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This Issue

October 2019

FIREARMS

- 22 The Marlin 336XLR
- 36 Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera
- 44 Talbot on target! Lever Action
- 58 Beretta DT 11 ACS
- 79 Encore! Encore! - The Thompson Center Pro Hunter

HUNTING

- 75 Three and easy for the novice

PRODUCTS

- 28 Evolution Gear soft cases
- 53 Vortex Fury HD 5000, 10x42 Laser Rangefinder binoculars
- 66 Oryx rifle chassis systems by MDT
- 72 Take a rest - support when you need it most

AND MORE

- 34 Aussie Whitford on top of the world - twice!
- 56 Darwin tragedy 'could have been avoided'
- 84 Handloading for hunting ammo
- 88 A true Aussie champion - The Ballantine Ammunition Company
- 92 Aussie medal-fest at Benchrest Worlds
- 93 Golden Boots walks tall in national championships
- 94 Long way round for the Saxony sword

REGULARS

- 6 President's Message
- 7,8 Letters
- 7 Insurance Q&A
- 10 Reloading
- 12 Bushcraft & Survival
- 14 Clay Target Q&A
- 16 Top Shots
- 20 Open Season
- 96 Gun & Knife Show List
- 98 Youth in Focus - Ash Hutchins
- 100 Competition News
- 102 SSAA Shop
- 105 Members-only Competitions
- 106 Jumbunna



Our October cover
Daniel O'Dea with the
Lithgow LA105 Woomera.

NEXT ISSUE



John McDougall has been out and about with the Dickinson bolt-action 12-gauge shotgun which he reckons is guaranteed to win a following in Australia.

Daniel O'Dea took to the field with Hornady TAP Urban 60gr ammunition and says it should really appeal to professional shooters and farmers who don't reload.

The new Howa Mini Action Rifle in .300BLK was put to the test by Con Kapralos who found it fun to shoot, the light recoil arguably its best feature.



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EDITORIAL POLICY

To create a better environment and community understanding of all forms of hunting and shooting sports.

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Email: as@ssaa.org.au Web: www.ssaa.org.au

ABN 95 050 209 688

195,862 members strong
as of August 2019

This magazine is owned and published by the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Association.

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President's Message

WITH GEOFF JONES

Timely reminder to keep firearms security on the agenda

In the wake of our updated *Secure your gun, secure your sport* pamphlet relating to safe gun storage, now seems a good time to remind SSAA members of the responsibilities we have to ensure we lock up our firearms properly. This applies to us all. There's no point in being blasé and saying: "Oh, I'll do it tomorrow." That's not good enough. Sometimes firearms owners - rightly or wrongly - are accused of letting their guns fall into criminal hands, so making things secure is a matter of keeping our members on the right side of the law.

I realise that for farmers, firearms are tools of the trade as far as they're concerned - much like pliers, hammers or any mechanical instruments - but firearms can't be left lying around the back of a ute or in a shed because they're going to be used again the next day. The law is the law and it states that firearms should be securely stored at the legal owner's house or property all the time. This is part of the process to ensure legal firearms don't fall into criminal hands.

Disreputable elements can find ways to get hold of what they want via illegal imports and stolen items so our members should be constantly reminding themselves the way to prevent any malpractice is to have permanent, secure storage facilities for their firearms. We have to avoid our firearms finding their way into criminal circles and guard against legal firearms being misdirected and used for criminal activities.

Figures obtained from police sources suggest incidences of this are miniscule, indeed this factor tends to be overstated in my opinion, but that's no reason to drop

our guard. We should never lessen our awareness as any lack of gun security is an offence. That's a fact. You can easily be charged and we can't afford to be casual. If the legislation is seen to be not working this could have long-term ramifications but I have total faith in our members to do the right thing so let's stress that you can never be too diligent.

On a more upbeat note, members have the 2019 SSAA SHOT Expo to look forward to this month. On the weekend of October 19-20 all roads lead to Melbourne Showgrounds for the revamped and expanded edition of our showcase event which is shaping up to be bigger and better than ever.

The much anticipated attraction has become one of the star turns on the SSAA calendar, and with thousands of brands filling hundreds of stalls and more than 150 exhibitors displaying their wares, there should be something for everyone. The SSAA emphasises the family-friendly nature of the occasion so why not grab some tickets and take the kids along.

One of my personal favourites is the Working Gun Dogs show and I know our Victorian contingent puts in lots of effort to make sure this is a crowd-pleaser. And with the new backroom planning of Level Up Events on board, this year's Expo will be a real treat for everyone.

G.E. Jones

Geoff Jones
SSAA National President



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Fond Ipswich memories

WHAT A DELIGHT it was to read Dave Rose's article on the Ipswich and District Rifle Club (*Shooter*, July 2019). I joined the club in the late '50s when the usual shoots were at the old military range at Redbank (I grew up in the nearby then-village of Goodna).

My interest in target and club shooting was guided by hometown 'oldies' Les Law and Bill Hammond, the latter my mentor and coach as I picked up the ways and wisdom of target shooters. Jim Rush, who featured in one of your photos, executed the purchase and preparation of my SMLE and was always part of the learning curves of those days on the range that remain memorable aspects of my firearms and shooting interests.

Of historical interest would be my means of 'getting to the range'. Sometimes I'd be picked up by a fellow member, others I walked the bush between Redbank and Goodna, rifle and shooting bag over the shoulder, keeping clear of the butts and appreciating days the shoot wasn't 800yds which added some distance to my 2.5k trek. On other days I'd take the train from Goodna to Redbank, rifle and other gear hanging off my shoulder. These days I'd probably be a candidate for a SWAT squad visitation!

Thanks for the excellence of the magazine and constant support and enthusiasm

you offer those interested in the shooting sports while feeling the squeeze of present day realities.

Paul Goodland, via email

Satellite essentials

I WRITE TO comment on Peter Bindon's *Bushcraft & Survival* column in the June issue of *Australian Shooter*. I fully agree with Peter except on two points, one of relevance and one of completeness.

'Never go it alone' says Peter. Well it's nice to have one or more mates on a hunting trip but when it comes to deer stalking, most would agree it's a single activity. The group will split into different areas but each goes his own way.

'10 Essentials'. Again I agree with Peter but he omitted what I consider two essential items on a deer stalk - a UHF radio and satellite phone. The radio is useful to communicate locally with your mates and the sat-phone essential to get help or just talk with friends or family.

I bought a sat-phone for about \$800 and subscribe to a \$15/month plan with which I can call anytime from anywhere in Australia. I usually send an SMS to my daughter or mate and ask them to call me which costs them the price of a call within Australia, ie nothing as they have unlimited calls.

Alain Remont, via email

Hi-five for Hi-Tek story

I WISH TO comment on the Hi-Tek bullet coating article by Geoff Smith on Page 30 of the August edition of *Australian Shooter*. The article was interesting, relevant and well received by all the many SSAA members at my local club who reload.

The piece was balanced and provided sufficient explanation of the process. Including information on testing both uncoated and coated projectiles was a bonus for readers. Great work on the magazine and please keep these wonderful articles coming.

Rod James, via email

Proud to be a member

JUST A LINE to say how pleased and proud I am to be a member of the SSAA. I joined recently with my son and we really enjoy heading to the range to shoot together. It's a great bonding experience - loading the car, driving down then comparing results.

Shooting is a terrific sport, the people we meet are complete professionals and I'd highly recommend it to fathers and sons, wives and daughters for sharing a common interest. We have signed up for the SSAA training course on marksmanship and to review the basics. It's great being part of a professional, well-run and passionate association. Keep up the great work.

Damian and Sean Pennington, via email



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q I know SSAA General Firearms Insurance doesn't cover reloading equipment but I have a press and lots of other stuff. Can you provide a separate policy for my reloading gear?
Sam, via email

A You're right, SSAA Members Firearms Insurance covers privately-owned firearms as well as fixed accessories specifically limited to the

following: scopes/sights, straps, gunbags/cases, tripods, bipods and trigger rests. Check with your home and contents insurer as you may find these are already covered under that policy. If they are, they'll probably be only covered at your home address and only for whatever perils (fire, theft, water damage etc) are listed in the product disclosure statement of your policy.

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to home and contents which would also include cover for your reloading equipment, so if you'd like a comparative quote contact us on 08 8332 0281 or visit ssaaib.com.au





Fowl play suspected

THOUGHT I'D SEND you this photograph of a fox which had been killing a lot of guineafowl. I was contacted by the farmer who owns the birds, Mary McGregor, asking if I could help solve the problem which, as you can see, I did. Now the tables had turned and Mary took this picture of the remaining guineafowl holding a wake for the fox.

Stan Noble, WA

Problems with the JW25

WITH REGARD TO Jim Nash's Top Shots question on the Norinco JW25 (*Shooter*, April 2019). Jim, I feel your pain as I've owned a JW25 for a few years and have also struggled with its consistency. I bought this firearm new but untested as I fell in love with its looks - there's really nothing else like it out there.

But it hasn't been without its many problems. Mounting a scope wasn't much fun (the dovetail rail was 11mm at one end and 9mm at the other), sharp screw ends and easily chipped wood are just a few of the issues I had.

I've tried almost every type of 22LR ammo from the cheap and nasty to the outlandishly expensive, still the inconsistency remained. I tried subsonic, standard and high velocity, literally pumping thousands of rounds through until I almost gave up hope.

I took my woes to a local gunsmith who was able to help diagnose the issue almost immediately. Turned out the whole receiver was canted over several degrees. Thinking it was just misaligned, once the stock was removed I discovered the whole receiver and rail had to be milled in order to level it out. The barrel was inspected with a bore scope and was fine.

Good news is it's starting to become a bit more consistent, granted it will never be a match-grade rifle but now I'm starting to shoot 1" groups at 50m using Geco and Highland RX ammo.

Wayne Laws, via email

It's a heated debate

IN PETER BINDON'S 'Bushcraft and Survival' column in your August edition he says: "It has long been a contentious issue whether the head loses more heat relative

to that lost by other parts of the body." I thought it unlikely too and used to say that if it were so, with a warm enough hat you could ski naked!

But that's to overlook the other source of heat loss 'from the head' - respiration. The lungs can't use freezing cold air so by design our bodies heat up any incoming air then we breathe it out warmer than it went in. Thus an ongoing, unavoidable heat loss occurs unless we can work out some way to stop breathing. So it's absolutely true that we lose most heat 'from the head' - radiation and respiration combined.

As far as the issue of the Akubra's effectiveness as cold-weather apparel, I'd suggest a warm beanie is a far better proposition (a fundamental item in my hunting gear). Look at pictures of mountaineers at high altitude and you won't see many wearing Akubras.

Patrick Kerin, via email

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The Model 1894 Winchester rifle

Designed by John Moses Browning in 1894 at the request of Winchester who were experimenting with a new smokeless powder, the Model 1894 rifle - also known as the Winchester 94 or just Model 94 - became the most popular lever-action rifle ever made with more than 7.5 million produced.

It was originally chambered for two metallic black powder cartridges, the .32-40 Winchester and .38-55 Winchester, and later in 1895 when Winchester had solved its issues with the nickel-steel barrels that could handle the new smokeless powders, it introduced the .25-35 Winchester Centre Fire (WCF) cartridge for the Model 94.

Some months later the company expanded the neck of the .25-35 Winchester to .30 calibre and the .30-30 Winchester cartridge, perhaps the most popular small to mid-sized game cartridge ever made, was born.

The Model 94 was an instant success amid huge demand for a lightweight, easy to handle, low recoiling firearm from farmers and settlers in rural USA and the one-millionth rifle was produced in 1927 and presented to US President Calvin Coolidge. President Harry S. Truman received his Model 94 on production of 1.5 million in 1948 followed by the two-millionth presented to President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953.



During World War One the US Government bought 1800 Model 94s and 50,000 .30-30 cartridges from Winchester to be used by the US Army Signal Corps who were stationed in the Pacific Northwest. In 1914 the Royal Navy bought 5000 .30-30 calibre Model 1894s to be used for ship-board guard duty and mine-clearing and France bought 15,100 carbines equipped with left-mounted sling swivels and a barrel band to be used by artillery troops, motor-cycle couriers, railway personnel and balloon units and, after the war, some acquired Belgian proof marks after being sold as surplus to Belgium.

In World War Two, Winchester 1894 rifles were used by the Canadian Government in the hands of the Canadian Pacific Coast Rangers whose duty it was to defend the west coast of Canada against Japanese invaders, which fortunately never came to pass.

Over the years Winchester made very few design changes to the Model 94, but the one in 1964 brought about by the company looking to increase profitability seri-

ously damaged their reputation for producing quality firearms.

It ceased machining the receiver and other parts out of solid steel and switched to sintered steel for the receiver, stamped sheet metal for the cartridge lifter and hollow steel roll pins rather than solid ones in the action. While these changes didn't adversely affect performance, the sintered steel did not take well to the blueing process and was perceived by firearm buyers as a quality issue.

As telescopic riflescopes became more affordable and more popular, the fact they were difficult to mount on the Model 94 due to its top ejection configuration prompted Winchester in 1982 to change the design of the action to allow angled cartridge ejection.

This change enabled a top mount to be fitted easily to the receiver to house a telescopic sight and Winchester was once again able to compete on equal terms with its main rival Marlin, whose lever-actioned rifles had for many years been side ejection.





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Surviving overnight in winter

Newspapers reported fairly recently on how more than one hiker was stranded by the freezing weather that much of south-eastern Australia was subjected to this winter. Happily, many of the stories had a positive ending but sadly there were also casualties. Apart from being disorientated and ultimately lost, when the weather has closed in and concealed access tracks, navigating can be extremely difficult.

Moving from their current location in an attempt to regain a camp or motor vehicle is just one way hikers become lost. So, accepting that you're lost and need to stay where you are until morning (you hope), what next? Having to camp out in extreme weather usually requires sufficient resources to ensure you'll be supported for a few days at least and perhaps up to a week.

Unless you have exceptional cold-weather survival skills I suggest you must carry the necessary resources with you all the time and never be parted from them - like leaving them in the vehicle while you walk to a photo opportunity. Assuming you're already dressed warmly, the absolute bare minimum for survival, but certainly not comfort, is adequate shelter and a means of fire-lighting. After that, add what you like.

Uncomfortable but safe camps can be

Assuming you're already dressed warmly, the absolute bare minimum for survival, but certainly not comfort, is adequate shelter and a means of fire-lighting.

established with just a good quality bivvy bag on an insulating mat with a sleeping bag inserted into it. The main thing to remember is you must always be breathing fresh air and can't be sealed into anything which even slightly impedes a flow of air to breathe. In other words, never zip up completely inside but protect your exposed nose and mouth so you have access to fresh air even if you fall asleep. I've found this becomes easier if you have a fire burning in your improvised campsite.

Having chosen a suitably sheltered spot, while still carrying your gear, collect the necessary fuel and get a fire going. My preference is to use a method which gives a direct flame, like a cigarette lighter. A block

of solid fuel or a slice from a supermarket firelighter provides my tinder as this will easily light the large pieces of wood which I'll almost certainly be forced to use. Sitting in a sleeping bag protected by a bivvy and warmed by sips of melted snow or ice, you have a reasonable chance of being found alive.

A reader of this magazine wrote to me recently reminding me of the usefulness of a sat-phone in the wilderness. You probably recall how some adventurers traversing the Antarctic continent kept in touch with organisers and family using a sat-phone. Although coverage can be problematical depending on the position of the satellites through which the signals pass, a sat-phone is not to be ignored as a useful tool in remote locations or where a regular mobile phone has no reception. So stay wrapped up, keep sipping that warm drink and make a lucid call on your sat-phone.



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Clay Target Q&A

WITH RUSSELL MARK

Q Before I have a new stock made for my shotgun, I need some advice about chokes and how they pattern. I notice that when you pattern your shotguns you advise people to do this at 20m. Most of my shooting is at either clays or rabbits where I guess I'm shooting them at twice that range. Should I therefore test my shotgun at that distance?

Grant Brayshaw, Vic

A That's a great question Grant and a complicated one to answer. I assume you're referring to a previous *Australian Shooter* article where I'm patterning a shotgun at 20m simply to determine its point of impact percentage above and below the aiming point. I use 20m as it opens up even the tightest choke to a point where you can clearly see if the shot pattern is left, right, high or low.

In the US many experts will advise you to do this test at 13 yards but, in my experience, I find some of the tightest chokes really don't open up their shot patterns wide enough to make a clear and decisive judgment, therefore the extra distance caters for the shotshell to open up just enough to see its shot imprint on the pattern board.

I'm a huge supporter of using a post or rest to gently lean the barrel against after you've mounted your shotgun in its natural position to your face and shoulder. Using a support such as a post will remove

any human error caused by swaying the shotgun slightly, thus giving an incorrect point of impact. I know some great shotgun shooters who are terrible when forced to shoot at a still target and the use of a support eliminates this problem.

Specifically if you're just concerned if your shotgun is shooting straight then I suggest testing it at 20m, firing three shots from the same barrel at the board then working out what percentage it is in height above or below the aiming point and alternatively left or right. This will give you a starting point to make any changes to your stock or technique.

If you're interested in what choke you should be using and how the ammunition is performing through that choke at your recognised 'killing' distance, then of course you should pattern the shotgun at that distance. If you reckon 40m is the average distance you're breaking clays or knocking over game and you have the chance to check this on a pattern board, by all means try it at that distance.

Because you may be concerned about how the shot is performing, only fire one shot to gauge the shell's performance and I suggest at that distance you try either an improved modified (three-quarter) or even a full choke. 'Open' chokes at that range will require a large pattern board to give a good indication of just how wide your shot is spreading.

And a word of warning on comparing pattern-testing results. Try to always compare

'like' with 'like' when talking percentages or points of impact of a shot pattern. An example of this is simply using a full choke at 20m and, for argument's sake, seeing the entire pattern hitting above the aiming point. Let's say the middle of this pattern is 25cm above the aiming point and the diameter of the pattern is 50cm wide - this is called a 100 per cent high pattern.

Now let's assume at the same distance of 20m we change our choke to 'cylinder' or the most open choke available and all of a sudden our shot pattern is 100cm in diameter. Centre of the point of impact will still obviously be 25cm above the aiming point but in terms of percentages, because of the open choke the pattern will now go from a 100 per cent high to what's called a 75/25 pattern.

