a great optic from the Leupold stable you won't be disappointed. The Ruger American Rimfire Stainless rifle retails around the \$900 mark and is available from most fire-arms dealers. More at nioa.com.au ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Make: Ruger American Rimfire Target Stainless rifle

Action: Bolt-action, stainless steel finish

Barrel: 460mm long, cold hammer forged stainless steel, semi-varmint profile, 1:16" RH twist with six grooves

Sights: None fitted. Receiver dovetailed and Picatinny rail fitted for scope. Review rifle tested with a 3-9x33 Leupold Freedom EFR scope (not included)

Calibre: .22LR (tested), .22WMR, .17HMR

Magazine: Ruger BX-1 rotary, 10-shot, flush mounted

Stock: Black laminate, matte finished, sling swivel bases fitted

Trigger: Ruger Marksman, fully adjustable from 1.4-2.3kg, set at 1.6kg from factory

Length of pull: 350mm

Overall length: 940mm

Weight: 3.04kg

Distributor: Nioa

RRP: About \$900, shop around



Review rifle in disassembled form.



The bedding arrangement consists of the Power Bedding system patented by Ruger.



Left side of the action with serial number, maker's logo and model etched into the stainless steel receiver.

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Contact Paul Brush 0412 562 252

SSAA Member Alert

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

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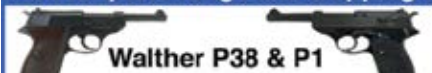


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Gun & Knife Show List

2020

Feb 29-March 1	Eastbank Centre, Welford St, Shepparton	200 tables antique & modern firearms, militaria and collectables Expo	Ricky Seiter 0400 567 353
March 7-8	Bathurst Showgrounds, Bathurst	Bathurst Arms Fair	bathurstarmsfair.com.au
March 14-15	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
April 4-5	The Betting Hall, Elwick Showgrounds, Hobart	Antique & modern firearms, edged weapons and militaria	Phil Gourlay 0477 411 457
April 4-5	Exhibition Display Pavilion, Ipswich Showgrounds	Queensland Knife Show	andrew@knifeartassociation.com
May 23-24	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectables	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
July 18-19	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
September 12-13	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectables	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 12-13	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	Geoff Smith 0419 955 284
October 17-18	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252

Persons wishing to purchase any firearm that requires a licence from any arms fair in NSW should apply for a Permit to Acquire at least six weeks before the fair. For reasons beyond the control of show organisers, some of the above dates may be changed. It is advisable to check the show dates before travelling.



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International

International Big Game Rifle/ Dangerous Game Shoot

September 12-13, 2020
Mickett Creek Shooting Complex, Darwin,
NT

Program: See National website for full event details. Facilities: Toilets at range but no showers or camping. Darwin Rifle Club has showers and toilets and camping can be arranged with sufficient notice. Contact: Barry Seabrook ntbiggamerifle@gmail.com

National

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot

February 1-July 31, 2020

Various locations

Program: 40-shot match with results due by August 31, 2020. To enter email name, age, club, membership number and detailed results to juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au. Prizes: Medals for first three in U-15 and O-15 to U-18. Contact: juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

SSAA Handgun Metallic Silhouette National Postal Shoot

March 1-May 31, 2020

Various locations. Program: Big Bore, Small Bore and Field Pistol. Rules: IHMSA official rule book. Prizes: Gift cards - 1 x \$100, 4 x \$50 handgunsilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

Muzzleloading National Championships

April 10-13, 2020

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA
Program: See website for full event details. Note: WA Police require temporary permits to bring firearms into Western Australia. Rules: Rule book No.8 - current firearms licence and SSAA card must be shown. Contact: kevin.brice@bigpond.com

SSAA 5-Stand National Championships

May 16-17, 2020

SSAA Albury, Winchester Lane,
Ettamogah, NSW

Program: See website for event details.
Contact: Brett Chambellant 0407 153 300

Big Game Rifle National Championships

May 16-17, 2020

Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas
Program: See National website for full event details. Nominations to be received by Friday, May 1. Rules: SSAA Big Game Rifle national rule book, Issue No.4, 2016. Facilities: Camping and caravans permitted at range from Thursday to Monday, toilets on-site with disabled facilities. Contact: David Moults secretary@ssaabluehills.org.au or 0488 441 499

Gallery Rifle National Championships

July 25-26, 2020

SSAA Para, Rifle Range Rd, Greenwith, SA
Program: See website for full event details. Contact: Don Robinson 0428 986 070 or Dave McCarthy 0414 880 333

SSAA 2020 IHMSA National Championships

October 2-9, 2020

ACT Majura, Hector McIntosh Grove,
Majura, ACT

Program: See National website for full event details. Contact Russell Mowles 0418 819 945 or Cheyne Fischer 0419 660 062.