Same shotgun with no changes to the stock and the point of impact will still be 25cm high at 20m but the pattern percentages are remarkably different. My point is simply this: When making comparisons for gun-fitting purposes keep the ammunition, distance and chokes the same before you go ordering a new stock for your shotgun.



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

email: edit@ssaa.org.au

Q Will the 235gr Weldcore in .375 H&H be fine to hunt water buffalo in the NT? I already own a stack of these projectiles and am trying to avoid buying 270 or 300gr if I can get by with the ones I've already loaded. I'm loading the 235gr projectiles on top of 68gr AR2208. I've never used them on an animal this heavy and don't have a feel for their ability to hold up. My other choice would be to use my .300WSM and 180gr Woodleigh projectiles. Be frank - if I have to buy heavier projectiles for the .375 I will. I've hunted a lot of scrub bulls with my .300 WSM with good success.

Chris Wright, Qld

A My choice for hunting buffalo would be the .375 as this classic cartridge is almost perfect for game animals that size. That said, I'd also let the moths out my wallet and buy some 300gr projectiles, preferably Woodleigh Hydrostatics as they penetrate better than Weldcores.

It's the same story with the .300WSM - I've seen a number of buffalo taken with this cartridge using Barnes projectiles and they work just fine. If I had to use a .30 calibre my preference would be either the 180gr Woodleigh Hydrostatics or 178gr FN solids from Outer Edge as they're both Australian-made and deserve the support of Aussie hunters.

And don't underestimate buffalo as they can be a lot tougher than most people think. Safety is always important, good shot placement and bullet performance crucial and the few extra dollars you may spend on premium bullets really is a small price to pay. Enjoy the hunt.

John Dunn

Q At our gun club we have a group of guys who say reloading shotgun shells saves them money and gives superior killing power on clay targets. Is that true?

Mike, Ballarat

A I reloaded all my shotgun shells as a younger guy and it was a little cheaper but the real advantage was the ability to make up lighter, faster loads than those available at the time, when 32-gram and 36-gram loads were standard.

I read English and US magazines and brewed up 28-gram and even 24-gram loads well before they were available in Australia and did some of my best sporting clay shooting with 28-gram loads and number 8 shot which were fast (1350fps) and very light on recoil. The extra pellets in the 28 grams of the slightly smaller 8s more than equalled the amount of 7.5s in the 32-gram load - that was the secret. High speed loads with less recoil meant I was less tired at the end of the day if a shoot-off was required.

Nowadays we're spoilt for choice with loads like this from local and overseas manufacturers. I gave up reloading shotshells when these became available and could be bought in bulk for less than the cost of reloading. The only other reason to reload apart from the interest, education and pleasure gained while doing it, would be to reload expensive hunting loads and even then it would probably be about line ball.

Perhaps your friends are buying components in large quantities at a favourable price and splitting them among themselves. Their reloads wouldn't be superior to commercially available ones but you can derive a lot of satisfaction from loading your own shells and seeing them smoke clay targets. Exactly like tying your own fishing flies and using them to fool a wily trout. This is where confidence in your shells comes into the equation.

If it is all about economics then the answer is no. Time taken and the cost of components coupled with the expense of buying all the gear to safely reload just doesn't add up unless you're shooting a vast quantity of shells or want to extend your knowledge of shotgunning - or rifle shooting for that matter - by reloading centrefire cartridges.

Paul Miller

Q I have a Browning Hell's Canyon Long Range in 6.5 Creedmoor and love it, the perfect companion for my .204 Tikka as a long/short-range varmint combination. This has piqued my interest in the 6.5 range of calibres. Can you please give me some info on the many versions of the 6.5s and origins etc. Keep up the great work.

Kerry Wuth, Ipswich

A If you can lay your hands on back issues of *Australian Shooter*, the September 2016 edition carries my article on the popular 6.5mm cartridges up to that point. The article covers the 6.5x55 Swedish, 6.5x284 Norma, .260 Remington, 6.5 Grendel, 6.5x47 Lapua, 6.5 Creedmoor, .26 Nosler and the 6.5-300 Weatherby Magnum.

Since then at least two new specimens have surfaced. Hornady, who started the Creedmoor craze, released the 6.5 PRC (Precision Rifle Cartridge) based on their .300 RCM cartridge. The other is the 6.5 RSAUM (Remington Short Action Ultra Magnum) based on the SAUM basic case and both are gaining a reputation as long-range competition rounds in the US.

Both these newcomers hold a similar amount of powder although I don't have any loading data to hand and believe only custom-made rifles are being produced for both rounds.

This situation may eventually lead to both going the way of other recent cartridge inventions which have failed to attract much interest from the bigger rifle manufacturers.

Rod Pascoe

Q I recently read a piece in an Australian shooting magazine which seemed to indicate that, in NSW, you're breaking the law if you undertake target/practice/sighting-in shooting on private land (that is, not an official range). I wonder if you know anything about this and could shed

some light on the issue, particularly for the other states and territories.

Jeremy Patten, via email

Any queries on firearms law are usually quite complicated as each state has its own legislation. We have federal legislation as well, especially including the National Firearms Agreement which stipulates the minimum requirements for each state.

In broad terms this requires a potential shooter to provide a 'genuine reason' as to why he or she wishes to own and use firearms. For 'sport/target shooting' you must belong to a club and shoot on recognised club ranges only, while this is not the case for 'hunting/vermin control'. Hunters are usually only permitted to use category A or B firearms and for 'hunting/vermin control' most states merely require the shooter to either be, or to have the permission of, the owner of the land. For obvious reasons a hunter must check the sighting and operation of firearms in order to effectively hunt, so this is generally recognised as a lawful part of the activity of hunting.

I suspect the gist of your question arises from NSW Firearms Regulations 2017, Section 29 'Sport/Target Shooting' Subsection B: *The licence does not authorise the use of a firearm except at a shooting range approved under Part 8 or under the authority conferred by Clause 33 (licences and permits extend to authorise sighting-in, patterning and related activities).*

This only refers to what amounts to club activities, so hunters or vermin controllers are not affected by this. Having said that, the onus is on all shooters to be very sure of what they're doing since there are many small but important differences in the firearms laws of each state.

Geoff Smith

Caitlin prospers

with cash backing from SSAA

Dave Rose

Funding from the SSAA Academic Bursary program has enabled Queensland student Caitlin Ford to pursue her post-graduate studies into teaching predator avoidance skills to two of Australia's native species.

Caitlin, 25, arrived from her native England a year ago after securing a place at the University of Queensland where she's undertaking a four-year full-time Wildlife Conservation course. Her specific project involves predator avoidance training via microchip automated devices linked to the yellow-footed antechinus and eastern chestnut mouse.

The yellow-footed antechinus is a shrew-like marsupial whose territory stretches from the Mount Lofty Ranges in South Australia to Eungella in Queensland, with the exception of most of coastal New South Wales and Victoria. The eastern chestnut mouse is found along the eastern coast from northern Queensland and into NSW as far as Jervis Bay.

The mechanisms are used on both species in captivity and monitor their behaviour during predator avoidance training and are then continued when the animals are reintroduced to their original habitat. The ingenious scheme utilises microchip automated doors attached to custom-made nest boxes placed inside enclosures prior to the animals arriving from the wild. The interactions of the animals are recorded using infrared remote surveillance video cameras then the behaviour analysed.

SSAA Bursary directors awarded \$1996 which Caitlin will use to cover equipment fees, broken down into \$880 for microchip automated doors, \$1026 for microchips and \$90 for predator avoidance training resources.

Her research is building on similar investigations carried out by another SSAA Bursary recipient, Megan Edwards. "It's a comparison between two species to see which ones can recognise and avoid invasive species such as cats, red foxes and wild dogs," said Caitlin. "It's following on from Meg - trying to find if various animals' personalities affect their ability to act."

Caitlin will spend some of her funding



to buy the nest boxes and use them with the animals in captivity before transferring them to the wild. "They're automated doors just like pet doors for cats and dogs," she said. "We'll teach the animals in captivity and use them as nest boxes, see how long it takes and work out if they use them in the wild. We can also put food in the boxes to sustain them when conditions become harsh."

Caitlin's research is carried out at Hidden Vale Wildlife Centre, west of the main University campus in Brisbane. She has two to three years left to complete her course when she'll hopefully graduate as a Doctor of Philosophy. "There are various subjects which go under the umbrella of philosophy with mine being conservation," she said.

It has been an enthralling academic journey so far and she's enjoying the ride after moving from her home town of Epsom in Surrey to carry out her undergraduate studies at Southampton University where she earned a Masters ranking.

"I started in zoology but switched to ecology during the course," said Caitlin. She may be a long way from home but is relishing the experience. "I'd never been to Australia but what better place could there be to carry out conservation studies?"

She also finds time for some teaching duties around conservation. "I love the teaching aspect and depending on securing the required visa, I'd like to stay in Australia," she said. "It's a wonderful opportunity - research here is very innovative whereas back home it's more traditional." Hopefully the SSAA Bursary grant will go a long way to helping Caitlin realise her ambitions. ●



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Hunting participation on the rise

When you have a state-managed hunting regime you have the ability to access information regarding hunting activities more easily. The Game Management Authority (GMA) in Victoria recently released a report on data they collected during 2018, the report highlighting two new records surrounding the harvest of wild deer in that state. The records broken concern the highest number of licensed recreational deer hunters ever recorded and the highest-ever number of deer harvested.

It was reported the number of licensed deer hunters in Victoria peaked at 39,066 by the end of the year, these hunters said to be active for an average of 6.7 days a year with an average harvest rate of 3.5 deer per year. Total hunting days spent by hunters across 2018 was approximately 237,000.

The GMA indicated Victorian hunters harvested approximately 121,600 deer from public land, up from an estimated 106,275 the year before which is roughly a 13 per cent increase in the total number of wild deer taken. Sambar deer took first place as the most common species harvested with a total harvest of 88,202, fallow deer filling second place with 30,552, those figures going to show that recreational hunters harvest a fair bit of organic, free-range venison from Victoria's public forests and bushland. With constant cries from 'green' groups that wild deer are over-populated, these figures

surely highlight the fact the solution is right in front of them if they care to remove their blinkers.

The other interesting fact reported is the actual harvest is female biased, the sambar total being 55 per cent females and the fallow harvest 64 per cent female. This is in total contrast to the constant regurgitation from anti-hunting groups that hunters only target trophy animals - males - and for that reason should not be involved in managing populations. Their claims no longer hold water when compared to this latest data available.

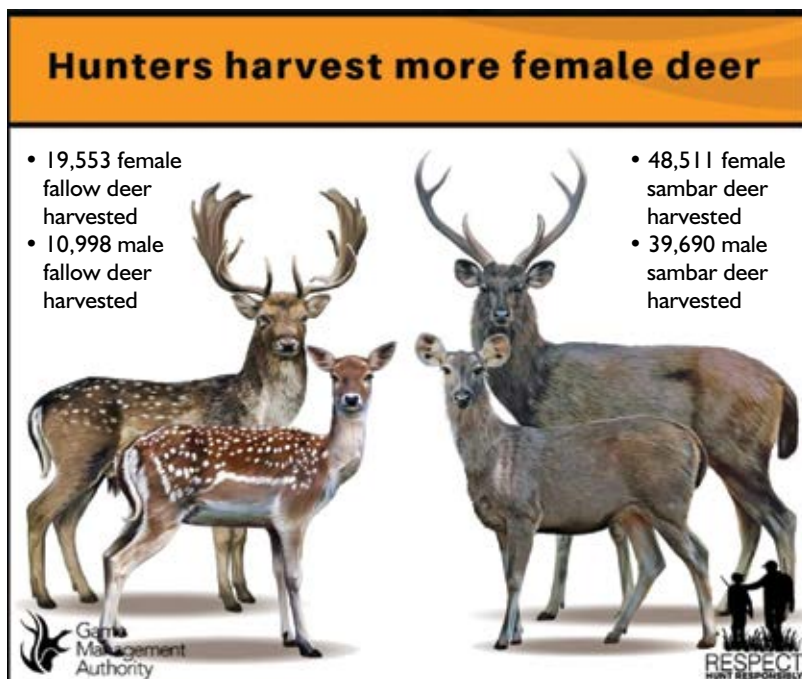


Image then if hunters were empowered to get out more and hunt more instead of being ignored as a wildlife management tool. It would be interesting to learn how many deer have been cleared from public lands by government contractors to identify who, in fact, is the biggest harvester of deer in Victoria. I'm sure this information is available but I'm guessing some may not want it made public.

Send questions to:
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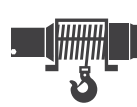
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SEATS 2

The Marlin 336XLR

attention to detail

James Hoffman



The Marlin 336XLR and
Connecticut-era JM
Marlin 1894CB.

You may question why you'd buy a comparatively expensive Marlin 336XLR 30-30. That's an astute observation as similarly-priced modern levers such as the Browning BLR or Henry Long Ranger (in such chamberings as the 308W) should always outperform ye olde 30-30. Nevertheless, there are a few reasons for choosing an upgraded 30-30 over the modern Winchester 88 spin-offs as follows.

Both the modern BLR and Henry LR sport inherently heavy triggers. Based on the rather inventive front-locking Winchester 88 rack-and-pinion design, the trigger linkage on these actions are complex and heavy. Sure they can be lightened, but this will require a visit to a competent gunsmith and even then results can be varied as they're generally considered a more complex trigger to lighten safely. The 336 trigger on the other hand is simpler and can easily facilitate aftermarket triggers. If the trigger break is vitally important to you, as it is to me, the 336 action is a better choice.

A longer 24" lever gun is a hard thing

to come by these days and in many cases you're forced into the pricy resale market - and both the BLR and Henry LR are currently only available as 20" carbines. This is fine if you only intend on scoping, but if iron-sights are your preference you'll appreciate the longer sight radius of a 24" barrel. And unlike your average Winchester 1894, all Marlins eject sideways and come pre-drilled and tapped to easily take a rail.

While the 308W is a superior round, the 30-30 shooting modern projectiles isn't far behind. Driven at 2300fps+, which can be achieved with a 24" barrel, its wind-bucking ability is not to be scoffed at. From a capable shooter using Hornady Flex Tip projectiles with the higher G1 ballistic coefficient of 0.33, the XLR can comfortably shoot a five-shot group into 6" at 300m.

The XLR's slower 1:12" Ballard-style rifling really does seem to stabilise Hornady Flex Tip projectiles extremely well, better than any 30-30 I've ever seen, and arguably may stabilise cast-lead bullets better than the modern 1:10" microgroove barrels

you'll find in most 336s. And cast-lead pills through Ballard-rifle lever guns is highly documented, there's more information online about the subject than you can poke a stick at. If you want to sling cheap cast-lead bullets the XLR will be better suited than the BLR or Henry LR.

And with regard to metallic silhouette target shooting, often Lever Action Silhouette rules stipulate rifles must be traditionally styled with the under-barrel magazines using rimmed cartridges. The BLR and Henry LR will not conform to such requirements.

So with such reasoning out of the way, on with the review. As the previous owner of an entry-level Marlin 336, the following focuses more on comparison between a cheaper 336 and the upgraded 336XLR.

These days the Marlin XLR comes out of the Remington factories of New York. Since Remington's acquisition there has been some suggestion of lowered production quality, so I was nervous it wouldn't be much of a step-up from my cheaper Remington-built 336W, yet costing about double the price.



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The Marlin 336XLR



Thankfully, the first thing I noticed was that compared to my entry level 336, the fit and finish is of an obviously higher standard.

The machining is more refined than the 336W, fewer sharp edges, and the action is fairly smooth out of the box yet still locks up tight. The tolerances are noticeably tighter - some of my rough old handloads are a squeeze to chamber - and I'll have to tweak my trims and OALs to better suit this rifle. From a weight and balance perspective the XLR feels similar to my old 336W but with a touch more weight up front.

The factory trigger is also significantly lighter and crisper than your average 336, breaking cleanly at around 3.5lb, about perfect

for a hunting rifle. Unfortunately the factory trigger still suffered from the dreaded Marlin flop so I replaced mine with the drop-in Trigger Happy Kit by Wild West Guns as this rifle will be used for target shooting.

The Pachmayr recoil-absorbing buttplate is finished perfectly and does a superb job of soaking up any felt recoil, even from the hottest of factory loads. It's on par if not better than the aftermarket Limbsaver pad I added to my 336W. Even though it's a laminated timber stock, the colouring and chequering is well finished, a small polymer cap underneath the grip a nice touch which oozes quality.

The bolt is fluted, reducing the bearing

surfaces and so helping with an overall smoother action, the underside showing an embossed '3030' insignia, another quality touch. The screw-attached front ramp, dovetailed to take the front sight, has two screws instead of the one seen on budget line 336 models, meaning I was comfortable tapping out the front sight without the worry of damaging screws. This was a real bugbear for me in the past when swapping front sights.

With a box of Hornady LEVERevolution factory ammo, the XLR five-shot grouped very tidily indeed. Sporting a little 1-4x24 scope at 50m, the first three shots

>





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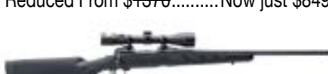
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The Marlin 336XLR

and fifth opening up to just under 2MOA, undoubtedly due to the barrel feeling the heat generated by the factory loads.

Beyond five shots the XLR has a strong tendency to string vertically, common for a lever gun due to the tightly-fitted timber fore-end-to-barrel contact. As the barrel and action heat up the barrel will expand and move away from the timber, resulting in a vertically-wandering point of impact. The wandering direction can seem counter-intuitive but remember that any barrel taper can impact such characteristics. In fact this

problem can be mitigated through a bit of home tinkering by free-floating then RTV silicone-bedding your barrel, but that's one for another day.

Overall I was impressed by the quality of the Marlin 336XLR, its attention to detail far surpassing your average 336, and it's fair to conclude the XLR is up there with the most accurate out-of-the-box traditionally-styled lever-action rifles money can buy and definitely above average with respect to the normal 336 action. But with an RRP in excess of \$1600 I guess you'd hope so. ●



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Capacity: 5-shot tubular magazine
Metal finish: Stainless steel
Safety: Hammer block
Stock: Laminate
Trigger: Single stage
Sights: Adjustable semi-buckhorn folding rear sight, ramp front sight with brass bead and wide-scan hood.
Weight: 3.4kg (7½lb)
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Length of pull: 13½"
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Evolution Gear soft cases

Daniel O'Dea



The Evolution Gear Double rifle case open, displays the twin layer design.

Without doubt the gold standard for protecting firearms in transit is a good quality solid hard case which not only offers protection against bumps and scratches, but gives some level of secure storage when travelling away from the normal security afforded by a gunsafe.

Hard cases can be cable locked into the boot of your car or a rail in your motel room for example and in some situations it's all but a mandatory requirement when travelling,

such as by air. But despite all the positives of hard cases there can be drawbacks too. They're generally bulky and, being a rigid item, can be hard to squeeze into the back of a well-packed vehicle or other tight spots that might be encountered. In my experience hard cases can sometimes be essential while travelling but perhaps not as practical as a soft bag once you get there.

A while back I had the chance to review a couple of hard cases for both rifle and pistol from Evolution Gear which were excellent

and superbly featured, both offering pluck-out foam so I was able to customise them. I had a rifle case for my Remington 700 P - set up for long-range work with the usual accoutrements such as bipod, magazines, bolt slot etc - and a pistol case for my MP9 pistol and handful of spare magazines.

The only problem with customising a case like this is you tend to limit its use to just one firearm. Again, perhaps not a problem, but if you've plenty of guns that can mean plenty of cases and good quality ones are not generally the cheapest items. You also have to store them which comes back to the bulky and rigid point made earlier.

So I had my interest peaked when Steve Kassab from Evolution Gear called to tell me about a new offering that's not only a great product in its own right but can be used in conjunction with your Evolution Gear hard case to add both flexibility and practicality.

Quite simply, but equally clever, it's a double soft bag perfectly dimensioned to fit into your Evolution Gear hard case shell with the foam removed. This means you can have a hard case set up for your favourite target rifle for routine competition but, if travelling on that once a year far-flung hunting trip, you can remove the foam and securely transport two hunting rifles in a functional soft case that fits perfectly inside.

Designed and developed in Australia,



The Double Rifle Soft Bag, shown in conjunction with the 540 Hard Case, comes in Desert Tan, Olive Drab or Black.



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Evolution Gear soft cases

the concept applies to the Evolution Gear Double Rifle Bag that's fully compatible with the 2540 Rifle Case. As a standalone item the soft double rifle bag features an external shell made from hard-wearing 600D nylon with laminated EVA 'for added protection against snags, rips and tears'.

Premium quality zippers run smooth and have integrated eyelets that line up to accept a small padlock (not included) for added security. A generous flat side pocket about 470mm x 250mm provides additional external storage and there's also an integrated Velcro pad (70mm x 250mm). In the side pocket were a couple of Evolution Gear stickers and a handy bag tag for identification.

Two heavy duty carry straps meet at the centre and there's a wraparound Velcro handle to secure them. Another handy feature is a reinforced 40mm webbing hang tag on one end for storing the bag in a cupboard or hanging on a hook.

When zipped wide open the two halves of the case lay flat, in the middle an EVA foam divider separates the firearms when strapped in. The divider is hinged with a long



The Handgun/Pistol Bag has room for pistol and five magazines.



Zip-up flat pocket has storage for range cards, rule books etc.



The Double Rifle Soft Bag can hold up to four non-scoped firearms but can get a bit weighty.

Velcro tag so can be removed if not needed. Each internal side is faced with a MOLLE panel - Modular, Lightweight, Load-carrying, Equipment - a standardised system by which most modern Western military forces attached equipment to their webbing these days.

These panels have four Velcro straps per side to hold the firearm in place and, being MOLLE, the straps can be adapted to suit firearms of just about any configuration. At both ends of each side is an angled pocket to secure the butt at one end and muzzle at the other, a raised 50mm EVA foam edging forming a perimeter around the boundary for extra protection.

Usable internal dimensions of 1240mm x 315mm dictate the overall size of firearms that can be accommodated either side while external dimensions run out at 1270mm x 330mm x 110mm when all zipped up. Overall the unit is pretty sturdy for a soft case and weighs 3kg.

The twin layer layout of the Double Rifle Bag leaves plenty of room on each side for just about any style of gun, be it a more traditional scoped hunting rifle or bulkier long-range chassis style affair with

long-range glass, in fact a single standard-type hunting rifle hardly fills the space. Depending on dimensions of your guns - scoped, non-scoped etc - you could at a pinch fit two per side for a total of four firearms.

Evolution Gear also offers a Handgun/Pistol Bag measuring 300mm x 260mm made from the same heavy duty 600D nylon, 15mm of EPE padding integrated into each side. Like the rifle bag, the



The Double Rifle Soft Bag is flexible when used with the 2540 Rifle Hard Case.



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CAL. .25	9	290cc	250 BAR	3.2 KG	76 CM
CAL. .30	7	290cc	250 BAR	3.2 KG	76 CM

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AIR SPEED	MAG CAPACITY	AIR CAPACITY	PRESSURE	WEIGHT	LENGTH
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CAL. .22	10	290cc	250 BAR	3 KG	103 CM
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handgun version comes with premium quality zippers with the same padlock-able eyelets. Fully unzipped the unit opens flat so can be used as a protective bench mat, handy for ranges with concrete benches. Inside is a flat internal zip-up compartment to hold range cards, rule books etc and on the other side an elasticized bandolier-style strap will house magazines. Reinforced stitched webbing straps connected with

padded Velcro form a functional carry handle. Expanding on the concept of the soft case within the hard case, you could easily fit three or four handgun soft bags into one hard case with the foam removed, the number of soft bags only limited by the dimensions of the hard case selected. More at evolution-gear.com.au. ●

• Turn to page 105 for your chance to win one of these double rifle bags valued at \$195.

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That's the only word to describe the demand for our giveaway of Ian Thompson's *Ballistic Allsorts* book in last month's magazine. Such was the popularity of the offer we managed to talk Ian into giving us not 10 as published but FIFTY copies to give away.



That's the good news but the even better news for the hundreds of people who missed out is that, in searching for those extra copies, Ian unearthed another two boxes of *Ballistic Allsorts* which are now available to buy exclusively via the SSAA online shop.

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Aussie Whitford on top of the world - twice!

Dave Rose

Adelaide shooter Barry Whitford can proclaim himself a double world title-holder after his exploits at the 2019 International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA) World Championships in Oklahoma City. SSAA member Barry, 68, retained the Big Bore Revolver title he won last year and was also victorious in the Unlimited Any Sight category, a title he'd previously won in 2016.

Barry then joined forces with Russell Mowles of Queensland, the Aussie duo triumphant in Big Bore and Small Bore for Regional Teams. For this competition various US states are banded together as regions with Australia labelled a separate regional entity. And there's also a World Team tussle where Barry and Russell finished runners-up in both Big Bore and Small Bore, the top three berths for each identical with the US dual winners and Brazil securing two third-placed finishes.

Russell, the SSAA Handgun Metallic Silhouette national discipline chairman, has competed at numerous World Championships which are 80-shot matches with targets out to 200m for Big Bore - chickens at 50m, pigs 100m, turkeys 150m and rams 200m. Small Bore targets are set at 25, 50, 75 and 100m.



Laid back: Barry assumes the Creedmoor position for Unlimited Any Sight.

Barry scored 78 out of 80 in Revolver to win by two points but the Unlimited Any Sight title was done the hard way, his perfect 80 from 80 shots pitching him into a shoot-off against three Americans with five chicken targets just 3-4" tall taken out to 200m instead of 50m for five shots in two minutes, Barry's four hits enough to clinch gold. "Revolver is probably the most difficult discipline to shoot accurately so the scores are normally not as high," he said.

Barry first took part in the competition in 1996 in Texas, paying his own way at the time. "There was no official Australian team back then," he said, "but I was very keen to compete at international level." A work assignment from 2004 to 2009 saw Barry and his wife, Janet, living in Detroit which made travelling to the showpiece easier and he was helped by an American friend lending him a handgun.

Since 2010 Barry has qualified almost every year as part of the Australian team. "It's good we're getting some exposure," he said. "To go all that way and win an international competition takes some doing. It's a really interesting sport from both the technical and actual shooting aspect, so the more people who get to see how good it can be, and what can be achieved, the better."

The competition is only part of the logistical equation for Barry to work out from his home in Happy Valley, SA, including travel guidelines and restrictions on carrying firearms and ammunition to the US. He packs about 5kg of loaded ammo for the flight and does the rest of the required reloading from an interim base in Kentucky.

Then there's the cost involved. "By the time you tot up hotels, rent-a-car and the rest it can be anything between \$8000 to \$10,000," he said. "Team members receive a reimbursement from the SSAA which is



Champion: Barry moments after shooting a perfect 80/80 in Unlimited Any Sight.

always gratefully received but the personal outlay is still substantial."

Once the action gets under way there's plenty of hard work involved in the week-long competition. "It's Friday to Friday, full-on for a week," said Barry. In July in Oklahoma, high temperatures and humidity make shooting very demanding, adding to the effort required to perform at your best. "I'd say Oklahoma is the best course in the US - it has auto-reset targets and the range can go out to 500m for ultra-shoots."

The 2020 IHMSA World Championships will again be hosted by Oklahoma City Gun Club with tentative dates set for July 17-25 and Barry hopes to defend his titles. "I have to earn the spot by winning at least one category in the Australian National Championships," he said. Those will be held in the first week of October at the SSAA Little River range in Victoria. ●

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Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera Here at last!

Daniel O'Dea



We had a bit of a wait but by the time you read this the Lithgow Arms LA105 Woomera should be well and truly on the shelves at your local gunshop - that's if supply and demand allows them to stay there for long! I'm one of the lucky few who've already experienced the Woomera, firstly on debut at the 2018 US SHOT Show then a media event at the Lithgow factory and range as reported in *Australian Shooter* (August 2018).

That aside, I too have been patiently

waiting to lay my hands on one for a more thorough appraisal and as such was pleasantly surprised to receive a call from Jim Harding, Marketing Manager for Australian distributor Outdoor Sporting Agencies, telling me he had one in 6.5 Creedmoor on the way.

As a writer I get a to un-box quite a few new guns but lifting the lid on the LA105 is a real 'Christmas morning' experience, well packed and full of goodies. The rifle comes in a calico draw-string sleeve emblazoned with Lithgow Arms' signature and logo.

Individual plastic bags hold a multitude of other items including the bolt, three kick pad spacers, three sets of screws for same, a set of large interchangeable grip panels for the KRG stock, an L2 and L3 Magpul MOE rail section for the KRG stock, three-port muzzle brake and documentation including a comprehensive owner's manual, warranty card and muzzle brake installation instructions. The official 'Australian made' kangaroo logo swing tag adds a nice touch.

Recapping the main features, the LA105 Woomera starts with Lithgow

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G7 Ballistic Coef.	.304	.321	.355	.414	.442
Sec. Den.	.266	.277	.314	.346	.377
Item #	24531	26179	2638	3091	3092
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Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera

Arms' centrefire action first seen on the successful LA102. With its receiver precision-machined from a billet of high tensile steel mated with a forward locking cylindrical three-lug bolt and 60° lift, the action has proven to be fast to operate, tight in lockup and inherently accurate, providing the perfect base for a precision long-range rifle.

Added to this is a 24" (610mm) heavy 'Woomera' profiled barrel claimed to be "tuned for extreme long-range accuracy". It features an 11° target crown at the muzzle and is threaded 5/8"x24 UNEF for Lithgow Arms' inhouse-designed three horizontal ported muzzle brake to reduce felt recoil.

The trigger is a single stage, three-way adjustable set-up (for weight, sear engagement and draw length) factory-set for a 1.5kg (3.3lb) break. As far as a bang switch goes it has a broad, smooth trigger shoe providing ample rest for the pad of your finger when ready to fire, there's no discernible take-up, it breaks crisply and, most importantly, is consistently repeatable. I didn't play with the adjustment, though if I owned the rifle I might lighten it just a little. I left it as it came out of the box and was happy with feel and performance.

The three-position safety is a swing-level style located at the bolt shroud which also sports a cocking indicator providing both a visual and tactile guide to the rifle's condition. If I was hyper critical the safety was a little stiff to operate on the test gun, both positive and audible in movement between positions, then again some might argue these are plus points. I'd say it would likely lighten up some with use. With the pistol grip stock some may have to come off the grip to operate the lever unless you have larger hands. Again, based on the rifle's most likely intended purpose, neither would present any real concern.



Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera's left profile.



The KRG X-Ray Stock produced as OEM for the Woomera is well featured with lots of adjustment.

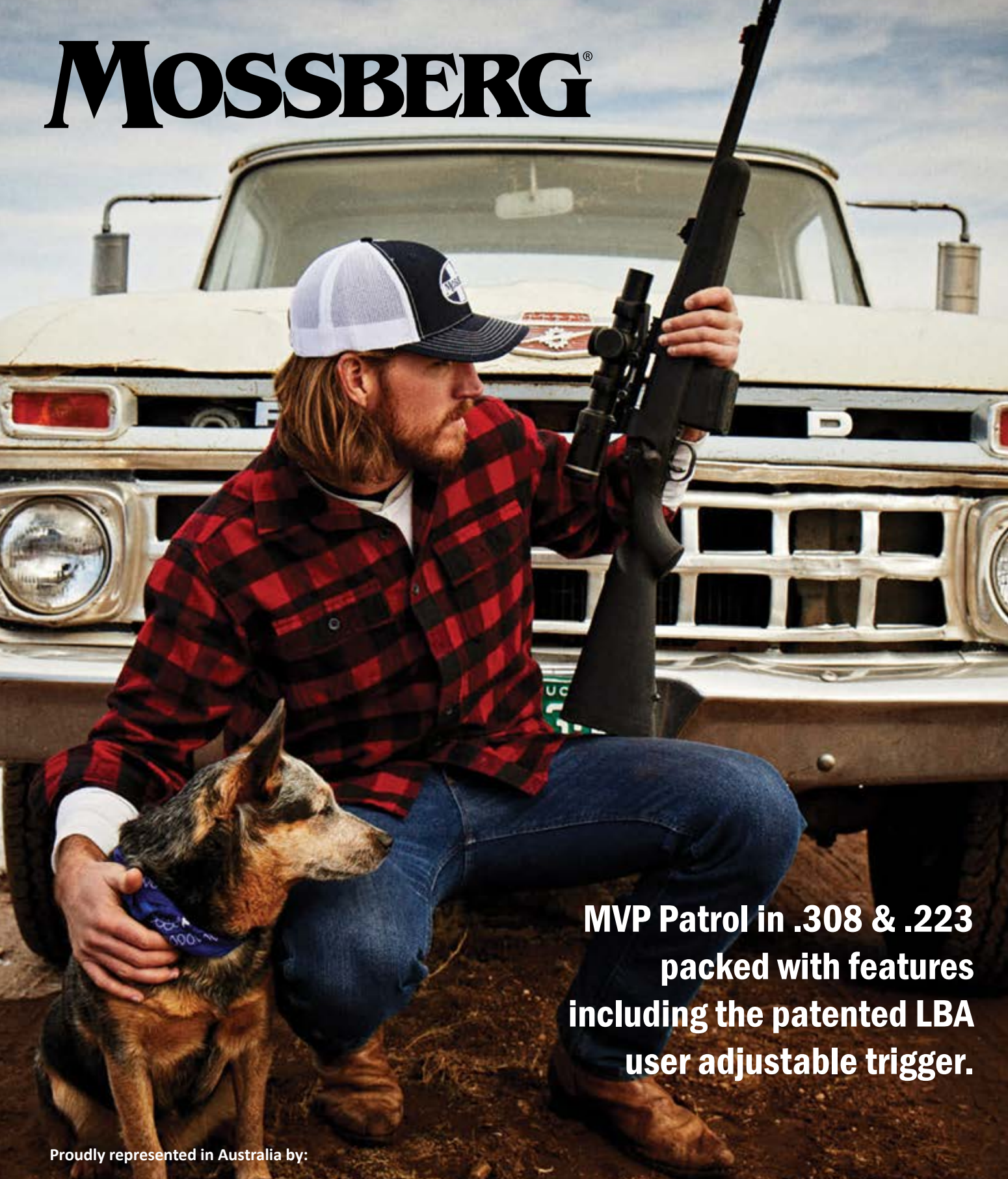


The inline relationship of bore axis with rifle stock required the kick pad and cheek rise to be removed for cleaning.

The fore-end is also fitted with a conventional sling stud for your sling or Harris-style bipod and I noted there's no rear sling stud, rather a QD cup, which leads me to think the front stud might be there more for a bipod with the various accessory anchor points meant for sling mounting options, again this is all customisable.

Still on the stock, there's an adjustable/removable rear bag rider which can also be swapped out for other KRG accessories. On further research I found a plethora of bolt-on KRG accessories for this stock including an ambidextrous QD sling mount that fits into the fore-end tip. Finishing off the buttstock is a generous soft rubber recoil mitigating pad which sits nicely in the

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Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera

shoulder with the rifle mounted.

Ergonomically I was impressed by the whole KRG system and of note is the high butt-to-bore line relationship. The top of the kick pad sits directly in line with the bore axis providing just about zero drop at the heel, meaning recoil comes straight back into the shoulder providing no point of pivot to drive muzzle lift.

Such clever design combined with the effective recoil pad and efficient muzzle brake makes for a soft-shooting outfit. The only downside I found was the need to remove the kick pad to use a bore-to-muzzle cleaning rod, likewise the cheek rise also needs removing to take the bolt out, but the benefits of the design far outweigh any perceived liability. Other small details like side thumb shelves complete the package into what is an excellent stock/chassis system.

Feeding ammo to the whole deal is an AI pattern, double stack 10-round magazine which seems to be the benchmark for many chassis-style rifles these days. The magazine is easy to load and feeds smoothly with ample length in the box for seating those ELD-style (Extreme Long Distance) projectiles.

The ambidextrous magazine release is just forward of the triggerguard which can be easily activated with an outstretched trigger finger and magazines drop free so you can stay on the gun for changes should speed during competition be required.

After reacquainting myself with the LA105 Woomera all that was needed was to mount some glass and hit the range. OSA had well and truly spoilt me in that department as along with the rifle they sent



a new Zeiss Victory V8 4.8-35x60 scope and set of ERA rings for fitment. The Zeiss was mounted on the LA105's factory standard 20MOA rail, readied for the bench and in a short time I was on paper at 100m and by the third round was centered in the bull, the next two landing in the same centre ring.