New South Wales

NSW Big Game Rifle State Championships

June 6-7, 2020

Southern Highlands Regional Shooting
Complex, NSW
Program: Please see National website for full event details. Nominations to be received by May 22, 2020. Contact: Ben Doherty bfdoherty@bigpond.com or 0409 831 258 (A/H).

Queensland

SSAA Air Rifle State Championships

March 27-29, 2020

292 Mt Petrie Rd, Belmont, Qld
Program: See National website for full event details. Contact: (07) 3395 0911 or 0418 873 258

SSAA Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

May 15-17, 2020

Hervey Range, Townsville, Qld
Program: See National website for full event details. Contact: Bob Luther johair67@optusnet.com.au or 0429 212 262

SSAA NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 17-20, 2020

Rifle Range Rd, Hervey Range,
Townsville, Qld
Program: See National website for full event details. Contact Hazel Bozic 4128 0467 hbozic1@bigpond.net.au or Bob Luther 0429 212 262 johair67@optusnet.com.au

Western Australia

SSAA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

April 10-12, 2020

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA
Program: See National website for full event details. Contact: Warren Goodfield 0407 440 431

SSAA Target Pistol State Championships

May 4-5, 2020

Dawesville, WA
Program: See National website for full event details. Nominations: \$10 per event, \$50 maximum (juniors half price). Prizes: Medals for first three in each grade for each match. Contact: Ronnie Pope 0459 545 374

SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

May 30-31, 2020

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA
Program: See National website for full event details. Nominations: \$20 per day or \$30 all events, juniors half price. Facilities: Some camping with limited power. Contact: Paul Dunn Paul@compac.com.au or 0407 428 175

Victoria

SSAA Handgun Metallic Silhouette Ultra 500 State Championships

May 19-21, 2020

Eagle Park, Little River, Victoria
Program: Tuesday, May 19: Set-up and practice; Wednesday: Competition day one; Thursday: Competition day two, shoot-offs. Rules: IHMSA rule book. Contact: Mick Arden 0419 429 485 or Peter Mannu 0410 017 501

SSAA Single Action Black Powder State Championships

July 11-12, 2020

Eagle Park Range, Little River, Vic
Program: See attached for full event details. Nominations: \$60 main match and side events plus Saturday shindig, shooting partner \$50, juniors \$20. Rules: Single Action Shooting Society and local range rules. Facilities: Free camping, toilets and showers, limited power. Contact: diablot6@bigpond.com

SSAA IHMS Big Bore State Championships

July 23-26, 2020

Eagle Park, Little River, Vic
Program: Thursday, July 23: Set-up and practice; Friday: Competition day one; Saturday: Competition day two; Sunday: Competition day three, shoot-offs. Rules: IHMSA rule book. Contact: Mick Arden 0419 429 485 or Peter Mannu 0410 017 501

SSAA Official Calendar

INTERNATIONAL

September 12-13, 2020 International Big Game Rifle/Dangerous Game Shoot

Mickett Creek Shooting Complex, Darwin, NT

ntbiggamerifle@gmail.com

NATIONAL

February 1-July 31, 2020 National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot

March 1-May 31, 2020 National IHMSA Postal Shoot

April 10-13, 2020 Muzzleloading National Championships

May 16-17, 2020 SSAA 5-Stand National Championships

May 16-17, 2020 Big Game Rifle National Championships

July 25-26, 2020 Gallery Rifle National Championships

October 2-9, 2020 IHMSA 2020 National Championships

Various locations

Various locations

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA

SSAA Albury, Winchester Lane, Ettamogah, NSW

Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas

Rifle Range Road, Greenwith, SA

SSAA ACT Majura Complex

juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

handgunsilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

kevin.brice@bigpond.com

Brett Chambellant 0407 153 300

secretary@ssaabluehills.org.au

0428 986 070 or 0414 880 333

0418 819 945

STATE

Feb 1-May 31, 2020

March 27-29, 2020

April 10-12, 2020

April 10-13, 2020

May 4-5, 2020

May 15-17, 2020

May 17-20, 2020

May 19-21, 2020

May 30-31, 2020

June 6-7, 2020

July 11-12, 2020

July 23-26, 2020

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.1

SSAA Qld Air Rifle State Championships

SSAA WA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

Muzzleloading National Championships

SSAA (WA) Target Pistol State Championships

SSAA Qld Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette State Championships

SSAA Vic IHMS Ultra 500 State Championships

SSAA (WA) Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

NSW Big Game Rifle State Championships

SSAA Vic Single Action Black Powder State Championships

SSAA Vic IHMS Big Bore State Championships

Various locations

292 Mt Petrie Rd, Belmont, Qld

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA

Port Bouvard Pistol & Small Bore Rifle Club, WA

Hervey Range, Townsville, Qld

Rifle Range Road, Hervey Range, Townsville, Qld

Eagle Park, Little River, Vic

Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA

Southern Highland Regional Shooting Complex, NSW

Eagle Park Range, Little River, Vic

Eagle Park, Little River, Vic

07 4128 0467 or hbozic1@bigpond.net.au

07 3395 0911

0407 440 431

kevin.brice@bigpond.com

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Paul@compac.com.au

bfdoherty@bigpond.com

diablot6@bigpond.com

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SSAA messenger bag

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SSAA ceramic blade kitchen knife set comes in a presentation gift box.

Large knife blade is 150mm long.
Small knife blade is 75mm long.

\$28.95



SSAA multi-tool

The SSAA multi-tool, with stainless steel handles, comes with 11 functional tools in one handy unit.

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SSAA knife roll



SSAA knife roll includes a 20cm boning knife, 18cm skinning knife, 20cm filleting knife and 25cm sharpening steel.

The blades are made from 3Cr13 stainless steel and all fit neatly into a heavy-duty canvas knife roll featuring the SSAA logo.

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SSAA rechargeable knife sharpener

Sharpen every knife or blade you own with the SSAA rechargeable knife sharpener. The sharpener is battery operated so you can take it anywhere with you, just charge the batteries before you go.

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- Crossed ceramic rods providing razor-sharp edge
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SSAA Apex swag

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SSAA outdoors bag - black



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- * Material made from waterproof 430gs, Ripstop Polyester canvas
- * Hard base sewn between bottom layers of canvas
- * 50mm adjustable shoulder strap
- * Front, rear and side pockets for essential items
- * High visibility reflective strip on front flap
- * Side footwear storage pocket

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SSAA blue earmuffs

With a noise rating of NRR 23 db, they are ideal for sporting shooters, range officers, instructors and spectators. See full details online.

\$59.95

SAFETY

SSAA first aid kits

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tackle box-style

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Code FA003



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for phone orders**



SSAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ABN 95 050 209 688

SSAA Membership Office, PO Box 282, Plumpton, NSW 2761
Phone 02 8805 3900 Fax 02 9832 9377 Email mem@ssaa.org.au

Membership No.

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

--	--	--	--	--	--



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

Town/suburb State Postcode

(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

Phone (Mobile) (Home)

Email

Date of birth Male ☐ Female ☐ Member referral number if applicable

☐ Tick to subscribe to the FREE SSAA National E-newsletter via email

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND SPECIAL OFFERS

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

Add four issues of the Hunter magazine per year

☐ \$93

☐ \$123

Adult (over 18 years)

Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, valid until next membership renewal.

☐ \$128

☐ \$158



Additional Family Member (No magazine) Applies to each additional person over 18 residing at the same address as a full-subscription **Adult** member.

Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, valid until next membership renewal.

☐ \$70

☐ \$100



Pensioner Available on production or photocopy of both sides of your Australian Concession Card.

Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, valid until next membership renewal.

☐ \$105

☐ \$135



☐ \$70

☐ \$100



☐ \$105

☐ \$135

☐ \$465

5-year Adult Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.

☐ \$1860

Member for Life Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.