Feeling in the groove I moved to a fresh target to shoot a five-round group, the first three in an overlapping cluster easily 0.25MOA, the next two opened it up slightly but I still managed about 0.33 MOA measured centre-to-centre - that'll do me! Knowing from previous experience the LA105 has long legs and likes to stretch them, I'd loaded up some Hornady 147gr ELD-M projectiles behind 40gr neat of ADI 2209, sparked off with Fed 210 Match primers and that's what I was feeding the Woomera.

To end the session I used a 300mm x 300mm reactive metal swing target across

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2. <input type="text"/>	7. <input type="text"/>
3. <input type="text"/>	8. <input type="text"/>
4. <input type="text"/>	9. <input type="text"/>
5. <input type="text"/>	10. <input type="text"/>

☐ Yes, the personalisation I have provided is correct.

Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera

the gully at 400m which was struck with little effort and great monotony once I dialed in. It had been my intention to stretch it out even further on a future outing but a queue of other interested parties was forming and I had to return the rifle to OSA. I couldn't be greedy as I'd previously proved the rifle's long-range credentials, popping balloons at more than 800m on Lithgow's factory range last year,

so reluctantly I packed it away.

With my third taste of Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera under my belt I can only say it continues to impress. In August last year the targeted release price was \$2800 which is right on the money now it's on the shelf, and a quick shop around finds it selling a little below that which to me represents great value. More at osaaustralia.com.au or lithgowarms.com ●

Fore-end of the KRG stock has slots on all three faces, compatible for MAGPUL, MLOK and other KRG accessories.



Specifications

Rifle: Lithgow Arms' LA105 Woomera

Action: Bolt-action

Trigger: Single stage, adjustable for weight, sear engagement and draw length

Trigger pull: Adjustable 0.75kg-1.9kg (factory set 1.5kg)

Calibres: 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Winchester

Capacity: 10-round AI pattern detectable box magazine

Barrel: 24" (610mm) medium/heavy 'Woomera' profile

Twist rate: 1:8 in 6.5 Creedmoor (tested), 1:10 in .308 Winchester

Muzzle: Threaded 5/8"x24 UNEF with three-port muzzle brake as standard

Sights: Standard with 20 MOA rail for optics mounting

Stock: KRG X-Ray adjustable for cheek height and LOP

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies

Price: Around \$2800



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Remington.



Remington Model 783 Walnut

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

Package price \$885



Remington 783 Varmint Laminate

Exciting new model. Featuring free-floating 26" heavy barrel, oversized bolt handle, laminate stock and beavertail fore-end. Package includes Picatinny rail and bipod.

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.223, .22-250, .243, 6.5 CM, .308

Package Price \$1139



Remington Model 783 Varmint

Featuring 24" heavy barrel with muzzle thread, oversized bolt handle and FDE synthetic stock. Package includes Picatinny rail and bipod.

Available in the following calibres:
.223, 6.5 CM, .308.

Package price \$885



Remington Model 783 Package

Legendary Remington accuracy, user adjustable crossfire trigger, detachable magazine, Pillar bedded stock and free-floating barrel, 3-9x40 scope, fitted and bore sighted, includes QGE gunbag and sling. Grab some ammo, check your zero and you're ready to hunt. Available in the following calibres: .223, .22-250, .243, .270, 7mm RM, .308, .30-06, .300WM

Package price \$735

WEIHRAUCH SPORT



Weihrauch HW30 S .177 cal - \$550

A superior, light and well balanced air rifle of excellent accuracy. Automatic safety, 'Rekord' adjustable match-type trigger, tunnel front-sight with four interchangeable inserts, micrometer rear-sight adjustable for windage and elevation with four different notches. Ambidextrous beechwood stock with cheekpiece on both sides and rubber buttplate. Also available in synthetic stock **\$525**.



Weihrauch HW50 S .177/22 cal - \$625

A proven medium to heavy sporting and training air rifle suitable for all types of leisure and sporting use for the whole family. Solid construction with powerful piston spring and excellent accuracy. Automatic safety, 'Rekord' adjustable match-type trigger, tunnel front-sight with four interchangeable inserts, micrometer rear-sight adjustable for windage and elevation with four different notches.



Weihrauch HW97K .177/22 cal - \$975

Especially developed for field target and silhouette shooting, well balanced, easy and smooth cocking. Under-lever fixed barrel accuracy, ambidextrous beechwood stock, 300mm barrel with muzzle brake and no sights, match 'Rekord' trigger. Also available in synthetic thumbhole stock **\$950** and deluxe laminate stock **\$1150**.



Weihrauch HW90 .177/20/22 cal - \$1085

Utilising the unique Theoben gas ram system, which features very fast locking time and recoil reduction. Equipped with the precision adjustable 'Elite' trigger with automatic safety. A new stock design incorporates an extended forearm and a high cheekpiece, chequering on the pistol grip and rubber buttplate. (Scope not included).

Est 1775

RIGBY



WDM Bell Commemorative Rifle

Paying homage to iconic British adventurer Karamojo Bell, Rigby has released a new limited edition 'W.D.M. Bell' model of their Highland Stalker rifle. The limited run of just 50 rifles is based on the original 1928 Rigby rifle design. On the magazine floorplate 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. Presented in a bespoke vintage-style canvas case with cleaning accessories, the rifle comes with a limited edition print of the Rigby ledger book where Bell's gun is listed, a Rigby knife and a copy of new previously unpublished stories by Bell, *Incidents from an Elephant Hunter's Diary*, signed by all the Rigby gunmakers involved in production of the rifle. The rifle is available in .275 Rigby, as per Bell's original rifle. Viewing by appointment only. Please call for more info.

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Talbot on target! Lever Action

Communications Officer Sam Talbot has been back at the range to continue his mission to shoot the SSAA disciplines. This month: Lever Action.



Not only is lever action a way to load fresh cartridges into the chamber of a barrel, it's also a fun SSAA discipline. And like many disciplines the name tells you just about all you need to know - at least that's what I thought. It turns out this challenging style of shooting is more than meets the eye and can throw up lots of surprises.

How does it work?

This discipline caters exclusively for lever action rifles. Competitions are in two categories: Classic Calibre for as-issued rifles in any centrefire cartridge produced up to 1938 and Open Calibre for all other rifles split between rimfire and centrefire. So if you want to compete in all categories you'll need three different firearms.

Matches require a variety of shooting positions and distances and courses of fire can vary from 15 seconds to five minutes for five shots. Lever Action competitions use animal targets which have score zones marked on vital areas, starting at 10 and going down to five, target animals including small bear, buffalo head, pig, rabbit, feral cat and goat.

Each competition consists of several rounds of five shots over 100, 50 or 25m, each round assigned a specific type of shooting position, reflective of field positions. Each competition is different and competitors can be assigned just about any combination of shooting position, distance, target type and time allowed, enough to keep you on your toes.

Where to go

After learning that some of the best Lever Action shooters in the country shoot at SSAA Para, I set out to try it for myself. Could it be a South Australian thing? Lever Action captain at Para is Steve Nicholas who also happens to be the third person inducted into the Lever Action Hall of





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Calibres: 6.5CM, 223REM, 308WIN

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Talbot on target!

Fame, and apart from myself there were a few other newcomers at the competition along with plenty of experience.

In fact ages ranged from eight to 88. At the upper end was Doug Turly who was showing a first-time shooter the ropes while sporting the most patches I've ever seen on a piece of clothing. He explained the patches came from National Championships so it was no surprise to learn Doug was the fourth person inducted into the Hall of Fame. Clearly I was in good hands and Steve was more than happy to show me the way and lend me a rimfire rifle to use, something which pleased me as lower recoil would make the short time limits much easier.

At Para you can use whatever class of rifle you like which results in a smorgasbord of unique firearms and cartridges, including one competitor with a .219 Zipper in .224 calibre. As you can imagine, all these rifles and cartridges being used alongside each other leads to plenty of friendly banter and competition and you'll find clubs can be quite lenient with rules and almost everyone there is competing with themselves.

Peeping Talbot

Peep sights are commonly used in Lever Action as optical sights are not allowed. This was my first time using peep sights and I found them pretty comfortable and effective - all you do is look through the holes and just like that your eye naturally takes over. It's surprising how much clearer they can make a target appear given there's no actual magnification.

As the distance of targets or weather conditions change, peep sights can easily



Competitors make good use of the post.



Figuring out the best way to hit the 10-zone on the pig target.



Sam was stuck on unlucky number 13.

be adjusted by replacing the ring with a smaller or larger one - further-away targets will be smaller so require a smaller ring to look through. For one target we used a clear



Sam switches to the .38-50.

yellowish ring ideal for overcast conditions, though I found it useful for being able to more quickly identify targets which I really liked as you could still see a blurry area outside the ring.

Competitors can't wear special shooting jackets in this discipline so any sort of lever action rifle is all you really need to get started. After all, you can just shoot with iron sights.

Round 1 - pigs

In the first round we were given five minutes to shoot the pig target from 100m in a standing-post position, meaning



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Talbot on target!

we could lean on a post to better steady ourselves. I was sure to study the pig target before we started as scoring zones on the animals are not uniform, instead reflecting vital areas. For the pig, scoring zones are wider and flatter circles with the 10-point zone shaped like a big sausage right where you'd expect the heart to be.

I was sharing my rifle with Michael Nicholas, SSAA Para secretary, who'd also be coaching me for the day and explained you can use the curvature of the peep sight against the natural curve in the pig because at 100m you can't see the scoring zones, only the black blob of a pig-shaped target.

Round 2 - bears

This was also at 100m with the pig replaced by a bear. The bear is similar in size to the pig but instead of horizontal circles, vertical ones are used. Luckily Michael had a plan for this too and by lining up the natural curve at the top of the bear with the sight then leaving white either side of the black target, I should be right in the 10-score zone.

Unfortunately we were shooting from the sitting-post position which has always been my weakness and this was exacerbated by the 30-second time limit allowed. While using the post helped, I found with one hand on the post and the other on the lever I couldn't cycle the lever without taking the rifle off my shoulder which felt unstable and awkward. This led to me rushing my shots and I only managed to trouble the bear once, although it was a 9. Steve assured me I'd master the technique with practice which I tend to agree with.



Final rounds

With four rounds down we brought the targets in to 50m, rounds five and six requiring us to shoot offhand in five minutes then just 15 seconds. The focus was the Precision Slow Fire Pistol target which is more friendly than the animals as it has scoring zones all the way from 10 to one, as opposed to animals which only score from 10 to five. The pistol target is used for conferring proficiency awards, doubtful in my case.

For the final two rounds (10 for the day) we brought the targets in again, this time to 25m and in round nine I again faced the sitting-post position but this time had five

minutes as well as a secret weapon - a new rifle.

Steve lent me his centrefire .38-50 and despite the iron sights I felt very comfortable with it, so comfortable in fact I shot my best score of the day of 49.1. If you haven't guessed by now, with five shots each round is scored out of 50.

The final round saw me return to the rimfire as we had just 10 seconds to fire five shots. For the five-minute rounds we loaded one shot at a time but in the faster rounds used the tube, loading all five shots at once. This is a fairly simple process of unscrewing a rod from the end of the tube under the barrel and inserting five cartridges before re-inserting the rod. Cycling the lever for the rapid-fire rounds is a lot of fun and satisfying to do and I find my accuracy isn't that much worse on the shorter rounds, though I'm not sure if that's a good thing or bad.

Conclusion

After 10 rounds of action-packed shooting I ended the day with 294, not too bad but definitely bringing up the rear. I couldn't blame it on the rifle either as Michael, who I was sharing with, took out the competition with 444 out of 500.

Once again the sitting position proved my real weakness, in fact all the traditional rifle hunting positions are arguably a weakness which I think comes down to practice as they take a long time to learn and perfect. Oh well, more time at the range it is then.

Fortunately, Lever Action is a great discipline for honing these skills and much more as there's always something surprising and lever action rifles have a rich and fascinating history. Make sure you give it a try soon. ●



Rifle Metallic Silhouette

SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette is an air, rimfire, centrefire and black powder rifle shooting discipline where competitors aim to knock down as many animal-shaped metal targets as they can. The sport originated in Mexico in the 1940s and arrived in Australia in the late 1970s.



Open class includes modified firearms with optical sights and major changes to the handgun permitted, including 'wings' for stabilising in conjunction with the barricade. Metallic Sight class includes handguns modified to ensure maximum accuracy with reliability. The barrel length of self-loading pistols is limited to 6.25" and revolvers to 8.625".

Production class allows a 'readily available' handgun equipped with metallic sights. IPSC production handguns suit this class; as well as 9mm Parabellum, .38 Special, .38 Super, .357 Sig or .38-45.

Courses of fire

There are four main courses of fire with time, distance and scoring conditions. The Practical event has four stages from 10 to 50 yards.

Facing two targets downrange, the competitor engages with various time limitations.

The Barricade event is similar, but you may use both sides of a barricade for support.

The Moving Target (Modified) event means facing a target, which comes from behind cover and travels 60ft in six seconds before again being covered.

The Falling Plate event engages metal 'plate' targets in various time-frames from distances of 10 to 25 yards.

Steel Challenge

Within the SSAA, Steel Challenge is managed as a subdiscipline of Action Match. It is exciting because there is instant feedback regarding a hit or miss. Rimfire firearms are chambered in .22 Long Rifle calibre only, while centrefire handguns must be a minimum calibre of .38 Special (9mm). Steel Challenge comprises eight stages, shot from a stationary position at static steel plates. There are four primary plates followed by the fifth 'stop plate', which must be hit last to halt the time.



ssaa.org.au/actionmatch

SSAA disciplines

Action Match



SSAA Action Match is a dynamic handgun discipline catering to revolver and self-loading pistol shooters. It was developed in 1979 by John Bianchi, a former LAPD officer who became CEO of holster manufacturers Bianchi International.

Firearms and classes

Targets and scoring

The targets are metallic cut-outs in the shape of chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams. Matches consist of 10 targets of each, set out in two banks of five, totalling 40 shots. The time limit for each bank is between two and five minutes.

In the Centrefire matches, chickens are placed at 200m, pigs at 300m, turkeys at 385m and rams at 500m. In Rimfire the targets and ranges are scaled down to one-fifth and Air Rifle matches one-tenth the size of Centrefire.

Firearms and classes

There are five main classes within Rifle Metallic Silhouette, plus Service Rifle and Black Powder Cartridge Rifle categories. Each class has specific weight and dimension rules.

Centrefire Silhouette Rifle allows shooters to use custom rifles based on a wide choice of calibres, barrels, triggers and stocks. Centrefire Hunting Rifle allows for more hunting style rifles.

Rimfire Silhouette Rifle and Rimfire Hunting Rifle are identical to their Centrefire equivalents, except being chambered in .22-calibre.

Air Rifle Silhouette is shot with break action and PCP air rifles.

Lever Action Silhouette Rifle

There are three classes of lever action match: Lever Action Silhouette, Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Silhouette and Smallbore Rifle Silhouette. Calibres range from .22LR up to larger centrefire calibres, including pistol cartridges. In Rifle matches the targets are shot at 50, 100, 150 and 200m, while the half-scale Pistol Cartridge and Smallbore targets are both shot at 40, 50, 75 and 100m.





Vortex Fury HD 5000

10x42 Laser Rangefinder binoculars

Pete Kincade

Harvesting game with a rifle requires an optimum match of hunting and shooting skills combined with the right cartridge for the job. But that's not all. For hunters who venture into the mountains and plains of the Australian bush, the ability to spot game and accurately determine distance to target and combine that data with shooting skill is paramount in achieving clean and humane kills.

Therefore good binoculars and a rangefinder are standard pieces of hunting kit these days. The ability to quickly and precisely determine range to quarry by means of laser rangefinding is certainly one of the greatest advantages to rifle hunters since the advent of telescopic sights.

Currently, I carry a pair of binoculars and separate laser rangefinder (LRF). But after using the Vortex Fury HD 5000, 10x42 Laser Rangefinder binoculars I'm sold on their light weight, faster results and greater convenience in an all-in-one solution. Let's

face it, spotting game with binoculars, swapping to a separate rangefinding device with different optical characteristics, locating the animal again, ranging and switching to the rifle is not efficient.

More than once I've found it challenging to relocate wary game in my separate LRF after spotting them with my binoculars, different optical characteristics and swapping devices contributing to this difficulty. I found spotting and ranging with one device to be faster, easier and less complicated. Combine these advantages with less bulk on your person while sneaking around downwind to remain undetected by your quarry, and I'm sure you'll be as convinced as I am that LRF binoculars have a distinct advantage over binoculars and separate rangefinding device.

The Vortex Fury HD 5000, 10x42 Laser Rangefinder binoculars are of roof-prism configuration. It's important to note roof-prism binoculars, as opposed to the more traditional porro-prism design, cost more to make and are stronger and less susceptible

to moisture intrusion. They're also, in the case of high-quality optics such as the Vortex binoculars here, better suited to the rough and tumble of bush and mountain hunting and enable more powerful viewing than the older porro-prism design.

I decided to test the Vortex Fury LRFs in the hills where I hunt red deer in Southern Queensland. The country is semi-open woodland and affords long-range shots on undisturbed deer while browsing. For those with a penchant for wild game on the dinner table, instant kills result in better tasting meat come dinner time and this is where accurate ranging and shot placement contributes not only to one-shot kills, but the fastest and most humane despatch of the game animal.

What really impressed me with these binoculars, apart from their excellent clarity in all light conditions and simple operation, was their relatively light weight considering they include LRF technology. These are 10x42 and weigh 916g with inbuilt LRF.



Vortex Fury HD 5000, 10x42 Laser Rangefinder binoculars

My current binoculars and separate LRF, Swarovski EL 8x32 and Leica Rangemaster 2000-B, weigh a total of 775g so for an extra 141g hunters get more magnification, onboard LRF, greater convenience, less complexity and a lot of change in their pocket.

The binoculars feature a conventional range finding mode and scan ranging, the latter enabling the user to measure distance to target on moving game. This feature can be very useful when determining distances from bedding spots to known foraging, watering and wallows, all useful data to store on your dope sheet or in your mobile ballistics app when hunting at extreme range. Knowing that a moving animal is following habits means being ready with the shot in advance of the animal being there. This is an advantage afforded to us by LRF technology.

The Vortex package includes an excellent harness and pouch of ballistic nylon construction. The fully adjustable harness allows plenty of scope to enable the hunter to position the package for fast access when required and to carry them without bearing weight around the back of the neck.

I like to range my distances in the metric system and that's why my first focal plane hunting scopes all bear mil-radian reticles. The Vortex HD 5000 Fury can display in either metric or imperial units which makes them suitable for everyone. Setting up the binoculars for individual use couldn't be easier as they feature conventional dioptre adjustment and separate adjustment for reticle focusing. I wear prescription glasses for long-distance clarity and like to leave them on when using scopes and binoculars. The binoculars feature conventional twist-up eyecups which make them a cinch for folk with and without specs or sunglasses.

What about angles up from horizontal to the point of aim on the game animal? Other LRF devices I've used operate in line of sight mode and assume the target is in the

same horizontal plane as my rifle barrel. But doesn't this affect trajectory and therefore firing solution and how can LRF help to address this challenge?

As any mountain hunter knows, game is rarely obliging when it comes to their angle of declination on long-range shots. Vortex have addressed this firing solution dilemma within the common parameters of up to 15 degrees of elevation out to 732m. Vortex refer to this feature as Horizontal Component Distance, in other words HCD will account for horizontal variation of up to 15 degrees out to 732m without additional calculation required by the shooter. For most hunters this represents a greater distance than they're ever likely to attempt humane, one-shot kills on game such as pigs, goats and deer.

Obviously the internal LRF and digital display requires an energy source and the package is powered by a single, easy-to-replace CR2 lithium battery. I used the binoculars on several hunting excursions using only the battery that comes in the box from the Vortex factory and it never needed replacing. However, just as I do with the illuminated reticles in my riflescopes, I suggest carrying a spare battery when hunting as the weight and bulk of a spare battery is imperceptible compared with not being able to range your game target due to a flat battery.

It's not hard to see these high definition LRF binoculars are aimed squarely at hunters who value crisp, clear optical definition in all light conditions - I spend many hours glassing for game when I hunt and eye strain is not something I'll accept.

You get what you pay for and at around \$2500 these are certainly not cheap LRF binoculars but look at what you get for your money. The Vortex HD 5000, 10x42 LRF binoculars provide sharp contrast, brilliant light transmission, no edge haze and superb colour definition in a tough, rubber armoured, waterproof, shockproof package.



Range finding in either yards or metres couldn't be simpler or faster with a simple two-button operation to toggle through modes and settings.

If you're looking to save weight and bulk, reduce complexity and increase your chances of accurately ranging game animals to take successful and humane long-range kills, you can't go past the Vortex Fury HD 5000, 10x42 hunting binoculars. ●

Specifications

Magnification: 10x
Objective lens diameter: 42mm
Eye relief: 16mm
Exit pupil: 4.2mm
Linear field of view: 98.02m at 914.4m
Angular field of view: 6.1 degrees
Minimum focus distance: 6.1m
Interpupillary distance: 54-72mm
Distance units in digital display: Metres or yards
Height: 14.6cm
Width: 12.7cm
Weight: 916g
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Darwin tragedy 'could have been avoided'

John Maxwell

The alleged gunman who shot four people dead and wounded a fifth had repeatedly sought help for his mental condition the day before his shooting rampage in Darwin on June 4, it has been claimed. A report in *The Australian* said Benjamin Hoffman, 45, told associates he called triple-0 seeking assistance, contacted the NT corrections department and attended hospital three times in the preceding 24 hours.

The Australian further reported that an hour before the shooting started, a Darwin woman had called triple-0 after spotting a man wearing an ankle bracelet monitoring device and carrying a shotgun. She described the man and his vehicle and gave its registration number. Although a police station was only a short distance from her property, it took officers half an hour to respond.

"I told them he was a criminal with an ankle bracelet and he's running around with a gun - he's on a mission," she said. Later that night she saw television news showing armed police dragging the same man from a car in Darwin. She claims if police had acted, the tragedy could have been prevented.

Northern Territory Police themselves

admitted Hoffman attended their Darwin headquarters at one stage during his four-hour rampage, possibly seeking to surrender, *The Australian* said. Furthermore, he telephoned a police superintendent on duty, asking to be placed in protective custody.

NT Police also revealed that officers stopped Hoffman for speeding at 10.52am that day but said there was nothing in his behaviour that was out of the ordinary. The same silver-coloured Proton car was detected speeding twice more during the next two hours.

All of which indicates a catalogue of errors by police and other NT authorities which allowed this tragedy to unfold, errors which are likely to be canvassed in detail if, as expected, Hoffman pleads not guilty on grounds of mental illness.

The tragedy unfolded when Hoffman allegedly embarked on a rampage in Darwin, shooting dead Rob Courtney, 52, Hassan Baydoun, 33, Michael Sisois, 57 and Nigel Hellings, 75, at four different locations. Two were apparently complete strangers. He was arrested that night and subsequently charged with four counts of murder and other charges.

During a brief preliminary appearance

in June, Hoffman apologised saying: "I am very sorry about what happened. I do need help. I've asked for help."

Not yet revealed, though it certainly will be, is where he acquired the pump-action shotgun and ammunition he used that night. Northern Territory gun laws are fundamentally the same as every other state and territory, with severe restrictions on possession of semi-automatic rifles and shotguns and pump-action shotguns.

Under no circumstances could Hoffman have legally possessed a pump-action shotgun. He'd been released from jail in January after serving the four-year non-parole period of a six-year sentence for bashing a man with a baseball bat. With his criminal history he could not have held a firearms licence.

As a parolee he was wearing an electronic monitoring bracelet on his ankle, which should have given his probation and parole officer real time information on his location. What's more, he had actually been locked up again for 14 days in April for breaching curfew conditions of his parole. Hoffman is in prison pending further court appearances. ●



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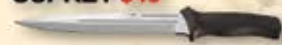
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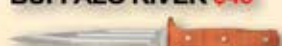
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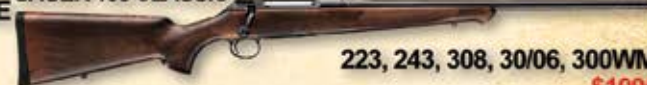
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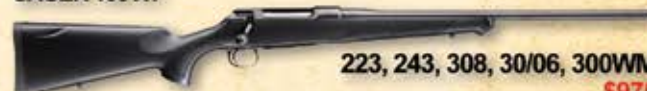
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Beretta DT 11 ACS

reliability - at a price

Paul Miller



Over the past few years we've reviewed some exceptional shotguns that represent the peak of design for competitive shooting at clay targets. The Krieghoff K80, Beretta DT 11 X high rib Trap, Blaser F3 high rib Supersport and in this review we examine the latest version of the Beretta DT 11 line called the ACS - All Competition Shotgun. All these guns are packed with special features and made from the highest quality materials available. They're the sort of guns competition shooters dream of owning and with enough persistence, saving and courage to make the commitment, are all within the reach of the serious competition shooter.

Action

The DT 11 is an evolution of the famous DT10 shotgun, the action about 3mm wider and said to be stronger. It's also heavier which is claimed to enhance the balance of the DT 11 series. Like its predecessor it has a detachable trigger unit - the DT in the name - an advantage for serious competitors who may take a spare trigger assembly to important events in case of problems.

The DT11 action is immaculately crafted and the single selective triggers are perfection, breaking cleanly every time at around 4lb. The action has a classy and modern look with matte sidewalls and mirror polished ribbon borders which complement the blue Beretta logo and decorative blue swirls on the sides.

There's a redesigned top lever, robust but practical and equally comfortable for right- or left-hand users and the safety/selector switch has also been modified and has a nice crisp feel. The closing of the action is as good as any top-end shotgun and closes like a bank vault with the most appealing sound. Little details make a difference like the nickel-based finish on the fences, hand-engraved to minimise glare.

Barrels

This model has the new 32" Steelium Pro Barrels, the latest evolution of Beretta barrel-making technology. They're made

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Beretta DT 11 ACS reliability - at a price

from a proprietary tri-alloy steel from solid block by a combination of deep drilling, cold hammer forging and vacuum distension. Beretta make much of this in their advertising and claim these barrels have a special concentricity and internal profile meant to reduce recoil and muzzle flip while increasing pattern density and enhancing shooting stability. These are interesting claims and having shot the gun at more than 300 targets they certainly ring true.

On top of the barrels is a relatively high rib with two beads hinged near the receiver and adjusted by a horizontal wheel in the supporting mechanism near the muzzle end. The rib is 10mm wide tapering to 8mm at the muzzle and draws the eye out to the target very nicely.

When we reviewed the Beretta DT 11 X with an even higher high rib and bulky ergonomic stock we concluded it was perfect for most Trap disciplines where an upright head position and fast target acquisition was an advantage, but I said then I'd like to see Beretta design a DT 11 meant more for Sporting or Skeet with a lower adjustable rib and adjustable Sporting-style stock. This All Competition Shotgun is just that and more.

The rib is the most easily adjustable of any gun I've looked at (no tools required) and was simplicity itself to shoot where I wanted it for Sporting and Skeet, 50/50 pellets distributed above and below the point of aim. It has 66 clicks of adjustment from low to high and depending on where you locate the adjustable comb on the stock, you can realistically get everything from about 100 per cent above point of aim through 50/50 to about 80/20 below.



With Skeet and Sporting the bulk of targets are shot level or falling so 50/50 is appropriate. Some may prefer 60/40 and this gun accommodates whatever you want. 50/50 for me was 33 clicks or dead centre of the rib adjustment with the stock comb set parallel and about $\frac{3}{8}$ " high. The lower setting with the rib wound right up might suit someone with a longer neck and you could elevate the low pattern by putting the comb at its highest setting giving an upright head position and the pattern at 50/50 or 60/40.

Beretta supply six of their externally visible Optimachokes from cylinder to full which covers every clay shooting sport perfectly. They're said to have a new



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Beretta DT 11 ACS reliability - at a price

profile which enhances the patterns and the way targets are broken and I won't argue with that.

Stock and fore-end

Both stock and fore-end are made from select grade walnut and finely chequered with immaculate fit to all metalwork and action, the fore-end a comfortable beavertail shape but without the fluted profile we often see on Trap guns. It's a compromise between a Trap fore-end and slim Schnabel we see on many Sporters and I suspect it's meant as a compromise feel for those who may choose to use this gun for Trap shooting.

The stock is fitted with the Beretta Fast Adjustment System (B-FAST) which worked perfectly. It's a robust and well-made lightweight alloy body with stainless steel pillars that allows very quick adjustment and gun fit to be fine-tuned. Recoil is reduced by the comfortable and well-shaped micro-core recoil pad. This gun is right-handed so has cast suited to being mounted in the right shoulder pocket, but as a lefty I was able to play with the stock's adjustable comb and make it comfortable, at least in terms of cheek weld and sight alignment down the rib. There are two weights included that can be fitted to the stock bolt to alter the gun's balance rearward and several plastic washers for supporting the comb's elevation before locking it in place.

Performance

This certainly lives up to its claim of being an All Competition Shotgun. The B-FAST stock and easily adjustable high rib allow a



serious shooter to fine-tune both gun fit and pattern placement with ease and precision. I achieved a comfortable heads-up position and the speed of target acquisition and all around the rib view without having barrels in your peripheral vision was superb.

The stock was comfortable in the

gun-up position, never feeling top heavy or unwieldy even with the high rib, super smooth to mount and perfectly cast for all you clever right-handers out there (left-handed stock available on request).

I shot at Sporting, Skeet and Trap targets and only adjusted the rib down to its lowest



Patterning is essential to get the best from this system - 50/50 for Sporting or Skeet.



Rib at highest setting gives low shooting patterns.



Rib set to lowest position to elevate pattern for Trap shooting.



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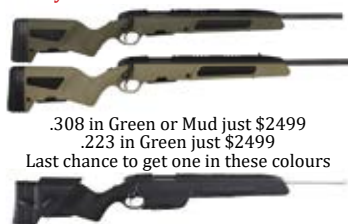


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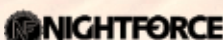


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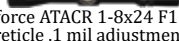
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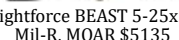
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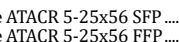
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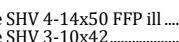
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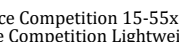
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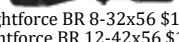
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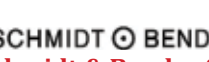
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Beretta DT 11 ACS reliability - at a price

for the Trap targets for a higher shooting pattern to allow me to keep the rising targets in sight as I pulled the trigger and followed through. It worked to perfection in all three disciplines - very few got away and those that were hit were invariably demolished. Even long distance crossing Sporting clays were broken convincingly with quarter choke and fast 28 gram 7s. Screwing in the tighter Optima chokes from modified and up to full destroyed them in a way that was confidence inspiring. Even my shooting mates were lost for words.

I appreciated the fast-handling, futuristic-looking high rib 32" barrels and was surprised how little recoil I felt and how little fatigue I experienced, part of this the 3.7kg weight. A gun like this is a major investment for the average wage-earner and requires determination to save and courage to commit. With the Aus/US dollar situation you're looking at around \$14,000 but you get a shooting machine effective for all clay target disciplines and you can have it fitted to you personally by Beretta Australia.

The thing that differentiates all quality guns is how they fit you as a shooter and that mystical quality of 'feel'. A gun like this exudes confidence and that means higher scores - competitions are won or lost by

one target and this gun's technology and adaptability may well give you that extra target. Highly recommended. More at berettaaustralia.com

• The author thanks Gary Georgiou of Safari Firearms in Sydney for his assistance in arranging this gun for review. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Beretta

Model: DT11 ACS

Weight: 3.7kg

Distributor: Beretta Australia

Stock: High grade walnut 14.75" with B-FAST system.

Barrel Length: 32" (81cm) Steelium Pro, bored 18.6mm

Barrel weight: 1.580kg

Rib: Adjustable 10mm to 8mm with two beads

Gauge: 12 gauge 76mm (3") chambers

Trigger: Single selective inertia operated

Chokes: Six Long Optima Interchangeable Cyl to Full

Warranty: Five years

Protective case: Included

Price: Around \$14,000



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Oryx rifle chassis systems by MDT

Con Kapralos



The Oryx rifle chassis as supplied - Howa Mini Action (top) and Howa M1500 Short Action.

To all but the rifle purist, the use of wood as a stock seems to be 'old-hat' and out of fashion. Synthetics such as glass-filled polymer, fibre-glass and carbon fibre are the new kids on the block for hunters and shooters chasing an indestructible rifle stock that's also impervious to the elements.

But more recently the rising popularity of long-range and tactical sports shooting disciplines has thrust chassis-style rifle stocks into the fray. The beauty of chassis-style stocks is their modular concept where the shooter can use whatever buttstock, grip, fore-end and bedding chassis they desire. Any serious tactical discipline shooter is spoilt for choice with a glut of companies catering to their needs and wants.

However, a niche existed for hunters and shooters looking for an adaptable chassis system which could be mated to factory-produced barrelled actions, vastly improving a rifle's accuracy and versatility, a concept where the rifle could be used for hunting one day and target or tactical discipline shooting the next. Enter the Oryx rifle chassis, made in Canada by the chassis experts in Modular Driven Technologies (MDT).

So how is the Oryx different to other rifle chassis systems on the market? Simply, the Oryx is a one-piece integrated aluminum chassis and buttstock built to improve the consistency and accuracy of factory produced bolt-action rifles. The Oryx chassis has super-simple installation in three steps and replaces the current factory rifle stock. The designers at MDT used their expertise to develop the one-piece chassis with all the necessary components and take the guesswork away from the user.

Everything's there - adjustable length of pull recoil pad, adjustable cheek-riser, AR-style pistol grip, fore-end with M-LOK compatibility and more, all built around an aluminum backbone.

Outdoor Sporting Agencies, Australian importer and distributor of the Oryx rifle chassis, contacted *Australian Shooter* with a request for us to run the rule over this new product. What was more surprising is the huge range of factory rifles catered to by the Oryx: Savage 10, Ruger American, Tikka T3, Remington 700 and 783, Howa 1500 SA and Mini Action and Mauser M18. In this instance a Howa M1500 SA (Short-Action) and Howa Mini Action Oryx chassis were sent for evaluation.

Oryx chassis features

The two chassis arrived in their red and black cartons with distinctive livery. Some noticeable features are as follows:

- Solid action interface - each Oryx is designed for the specific rifle model.
- Free-floating barrel - the Oryx chassis keeps the barrel free of contact with the chassis fore-end for greater consistency and accuracy.
- Integrated rifle stock - from fore-end to buttstock the Oryx is one piece of aircraft grade 6061 Mil-Spec Type II hard anodized aluminium. Solid and straight.
- Contoured fore-end grip - Oryx's contoured polymer side panels are comfortable in the hands in all conditions and complement the design of the fore-end which sits solid on barricades and platforms.
- Adjustable cheek riser - comfort and positioning of the head were of major importance when designing the Oryx. The adjustable cheek riser allows the perfect cheek weld for the perfect shot. Alignment of the eye with the scope ocular is now spot-on.
- Over-moulded AR-style pistol grip tested and designed to fit hands of all sizes and shapes, the palm swell incorporated in the

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Oryx rifle chassis systems by MDT

grip allows for precise hand placement and manual dexterity when carrying the Oryx chassis.

- Durable buttpad - a premium over-moulded rubber buttpad comes with an additional quarter-inch spacer to adjust length of pull to suit the user.
- Accepts M-LOK accessories on slots on the underside of the fore-end.
- Uses AICS pattern magazines*.
- Will accommodate barrels up to 1.25" in diameter

(*Howa Mini Action Oryx chassis uses standard mini-action magazines.)

Unboxing and installation

No bones about it, Oryx's claim that this chassis is installable in three-steps is spot on. Each chassis comes with its set of two action bolts and simple to follow instructions. Installation is just a matter of removing the old stock from the barrelled action, dropping in the chassis and, using the two new bolts, tightening them to the required torque. Then it's simply a matter of inserting the correct AICS magazine for the chassis and start shooting - it's that easy.

Test subjects in this case were my Howa M1500 short-action sporter in .243 Winchester and Howa Mini Action sporter in 7.62x39 Russian. Aesthetically speaking, the rifles were totally transformed in appearance but what was immediately noticeable was the increase in weight. The two review chassis weighed around 1.9kg, quite an increase in weight from the original laminate stock on the Howa .243 (about 0.4kg) and HTI polymer stock on the 7.62x39 Howa Mini Action (about 1.1kg).



Before and after - Howa M1500 Short-Action in .243 Winchester (top) and Howa Mini Action in .223 Remington.



The magazine well is part of the aluminum chassis backbone.

Each Oryx chassis comes with a pair of high-tensile hex-head bolts to anchor the barrelled-action to the chassis.