☐ \$175

☐ \$236

Overseas Available to members living overseas.

☐ \$27

☐ \$57

Junior (under 18 years) Parent's or guardian's signature



Just \$30 per year!

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SIGN UP ONLINE

ssaa.org.au



PLEASE READ AND SIGN

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

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

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

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ATTENTION NSW & ACT MEMBERS

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

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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 the following amount to the SSAA \$.....

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 March 31, 2020.

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

Enter online at
ssaa.org.au/win

SSAA green shooting vest (size small only)

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SSAA blue earmuffs

Valued at \$59.95

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onlineshop.ssaa.org.au



Competition winners

Australian Shooter December 2019

EZSharp Blade Sharpener
Glenn Dean, QLD

MOA or MIL Sight-in Targets
Ian Cilia, VIC

Dec Junior – SSAA Outdoors Bag
Jasmin Krah, Vic

**Dec AWS – Women's Browning
Clothing Pack**
Jessica Taylor, NSW

Best Shots Mug
Tristan Howell, SA

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All good things . . .

When we came to live here 26 years ago we reckoned we'd found our own little slice of New South Wales heaven - no near neighbours just paddocks and trees all around us and a level of solitude unimaginable within the streets of suburbia. The permanent creek at the back of the block had runs and deep holes where kids and grandkids could swim and fish, skip stones, throw sticks for the dog, build stone walls to divert summer flows or pan for gold in what amounted to a big private playground. There was room to move and we all made the most of it.

We watched the seasons come and go - freezing in sub-zero winter temperatures, broiling in the heat of summer - we gardened and gathered and revelled in the life we were able to make for ourselves. The landscape and birds and animals that called it home with us were an endless source of inspiration for someone like me who sees, feels and writes about the simple pleasures of country life. To say we've enjoyed ourselves here is something of an understatement but, for all that, our time is coming to an end.

It's late January as I write and this part of the world has just experienced one of the worst fire seasons in decades. We were lucky - the fires missed us. We had to leave twice but came through unscathed yet we have friends who didn't fare so well and getting back to where they were is going to take some time. Years ago, when fire-fighting was a seasonal part of my job description, I saw it as a challenge if not something of an adventure. These days I'm more inclined to be overly wary, the main reason our fire plan for this past summer was to leave before it got too bad.

It sounds so easy. You collect the few things you've already packed plus whatever else is important on the day and put them in the car along with the lady of the house, the dog and the cats. Then you fill the gutters with water and drive away, hoping all the cleaning up and preparation work you've done will be enough to stave off whatever might be coming. Fortunately they weren't tested and for that I'm truly thankful, but a lot of things have changed around here since then.

From the moment we arrived we knew the time would come when we'd have to leave again. It took a long time but for the



A smoky summer morning on the creek - precursor to a bad fire season. Photo: Jennifer Dunn

past 12 months or so we've been talking about just that, mostly in dribs and drabs as home truths here and there began to crystallise. Neither of us is getting any younger. We're making more trips to town than we used to and as much as I hate to admit it, even the simple maintenance tasks around the place are becoming more difficult, mostly because I can't physically work as hard as I used to.

Preparing for the fire season wore me out. The cloak of smoke from fires up and down the east coast made breathing difficult for days at a time. The over-grassed and understocked paddocks were ringing alarm bells like never before and for months I was a long way short of feeling at ease. We had a quiet Christmas at home, just the two of us away from the family, not game to go anywhere lest everything went

pear-shaped, which it did a week later.

When we came home the first time we'd already decided it was time to move and the second leaving and subsequent return merely confirmed it. Solitude is one thing, isolation another. Acknowledging vulnerability has a way of bringing reality sharply into focus.

Within a week we'd found a house in town that meets our needs. We won't be moving any time soon but even if it takes a month or three to sort it out, the timing is undoubtedly right. Neither of us needs the stresses of another bad summer. For us, moving on is the only sensible option - but I doubt that taking the dog for a morning walk will ever be the same again. ●



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All privately owned firearms registered to the member and fixed accessories.

COVERAGE.

- Accidental loss and damage of the equipment (including whilst in use, excluding chipping and scratching of stock).
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- Collision or overturning of the vehicle.
- Fire & extraneous perils.
- Flood
- Theft.

NOT COVERED.

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

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