The well appointed and adjustable recoil pad will be appreciated by hunters and shooters alike.

The Howa Mini Action with Oryx chassis was still quite tolerable 'in the hands' and could be used in a stalking scenario, over a bench or prone but the Howa short-action sporter in .243 Winchester now topped the 5kg mark with scope fitted and would only be suited to shooting from an idle position. A stalking rifle, probably not.

The fit and finish of the Oryx chassis was exceptional, the OD-Green of the polymer fore-end panels and matching

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Oryx rifle chassis systems by MDT

buttstock frame complementing the matte-black aluminium chassis and backbone. Everything on the chassis was as expected - the AR-style grip, magazine release, ample triggerguard provision and ease of use and adjustment of the cheek-riser and buttpad.

At the range

Shooting the Oryx chassis yielded no surprises. While the Howa short-action in .243 Winchester was originally an accurate rifle thanks to an alloy pillar and glass-bedded laminate stock, the installation of the Oryx maintained the rifle's accuracy. The Howa Mini Action on the other hand was a revelation. Replacing the factory HTI polymer stock for the chassis transformed it from shooting around 1.5 MOA (at best) with factory loads to well under MOA with the same loads. A friend with a Howa Mini Action in .223 Remington had similar issues with the HTI polymer stock touching the barrel on his rifle and the poor accuracy associated with this. Swapping the stock to the Oryx chassis produced groups around 0.5 MOA and left him scratching his head as to the results - no doubt another convert to the Oryx chassis.

In the field

Coinciding with a feral goat cull in SA's Flinders Ranges, the Oryx chassis mated to the Howa Mini Action in 7.62x39 was the perfect candidate for a rifle to traverse the hilltops and gullies. It travelled well as the light weight of the Mini Action barrelled-action resulted in a rifle that's easy to carry over the shoulder. The other Oryx chassis was mated up to another Howa short-action, this time in a .308 Winchester, and this was used to shoot from a resting position overlooking game trails and water-holes, areas frequented by feral goats. Both rifles proved very accurate out to all distances required for humane despatching of goats. One outstanding feature of the Oryx chassis is they're made to withstand bumps and knocks while maintaining a superb shooting platform for the barrelled action it supports. The Oryx chassis by MDT retails for around \$649 and is available from all Outdoor Sporting Agencies network dealers. ●



Howa Short-Action Oryx chassis uses the AICS-type magazine platform, this one of 10-shot capacity.



The cheek riser is easily adjustable.



The rubber-moulded AR-style grip is anchored to the aluminium chassis with a single bolt.



The buttstock is adjustable for length-of pull and comb height.



M-LOK slots on the underside of the fore-end allow attachment of accessories tailored to the M-LOK application.

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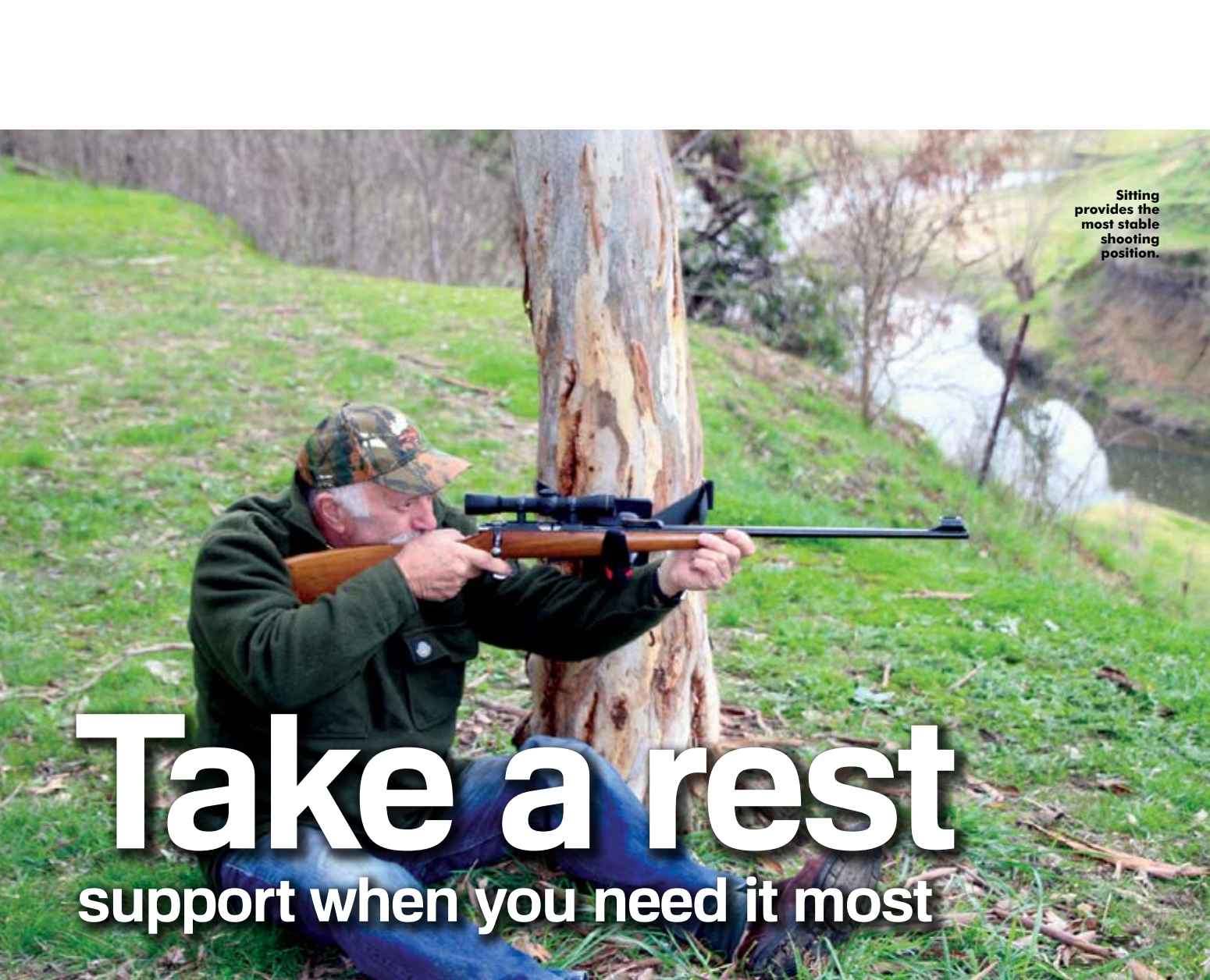
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Take a rest

support when you need it most

Senior Correspondent John Dunn

When it comes to taking game cleanly and humanely, every hunter worth his salt knows the advantages of using some sort of rest. While there are no benchrests in the bush, there are any number of objects such as trees, branches, stumps, logs, fenceposts, rocks or your daypack that can be used to calm the sighting wobbles brought on by exertion or excitement.

Alternatively there are shooting sticks, monopods, bipods and various other devices readily available - all more or less portable and designed to provide assistance on an as-required basis. None of them meet with universal approval. Everybody has their preference and what suits you might be useless to me or vice versa, the utility of any given product

dictated by the how and where of individual hunting requirements.

That's why I was a touch reticent when the editor rang to ask if I'd be interested in reviewing a new shooting rest coming to the market - the Keen Hunter Portable Support - my initial response being I'd like a look at it first. A few weeks later Mark Richards and Shaun Lynch turned up with a pre-production sample, we had a yarn about the product, how it worked and what it had to offer. I liked what I saw and in due course a production model arrived for review.

Background

The Keen Hunter Portable Support was designed by Mark to help his son David, a keen young hunter with some physical disabilities who found it hard to hold a

firearm steady when hunting fallow deer. David needed a support that was portable, easy to use and stable. Mark designed and built a prototype, had it refined by an industrial designer for production and by mid-2019 the rest was on the market. The rest is certified Australian made, right down to the packaging.

Keen Hunter Portable Support

The support is designed to be used in conjunction with a natural structure such as a tree, stump or even a fencepost. It's attached via a webbing belt that can be wrapped around the structure and cinched tight at the required height. The product has four major components - a back plate, support strut, rifle yoke and webbing belt with buckles - all parts made from weather resistant, UV-stabilised materials suitable

for rough use in the field.

The back plate is a composite unit with a black, hard plastic plate for rigidity and a fitted foam grip. The foam is firm with just enough give to allow it to snug up against a tree or post for a secure fit when the belt is tightened. The front of the back plate has a moulded and raised retention slot that accepts a mating plate moulded into the back of the support strut.

The support strut is also made from hard black plastic with reinforced sides for strength, its primary function to house the rifle yoke. A strut retainer is screwed to one side of the support and this strut allows the support to be detached, turned sideways then refitted to the backing plate so it can be easily carried without snagging on anything.

The outer end of the support has a spring-loaded release button that allows the rifle yoke to be removed or refitted as required while other accessories such as a camera support can also be fitted if desired. The rifle yoke has a hard outer with softer inner grip to accept and hold the forearm of a rifle and freely rotates through 180° when in place, so there's plenty of room for lateral movement when



the rest is fixed to a tree.

An adjustable webbing belt fits through slots on each edge of the back plate and secures the stand to a tree. The belt is fitted with a quick-detachable buckle for easy set-up and removal and a tri-glide buckle on the belt itself for fast length adjustment, at the same time ensuring there are no loose ends or hanging bits to catch on obstacles or create a trip hazard. Longer or shorter belts are available if required and a comprehensive, very reader-friendly user manual is provided.

Field testing

A problem with most portable shooting support systems is they can be awkward or a nuisance to carry in the field - not the Keen Hunter. In carry mode, called inactive mode in the manual, the unit can be strapped around the waist like a belt with the support out of the way behind the user's back.

I tried it in all three upright field positions - standing, kneeling and sitting - and not surprisingly found the most stable was sitting, not a problem in my book as I believe sit-and-wait hunters will be biggest buyers of the support. Around home I used



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it to shoot a few rabbits on burrows where sit-and-wait is the only option and can report it worked extremely well.

Overview

Given it needs something to be strapped to, the Keen Hunter doesn't have across the board applications for all hunters, nor does any other design for that matter, so that shouldn't be taken as criticism. That said, it's a handy accessory for a wide range of hunting situations.

Given a suitable tree to attach it to, anyone who sits in a blind or tree stand or waits over a warren, waterhole, wallow or game trail will find it useful as will handicapped or wheelchair-bound hunters. Setting it up takes very little time and that makes it useful for some walkabout hunting opportunities too. The design is practical and well thought-out, especially in the way it can be taken down and carried with minimum fuss.

The review support has made a welcome addition to my shooting kit and I'm sure there are lots of other hunters out there who'll find it as useful, portable and handy



Component parts of the Keen Hunter Portable Support.



as I did. Best of all it's an all-Australian made product and for that reason alone deserves the support of the hunting fraternity. With RRP of \$159 it's a product a lot of hunters will see as a good investment. More at keenhunter.com ●

• Footnote: As I was finishing this review, Shaun Lynch sent me a photo demonstrating how the rest can also be used for offhand shooting, an application that hadn't even crossed my mind.



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Three and easy for the novice

Mark van den Boogaart



Hat-trick! Jay with his fallow buck.

So I'm sitting in my driveway waiting for my mate Jay. Behind me is a case containing my newly Cerakoted Scout rifle, an overnight bag, ammo box, a couple of knives, binoculars and other essentials. This is a hunting trip, a special one as it will be Jay's first. Turning 40, it's a bucket list trip that started when he asked out of the blue if I'd take him hunting - during more than 10 years of friendship he knew I was a hunter but until recently had shown merely a polite interest.

Along with a desire to have a go, Jay had no gear and limited firearms experience so this trip had been some time in the making. I initially planned to have him tag along which is not really hunting, so I ran through some options and contacted good friends Jim and Debbie from Havago Australia. Happy to help, they'd take care

of everything so Jay could focus on the hunting experience while I'd have an easy weekend with the camera.

We met Debbie and Jim along with Pete, our guide for the weekend, and headed to the range where we spent the afternoon acquainting Jay with a compact Ruger American Ranch Rifle. Next day we were on the move early and heading towards the dams. The property, like the entire region, was in the grip of a drought so any concentration of water would likely mean a concentration of game. After scoping out a couple of likely spots we closed on one of the better locations for pigs. Pete led off with Jay right behind him and heading though the wooded cover towards the dam the breeze was in our favour and, combined with the cover, Pete and Jay got in close while I hung back with camera and Scout rifle over my shoulder.

Up ahead was a sizeable mob of pigs and Pete, in whispered tones, set up the shooting sticks and made Jay ready. Watching him with the Ranch Rifle it was clearly a good choice as its compact size made things a bit easier for a nervous new hunter and showing admirable patience Jay waited for a shot to present itself. Pete and Jay were focused on a small boar but with the other pigs so close, a through-and-through on another was a real danger. Finally a clear shot presented and Jay fired, striking the boar firmly. It took off at pace but made no more than 20m before dropping in its tracks.

As the rest of the mob scattered, Jay was a little in awe of what had just happened and was still processing it as I kept an eye on him and a big boar retreating into the tree line. Pete asked Jay to secure the rifle before heading to the downed pig and, in

Three and easy for the novice

truth, he'd made a pretty good shot and an excellent start to his hunting career.

Our next target was goats and we picked up a clear-cut track and spotted two small mobs joining up and decided to get in front of them on the other side of a stand of timber - a good decision as we had a great shooting lane and plenty of cover. Reaching for the sticks Pete and Jay readied themselves and waited. While the mob held a couple of good billies, Jay wanted something for the freezer so he and Pete were particular about their target.

Now one big mob, the chance of an accidental strike was high so Jay awaited the all clear and, when it came, placed a very good shot on a smaller goat, striking its neck and dropping it on the spot. The rest of the mob didn't take much notice so we waited for them to move off before making the rifle safe and approaching the downed goat. The novice was two for two.

We loaded the goat in the ute and headed back and over lunch Jay asked about the many deer, goat and buffalo trophies adorning Jim's walls. Our afternoon was set. Fallow deer under the guidance of Jim would be the target and within 90 minutes we had our first deer encounter, four big red



Jay waits for the shot to present.



Job done - Jay with the result of his first-ever hunt.

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Three and easy for the novice

stags. At about 250m one of them pulled up and presented a fantastic broadside but it was way too tricky a shot for a beginner.

Before long though fallow deer were on our radar, bedded down with antler palms acting as beacons above the long grass. Trouble was they were tight on a boundary fence and there was no cover between us and them. Jim and Jay began a single file walk on a slight angle towards them while Pete and I kept watch and with less than 100m to go four fine animals stood up.

Jim again set up the sticks while Jay steadied himself for the shot and as the report of the rifle filled the afternoon air, all but one took off, the other moving very slowly. A rapid second shot rang out and it disappeared into the long grass. Jim ensured it was finished then it was handshakes all round.

Back at base the deer was prepped for transportation to the taxidermist and in a few months it would be on the wall. The conversation was wide-ranging and the hunt recounted numerous times. The next morning Jay was chuffed with his first hunting experience but I was keen to find that ugly old boar we'd seen the previous day. Making straight for the dam, luckily he was back but unluckily there were a few red deer hanging around and I was barked.

Worse still, the boar took note and began to move towards the same heavy timber as the previous day - then for some reason



he stopped. Turning a little he presented a finely angled quartering shot so I lined up and fired, sending him down in a cloud of dust, and while the other pigs bolted, a big sow approached and gave him a bite! He twitched at that, causing her to spin round and chase the fleeing mob. I checked for signs of life but it was all over and I had my boar for the weekend.

We loaded Jay's truck with a couple of eskies full of meat and some nice boar tusks ready for presentation and, not surprisingly, he's already asking about our next trip. ●



Encore! Encore!

The Thompson Center Pro Hunter

John Dunn

It's funny the way things work out sometimes. Back in 2017 I bought a Thompson Center TCR 87 break action rifle in .222 at a gun show in Sydney and since then have had an elevated interest in the marque. Subconsciously or otherwise I've found myself considering the options available, reading reviews and checking advertising.

Earlier this year I came within a cat's whisker of buying a Bergara but the calibre wasn't what I really wanted and after looking at a few different rifles I decided it wasn't the way to go. There was nothing wrong with any of them, they just didn't ring the bells I need these days to make me open my wallet.

But all that changed when a couple of Thompson Centre Encore Pro Hunter rifles popped up on the internet. I did some research, liked what I found but when I made an enquiry they were gone. A couple of days later yet another Pro Hunter came up and, as luck would have it, the price was well down on recommended retail, always a

bonus. Better still it was in .30-06, a calibre I could put to work right away so I made the call and a week later the rifle arrived.

The rifle

Though I'm not a big fan of the stainless synthetic look, my interest in the Encore was multi-faceted. As a single-shot tragic I wanted to know how it functioned compared to the TCR 87 rifle I had. It was also the raw material for this article and perhaps most importantly I wanted to hunt with it and see if it lived up to the reputation it has earned for itself as a very practical and versatile hunting rifle - the latter based on its capacity to switch barrels and also be used as a shotgun or muzzleloading rifle.

With an overall length of 107cm and bare weight of 3.52kg the Encore Pro Hunter is no shrinking violet. As it comes from the box my first thoughts were the barrel was overly long and the stock more angular than I imagined but those doubts were dispelled as soon as I put the rifle to my shoulder - it

fitted like a glove. The pistol grip stock was just right and the balance was perfect with a slightly nose-heavy feel I like. From there on all I wanted to do was shoot it.

Barrel and action

The Encore is a modern variation of the front-hinged break or tip-up action that's been around for 100 years or more. The main difference is the Encore action is built bigger and better from modern materials more than capable of handling any of the pressures generated by cartridges the interchangeable barrel system is chambered for.

Both barrel and action are made from matte finished stainless steel, the partially fluted barrel 71cm long with a diameter of 25.24mm at the breech and 20.3mm at the muzzle which has a square cut, recessed crown. Top of the barrel is stamped Pro Hunter, the left-hand side with Encore Thompson/Center Springfield, MA and the calibre designation of .30-06 Sprg. No sights are fitted but the back of the barrel is drilled

Encore! Encore! - The Thompson Center Pro Hunter

and tapped to accept a screw-on base for scope mounting.

A block welded under the breech end of the barrel is key to the Encore's lock-up system. The front of the block has a precision diameter hole for the pivot pin that locates the barrel in the frame while the back of the block accommodates a barrel locking lug/bolt and sliding extractor that partially withdraws a spent case or cartridge from the chamber where it can then be removed by hand. Both locking lug and extractor are spring loaded, retained in the block by what appears to be a small roll pin.

The Encore frame is essentially slab-sided with a nicely contoured reinforce along the top edge on either side. On the right it's etched with Thomson Center TC in a circle logo and Pro Hunter, on the left with Encore and the TC logo.

The face of the frame has a circular hardened steel insert that sits up against the rear of the barrel when the action is closed, the insert having a central hole the firing pin strikes through when the rifle is fired. Below the insert in the lower section of the face is a square lip or shoulder the locking lug slides under when the action is



When the hammer's at rest it sits well clear of the firing pin mounted in the standing face of the receiver. Notice the sculpted reinforce along the top edge of the frame.



Component parts of the Thompson Center Encore Pro Hunter.

closed. The rear of the frame is hollow to accommodate the hammer, trigger and main spring assembly, the tail drilled and tapped to accept a stock bolt that secures the buttstock to the frame via a hole through the pistol grip.

The triggerguard pivots on a screw that's visible in the right side of the frame just above the trigger itself and apart from protecting the trigger, the guard acts as a lever to open the rifle. When the spur on

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Encore! Encore! - The Thompson Center Pro Hunter

the triggerguard is pulled back towards the pistol grip, a pair of arms inside the frame move forward to contact the barrel locking lug and push it out of engagement with the locking lip or shoulder in the lower section of the frame's face, allowing the back of the barrel to tip up, exposing the breech.

As the barrel tips up the extractor slides out from under the chamber so a spent cartridge can be removed or a fresh one inserted before the action is closed again. Like many other break-action rifles before it, the Encore Pro Hunter has an exposed hammer, described in the Safety and Instruction Manual as a swing hammer. All this means is the hammer spur can be set either in a central position or angled left or right as required so the spur can be

Action open with extractor extended - spent cases must be removed by hand.



The Flextech buttstock with its panelled inserts and Limb Saver recoil pad.



The block welded under the breech end of the barrel houses the locking bolt (bottom) and extractor, both of which are spring loaded. The hole towards the front of the block houses the pivot pin that can easily be removed to take the rifle down.

accessed under or around the ocular bell of a scope. A key to loosen the locking screw on top of the hammer is provided.

When the hammer is at rest its face sits well clear of the rear end of the firing pin and cannot move forward to accidentally discharge the firearm. When the rifle is fired the hammer strikes the back of the firing pin then returns to its 'at rest' position as soon as the trigger is released. Trigger pull weight on my rifle is a little over 1800g, a little heavier than I prefer but manageable.

When the hammer is cocked the Encore action cannot be opened and when the action is open the rifle can't be cocked. The rifle has no safety catch, nor does it need


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



SSAA SHOT EXPO
ssaashotexpo.org.au

Encore! Encore! - The Thompson Center Pro Hunter

one, the Safety and Instruction Manual recommending the rifle not be loaded or cocked until the need arises. The rifle should never be carried with the hammer cocked for obvious reasons.

If the hammer is cocked and no shot taken, the hammer can be let down by blocking its fall with the thumb of one hand while manipulating the trigger to release the hammer with the other. It takes a little practice but is easy when you know how. The rifle should be pointed in a safe direction while the de-cocking process is carried out.

Stock

The rifle has a two-piece synthetic stock fitted with QD sling swivel bases. The forearm is attached to the barrel by two small screws into the lower quadrant of the

barrel and has a beaver tail cross-section with panels of a softer grey synthetic material either side to provide grip. The rear end of the forearm slips over the front of the frame and hides the hinge pin when the rifle is assembled.

The Flextech buttstock is attached to the frame by a screw up through the pistol grip that's accessed by removing the grip cap. There's a pad of the same material on the comb of the stock and a quartet of chevrons on either side. The butt is fitted with a Sims Limb Saver recoil pad and according to the advertising the stock is designed to reduce up to 43 per cent of felt recoil.

Testing

A call to Elks Hunting and Fishing in Albury set me up with a Leupold base and rings. Initially I set up a Trijicon 1.5-4x24 scope with illuminated triangle on top of a post reticle. It worked well enough but I was frustrated by the lack of a fine aiming point that would show me exactly what sort of accuracy the rifle could deliver. Given the scope was set up in low mounts it was also difficult to get a firm thumb hold on the hammer, even with the spur set at an angle. Accordingly, I replaced the Trijicon with a 2-7x33 Leupold VX- R Fire Dot Duplex reticle scope and set it up in 30mm high mounts. Problem solved.

The Duplex reticle allowed me to see the centre of the target more clearly and I was able to achieve much better results using Remington 150gr factory loads as well as 178 and 180gr Norma ammunition which I knew would provide some premium quality cases for reloading. Group sizes varied from 24mm to 40mm - good enough to make the



Three-shot, 14mm group at 100m is all the accuracy a deer hunter needs.

rifle hunting ready until I'd worked up some handloads. Within a week I had a load using Outer Edge 160gr BBT (ball bearing tip) projectiles that would put three shots from a cold barrel into 14mm at 100m. I don't need any more accuracy than that.

Overview

Though it looks a little ungainly at first, the Pro Hunter handles remarkably well. As already noted the long barrel gives it a slightly muzzle-heavy feel conducive to the offhand shooting sambar hunting sometimes requires. The buttstock is well designed, the pistol grip and comb ensuring the rifle comes up to exactly the right place every time. Most importantly it's a pleasant rifle to shoot from any field position you choose and has made a welcome addition to my growing collection of single shot rifles. Can't wait to go hunting with it. ●



The action is opened by pulling back on the triggerguard spur.

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Handloading for hunting ammo

Don Caswell



I've been handloading for decades. It's an enjoyable activity but carries some safety considerations and necessitates concentration and care. Reading the many reloading guides and talking to more experienced handloaders, I've determined a process I believe is well matched to the needs of hunters.

A lot of the information available is written for shooters into benchrest and long-range shooting who want the utmost accuracy and the reloading guides often go into the detail to achieve that. Hunters don't need that degree of finesse for handling their ammo. How do I define a hunter? Someone carrying a light sporting rifle, mostly on foot, through the bush seeking a particular target animal. When opportunities arise the shot has to be from a hastily assumed position at a guessed range, often in twilight conditions with a wind blowing and a swarm of midges chewing on your flesh. Hardly the comfort of a covered concrete stand at your SSAA range with distance known.

Few hunters are capable of consistently delivering groups under 2 MOA in such varying field conditions and for that reason the benchmark for hunting rifle accuracy has often been quoted as 1 to 2 MOA. Nevertheless, sub-MOA is a common objective so what steps are necessary to achieve that?

Step one: Projectile choice

In developing a handload you must choose the type of projectile you intend to use in your rifle. The load you develop will be specific to that projectile and your rifle and the fact you may have different projectiles all the same weight is irrelevant. There can be subtle differences in the geometry of the projectiles that could lead to excessive pressure on firing for some but not others.

Handloads for each projectile must be worked up independently. Having said that, your choice of projectile should be tailored to the game you intend to hunt with it. For this example I'm using a 55gr

Polymer Tipped projectile for the 223 Remington.

Step two: Determine maximum seating depth

The first constraint is the length of the magazine in your rifle. If you want the ability to cycle ammo straight from the magazine, that will determine the maximum cartridge length. I once went through the procedure of establishing the most accurate handload for my rifle only to discover on my next hunting trip my ammo was a few millimetres too long to fit the magazine. All my testing had been single-shot feed at the range so that's now the first thing I check with any new rifle.

For hunting rifles you don't want to load ammo that engages the rifling on chambering. That will avoid the risk of having a round chambered and extracted without being fired, leaving a projectile stuck in your barrel. Having determined the overall length of the cartridge that just touches the rifling, and assuming

your magazine length is adequate, you can proceed.

Starting point is to set up your press to seat bullets 10- or 20-thousandths of an inch off the lands, that will be the longest cartridge you should load for that projectile in that rifle. Your testing of various bullet seating depths will be more deeply seated in the case for shorter overall cartridge length.

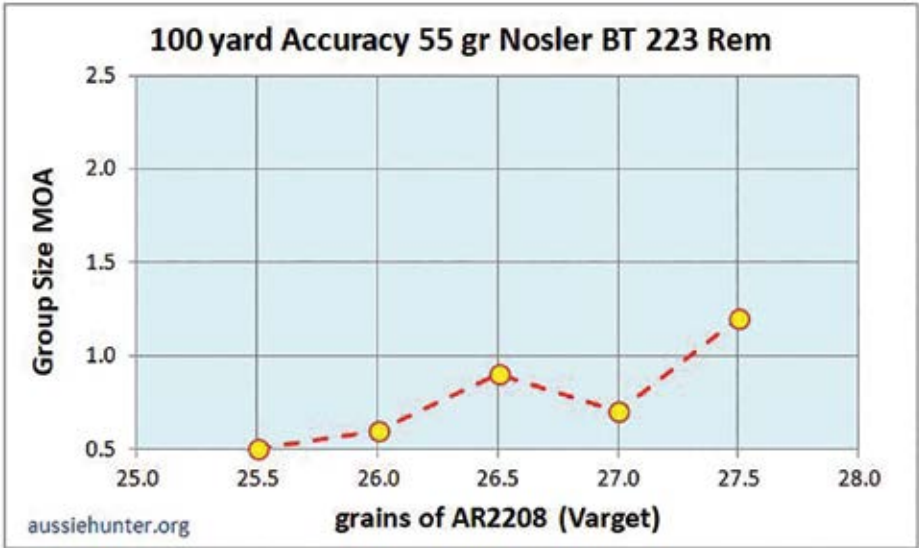
You'll need a fired case that hasn't yet been resized and de-primed. Because the case hasn't been resized, projectiles will slide easily and loosely into the neck. Press the case neck against a hard surface to slightly flatten it on one side, that will hold the projectile while you determine at what depth it meets the rifling on chambering.

By hand, push a projectile a little way into the neck of the case and take a permanent marking pen and colour most of the exposed projectile. Place a little lubricant on the front of the projectile so it's less likely to stick in the rifling then carefully chamber the round in your rifle, closing the action. Likewise, carefully extract the shell.

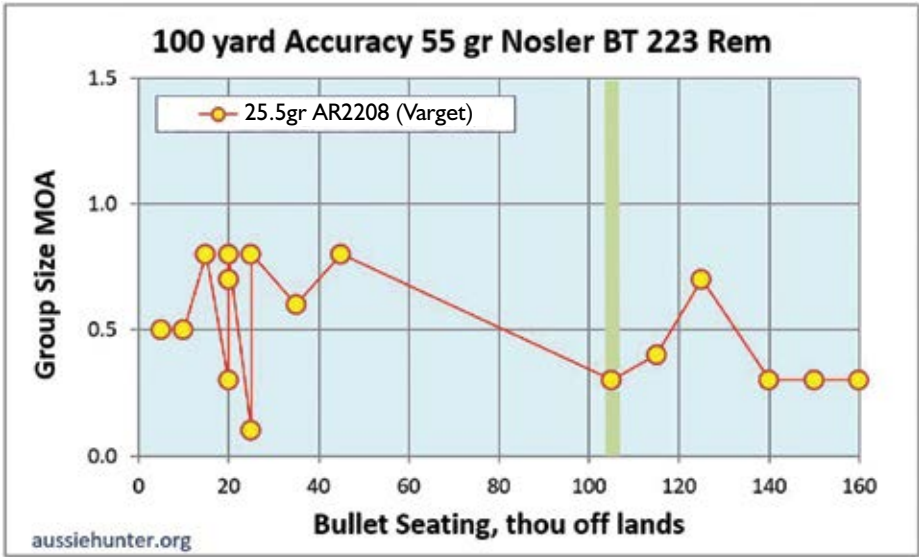
Close inspection of the inked projectile will show where the rifling engaged it and the mark where it was pushed into the crimped case neck. Gently, by eye, ease the projectile back into the case neck to match the scratch lines in the ink. The overall length of the cartridge, where the projectile just touches the rifling, is now in your hands. Measure that with callipers, record and repeat the exercise a few times for assurance.

Step three: Propellant choice

I have various reloading guides on my bookshelf and make use of website loading



Find the most accurate powder charge for your rifle.



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ADI	Hodgdon	IMR
Trail Boss		Trail Boss
AS50N	International	700X
AP70N	Universal	SR 7625
AP100		SR 4756
AR2205	H4227 / H110	IMR 4227
AR2207	H4198	IMR 4198
AR2219	H322	
Benchmark 2	Benchmark	IMR 3031
Benchmark 8208		IMR 8208 XBR
AR2206	BLC(2)	
AR2206H	H4895	IMR 4895
AR2208	Varget	IMR 4064
AR2209	H414 / H4350	IMR 4350
AR2213SC	H4831	
AR2217	H1000	
AR2225	Retumbo	
AR2218	H870 / H50BMG	

databases. My go-to guide these days is the ADI World Class Handloaders' Guide and no matter what my reference source is I always cross-check against a couple of other reloading guides. ADI's propellants are widely used worldwide but marketed and known by other names. The powders listed here, for safety sake, should not be considered exact but rather close approximations within 5 per cent. The table (left) gives a few of the major equivalent propellants for ADI products.

After referring to a handloading guide, select the propellant appropriate for your choice of projectile. For the 55gr Ballistic Tip there are some good options and I chose the versatile and reliable AR2208 which I've found a particularly accurate propellant in the 223 Remington.

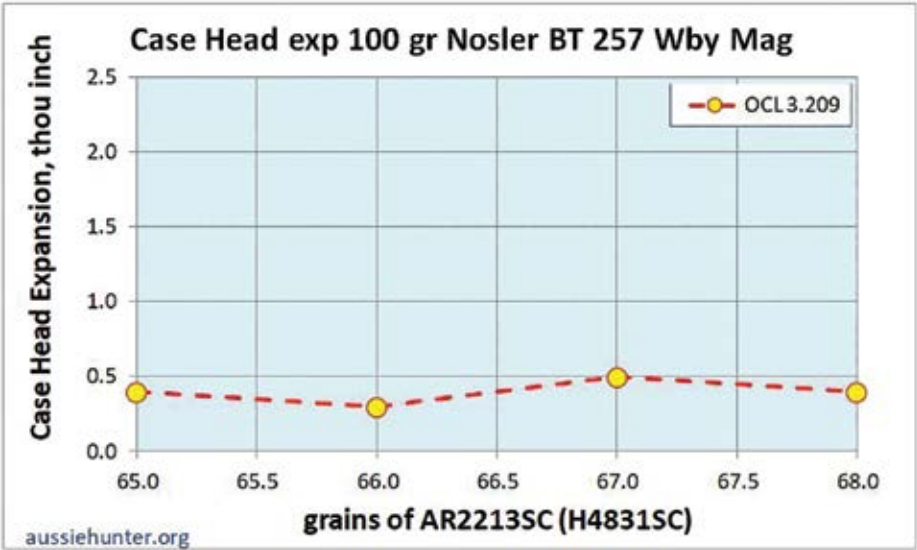
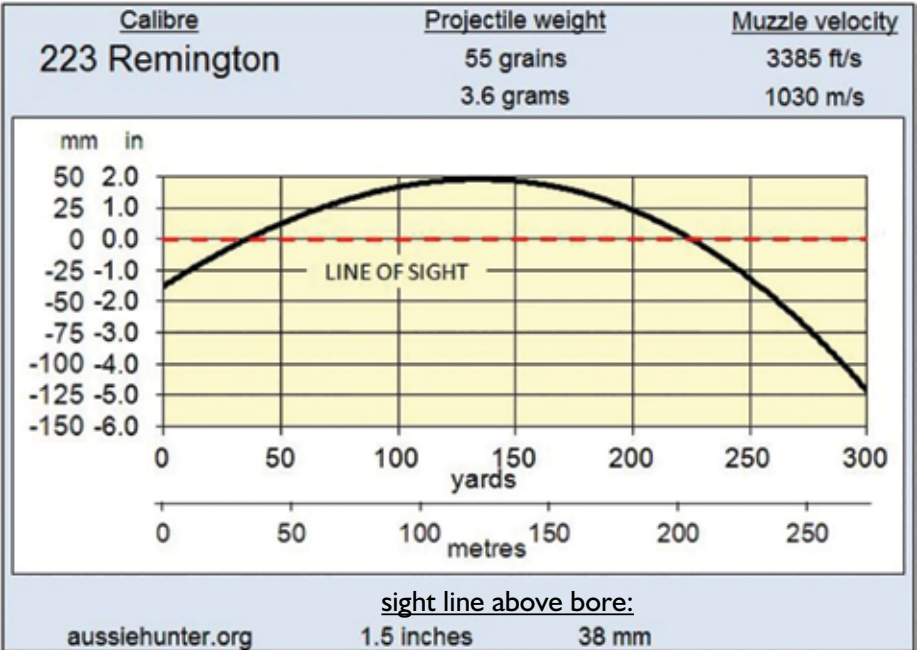
Handloading for hunting ammo

Starting with the listed minimum load I load three cartridge lots at each weight, going up in 0.5-grain increments. Normally I stop short of the listed maximum load until I've assessed what pressure is being developed in my sequence of reloads. At the rifle range I put up a batch of targets at 100 yards (or metres depending on location). For this initial testing you must maintain the same seating depth for all handloaded cartridges. If you want to be specific, the standard SAAMI length is a good choice.

Starting with the lightest loadings I fire each three-round batch at individual targets so there's no confusion in the groups. As I extract each fired shell I inspect the case head for any visible signs of pressure, such as primer flattening and ejector marks. I use a micrometer to measure the head diameter in several spots (cases are not uniformly circular, so take three readings and average them). Any expansion over 0.5-thousandths of an inch is an indicator of high pressure. Sticky, tight extraction from your rifle is the last sign of pressure and occurs after you'll have detected excessive pressures from head diameter measurements. This is true for any cartridge reloading but especially for magnum calibres.

The attached graphs of my load testing in the 257 Weatherby Magnum show how dangerous pressures can sometimes be encountered well within the recommended loading range listed in the guide. Every rifle and load combination is potentially unique. For the same rifle and projectile, the AR2217 loading escalated rapidly in pressure whereas the

With the same projectile and rifle there were no signs of pressure in the loadings of AR2213SC, right up to the maximum.



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AR2213SC loading was fine right up to the maximum recommended charge.

If there are no signs of excessive pressure I eventually test loads right up to the maximum, but reloaders should never exceed the maximum listed loadings even if you feel there are no signs of excessive pressure in your loads to that point.

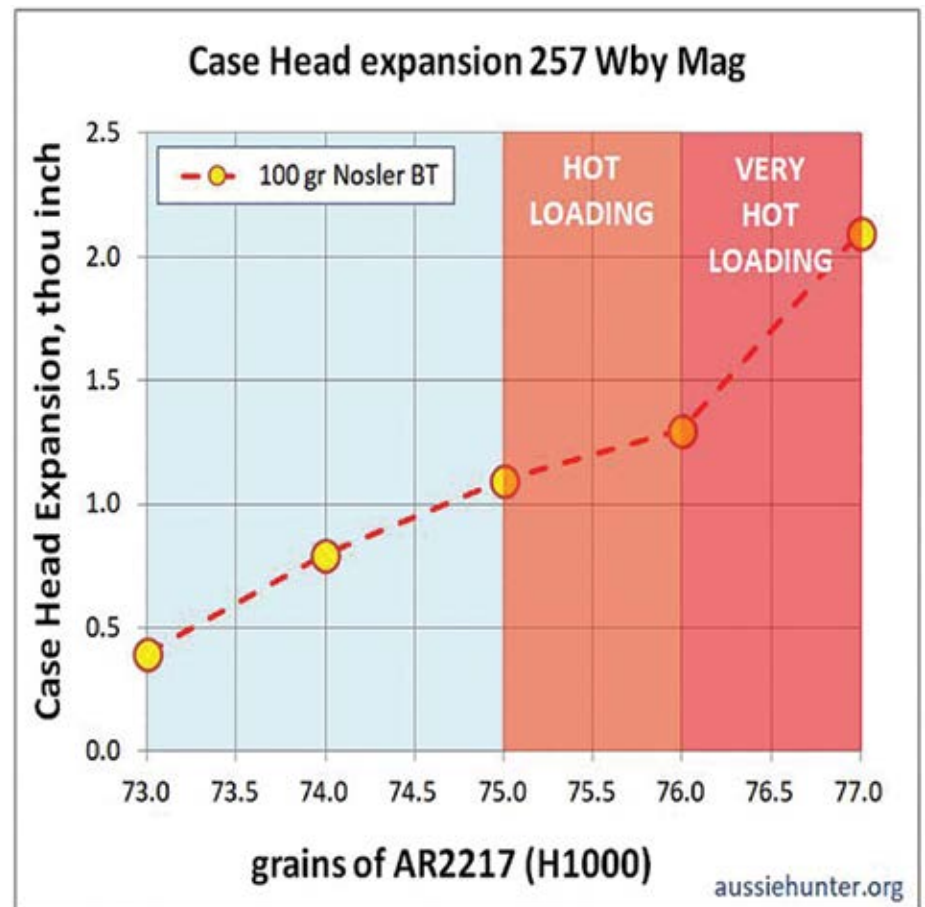
With measurements of each three-shot group I like to plot the data to give a better feel for the accuracy variation with propellant load. In this example, loading 55gr Polymer Tips in the 223 Rem the rifle clearly preferred the lower powder charge. Each load and rifle combination is different and that's why it's important to methodically test each one.

Step four: Finding optimum seating depth

Holding the propellant charge constant at the optimum level (25.5gr AR2208 in this case), load another batch of three-shot lots. Starting at your maximum cartridge length, each successive lot should have the projectile seated 20- or 30-thousandths of an inch deeper in the case. Conventional wisdom mostly dictated best accuracy is achieved when the projectile is seated somewhere in the range of 20- to 50-thousandths of an inch short of the rifling. In my experience that's not a strict rule as I've had many rifles shoot tight groups only when the projectile was seated 150-thou, or more, short of the lands.

Step five: Finalise sighting for hunting

With your optimum handload determined you're ready to go hunting. Sight your



rifle so the trajectory peaks no more than 50mm above your line of sight. For most game animals, in field conditions, that means you can fire without having to worry about allowing for any sighting variations. In just about all calibres and rifles with normal telescopic sight mounting,

Measuring case head expansion alerted Don to dangerous pressures well within the listed loading data for AR2217.

that means your group at the 100-yard range should be centred about 45mm (1.77") above your point of aim. ●

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A true Aussie champion

The Ballantine Ammunition Company

Lionel Swift



The Ballantine factory and shot tower.

It's a rare pleasure these days to find a fully Australian manufacturer with 30-plus years history. Ballantine Ammunition is one and this article will cover points of interest to shooters and hunters, including some history of the company and its predecessors. I'll also look at the manufacture of 12-gauge ammunition, high quality lead shot in general and Ballantine lead shot in particular.

In the beginning

Mark Ballantine was an electrical engineer with Siemens in Australia, later becoming Australian Trade Commissioner to Sweden, who combined his love of shooting with his engineering skills at Eley Ammunition in Deer Park, Victoria, then a division of ICI. Soon, ICI split their ammunition and chemical divisions - ICI continuing to make commercial explosives - and formed an IMI division to continue ammunition manufacturing under the Eley 'Ammunition' title.

Subsequently the IMI division was split again and Eley Ammunition manufacturing

discontinued, the machinery and equipment used to make rifle and shotgun ammunition sold off. The .22 ammunition equipment went to the Philippines, the 12g wad manufacturing presses to another Victorian firm and the 12g cartridge-filling machines to a New Zealand company.

Mark bought the lead shot and clay target manufacturing section and obtained three Vacini cartridge-loading machines from Italy. He then leased an area from IMI in Deer Park producing 12-gauge ammunition and targets, first under the previous Eley brand before choosing Champion as a brand name famously used ever since. After IMI required the use of that space he moved the entire plant to an industrial property he owned in Laverton North.

This monumental task took a year principally due to the shot tower and 4.5 tonne capacity lift along with the grading tables and rumbling machines, also weighty steel structures.

One of the main men producing lead shot for Eley Ammunition was John Sawczak,

a tool maker trained at Nettlefold manufacturing in Sunshine. He became head of the lead and shot plant and clay target production at Eley and continued this role with Ballantine, assisting with the move to Laverton, and today is production and factory manager.

Mark's son Tim, like his father, was a keen clay target shooter and came to work at the plant eventually becoming CEO after his father's death. Tim became a highly successful trap shooter in both DTL and Trench and was an Australian team member in the latter.

Manufacturing process

High quality shot is the basis of good ammunition and good shot requires very pure lead which Ballantine buys in ingots (97+ pure) with 14 per cent antimony incorporated, the antimony content reduced to the required 6 per cent during melting.

The harder shot reduced 'flyers' to the extent that patterns at 45m changed from 80 per cent of shot in a 1m circle to almost

100 per cent. The harder shot suffering less distortion through the barrel is perhaps the most important factor affecting quality of shot patterns.

Ballantine shot is polished in graphite then checked for being perfectly spherical and precisely graded before being loaded into cartridges, the quality acknowledged by both home reloaders and large ammunition companies. Winchester Australia initially made their own shot using a tower-less process known as the 'short drop' system involving only a 30mm drop into hot water (hence no chilling). After a few years they bought all shot from Ballantine, acknowledging the quality of the product and eliminating one of their own manufacturing procedures.

The tower is the most important part of

shot manufacturing and several attempts have been made to short circuit the process but none have produced the consistent quality of a 55m drop. The larger the shot size the higher the drop required and BB is the largest shot which can be drop formed from any height. The most common shot size (7.5) would require only half this height but when committed to all sizes from BB to 10, all shot is dropped from the top.

There are only three of these historic towers still standing in Australia, one incorporated inside the modern Melbourne Central complex in Latrobe St as a heritage curio, another in Clifton Hill near the entrance to the Eastern freeway and the third on the outskirts of Hobart, a popular tourist attraction with museum visitors.

The Ballantine tower (ex-ICI and IMI) is of bolted steel girder construction which enabled it to be dismantled, transported and reassembled - but not without incredible difficulty. The thousands of original steel bolts were not galvanised or plated so had rusted in place and had to be cut through individually. With a high capacity lift and heavy melting pots at the top of the tower, along with heavy steel frame components, the tower was by far the most demanding part of the move.

Shot production

There are six steps in the sequence of quality shot production. 1: Lead ingots are lifted to the melting pots at the top of the tower. 2: Shot is melted in a four-tonne pot and a continuous run may be up to 15 tonnes. 3: Molten lead is fed through a graded sieve (with holes smaller than the required shot size) and dropped through



The historic brick construction tower at Clifton Hill.

a 55m pipe to avoid wind distortion into a water tank at ground level (hence the term 'chilled' shot). Each precision hole in the sieves must be hand cleaned with a tiny drill, under a magnifying glass, after each pour.

4: Shot is collected from the water tank and dried in a heated air stream. 5: It's then tumbled in graphite for polishing before being lifted to a mezzanine floor and fed down a series of sloping glass tables, each separated by an air gap over which non-spherical shot will not 'jump'. Rejected shot is collected as scrap and remelted with a future batch. 6: The shot is fed through perforated rumbling bins for grading, as although it has been proved spherical the size of each pellet may not be precise. The



The Tasmanian shot tower.

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A true Aussie champion

small percentage of reject shot at this point is also collected for re-melting. The shiny, perfectly spherical polished shot is then stored in bins ready for the hoppers above the cartridge-loading machines.

Lead wire manufacture

Larger shot than BB, such as AAA and SG, cannot be drop-formed but requires swaging or moulding using a lead wire swaged to appropriate diameter (for AAA shot the wire diameter is 5.6mm but several diameters are produced). The final stage is automatically pushing the lead pellet from the remaining strip after stamping.

Because of the purity of lead and consistency of manufacture several customers



John Sawczak at output of the cartridge loading machine.



Six-stage glass plate spherical checking system.

buy various diameters of the lead wire. One interesting customer is Woodleigh Bullets, a small but world-renowned Australian firm owned by Geoff McDonald, based near the Murray River and whose customers include several large US and some African companies. The Ballantine lead wire is chopped and swaged as a slug to fill their projectile jackets.

Powder

From the outset Ballantine has used Vectan, a French powder highly regarded worldwide, three different Vectan powder specifications used for various weights of

shot and velocity. A graphic indication of the powder quality is there's almost no residue left in the barrel after firing several rounds of Champion ammunition.

Cases and primers

Pre-primed Fiocchi cases have been used for many decades although currently Nobel Sports cases are used. All are parallel striated tubes with brass coated steel bases, changing from 8 point to 6 point crimping some years ago.

Cartridge production

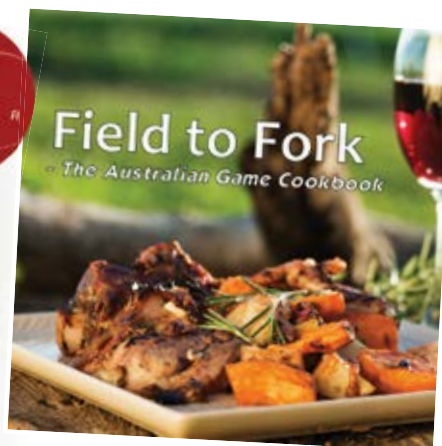
There are three Italian Vacini brand

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machines operating in three safety bays, each adjustable to load-specific shot and powder weights. The following sequence describes the machine's four operations in line form - the primed case is dropped into the first stage; powder is pneumatically charged into the case and the air used is previously dried by refrigeration; the appropriate sized wad is placed in the cartridge and the shot charge dropped; the filled case is crimped in the familiar star pattern and the edge rolled.

Load choices

Of interest is that shot charges larger than 36 grams must be dropped in two stages. The additional components for this are to hand but not used in the current line of Champion cartridges. The three Vacini loading machines often operate simultaneously, each producing a finished cartridge every second, and have done so since their installation more than 30 years ago, a tribute to their design, manufacture and maintenance.



Factory manager John Sawczak with sizing sieve at top of tower.



Champion cartridge showing perfect crimp and roll-over.

Most popular loads

The velocity offered in 12-gauge shotshells worldwide has increased over the years, typically from 1000 to 1100fps in the 1950s to 1300fps or more today. But Ballantine have noticed a slowing of this trend and the largest demand currently is for their 'low recoil' round, a very popular and effective target load of 1325fps at muzzle (1250fps at 1m). Cartridge shot weights range is 21, 24, 28, 32 and 36 grams.

Like the low recoil round, the 21-gram load is becoming very popular with juniors and target shooters in general, when they

realise pattern is more important than weight. It's also one of the quietest shotgun loads available. Note that most reputable manufacturers rate their velocities at 1m from the muzzle which can cause problems with comparisons.

Components

For decades Ballantine has supplied components including powder, shot, wads and percussion caps to reloading enthusiasts through Australian gunshops and the demand continues to this day. ●

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Aussie medal-fest at Benchrest Worlds

Alberta in Canada was the setting for this year's Benchrest World Championships, with three Australian teams competing against representatives from 16 countries who shot two events for both light and heavy varmint class rifles, the event most notable for the fact that all 12 Aussies were among the medals.

The Rosebud Range is set in forest country about 50km from Calgary and upon arrival competitors were given a lecture on bear safety by a Forest Ranger. Practice day made it clear teamwork would be vital to master tricky conditions and the Aussies spent the day figuring out what approach would prove best for success.

In the 100yd Light Rifle event numerous tight groups were the order of the day, the best of them a magnificent .059 by Frenchman Carlos Pacheco for a new world record. Aggregate victory went to Jeff Graves of the US, best of the Aussies being Brendan Atkinson (7th) and Milan Morrell (9th). In the team event the Australia A line-up of Atkinson, Ean Parsons, Steve Sori and Darren Parsons finished second.

The following day brought the 100yd

Heavy Rifle class where again small groups came thick and fast, the standout a tidy .113 by Pascal Fishbach of France. Yardage was won by Finland's Jari Laulumaa and some superb shooting by the Australia B team saw them take the yardage gold medal. Five Aussies in the top 20 were led by Will Greer (7th) and Dave McKillop (8th).

The next two days were contested at the longer yardage range and in deteriorating weather, Jack Neary of the US setting a new world record in Light Rifle with an impressive .110 but even that was topped by his countryman Joel Nader who shot a staggering .1325 aggregate, another world best figure which had onlookers in disbelief. Australia A just missed out on the medals in fourth.

The Heavy Rifle class was played out in very testing conditions but the Australia C quartet pulled out all the stops to take gold, Bill Jupp and Bob Bissett placing second and third respectively, ably backed by Keith Sewell (9th) and Gavin Marshall (11th). Australia A and B finished third and seventh respectively, the individual title going to Bob Scarborough Jr (US).

In the grand aggregates for Light Rifle



Silver and gold: Bill Jupp took second in the Heavy Rifle event and led Australia C to the gold medal.

the Australia A team finished third, B seventh and C 13th while in the Heavy Rifle class Australia C took second, A fourth and B sixth. In the all-important 2-Gun team event Australia A finished third, B fifth and C eighth, all in all an excellent outcome for the talented Aussie squad. ●



Winning line-up: Every member of the Australian team was among the medals.

Golden Boots walks tall in national championships



Competitors at the SSAA Field Rifle and Scoped 3-Positional National Championships.

The SSAA Field Rifle and Scoped 3-Positional National Championships were hosted this year by the Southern Districts Rifle Club of WA, the championships comprising seven events across five action-packed days.

First up was the NRA Smallbore 3x40 match, Matthew Boots taking gold on 1176.61 ahead of Jenni Ingram and Matt Rogaloff with 1120.30 and 1117.26 respectively. The wind picked up for the Scoped Precision 10m event, Rogaloff taking the honours this time with a score of 387.12 followed by Luis Henriques and Adrian Williams on 375.078 and 373.09.

Day two kicked off with the Field Rifle Centrefire match featuring 36 competitors. Boots started literally with a bang, shooting a rapid score of 100.01 and went on to win the event with a 388.03 total, young Cody Joyner also impressing with a 337.01 total. Wind again played a part in

the afternoon's Scoped 3-P Air Rifle match which proved a tight affair, gold going to Ingram on 581.20 just ahead of Rogaloff with 577.10 which, combined with his previous day's score, was good enough for the overall Scoped Air Rifle 2-Gun title.

The Air Rifle team title went to the Queensland quartet of Rogaloff, Ingram, James Perry and Alex Brace with a combined score of 2273.55 with hosts WA filling the runners-up spot on 2089.39.

A total of 49 shooters contested the Rimfire 3-Positional match on day three, Boots taking top honours with a 579.08 aggregate then announcing at the subsequent delegates meeting he was stepping down after a stellar stint as National Discipline Chairman, Matt Rogaloff nominated to replace him.

Boots maintained his momentum in the Field Rifle Rimfire match on day four, producing another gold medal performance on 391.08 ahead of a tight battle for silver

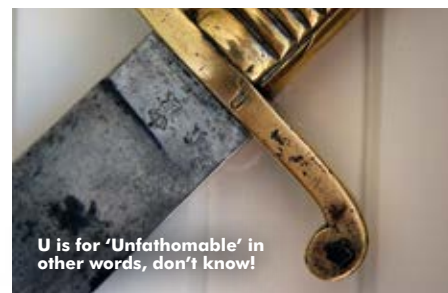
which saw Vaselko Talajic shoot 383.10 to pip David Malcman on 381.04. Talajic notably shot most X rings from a field of 63. The Field Rifle 2-Gun again saw Boots victorious on 779.11 ahead of Malcman (765.10) and Talajic (762.14).

Underlining his dominance yet again, Boots won the 3-Positional Centrefire event on day five with a 582.12 score, well clear of silver medallist Malcman on 557.02 and Dean Collins (544.02). Joyner was best placed junior on 428.01 which, combined with the 3-Positional Rimfire performance, was good enough for the Junior 3-P 2-Gun title.

The Open 3-Positional 2-Gun award went to Boots with a 1161.20 aggregate ahead of Malcman and Collins on 1129.15 and 1084.07 respectively. Boots also collected the overall 4-Gun title with a 1940.31 total, silver and bronze going to Malcman and Talajic on 1894 and 1844.24. ●

Long way round for the Saxony sword

Mark van den Boogaart



The trouble with collecting antique arms is that of all the things you might find marked on a gun, sword or anything else, what you won't find is: My name's Dave, I live in (location), I made this sword on (date), because (reason). Now that doesn't mean there's never any information, for instance the British liked to mark up their guns, kept very good records and spoke and wrote in English. The French on the other hand generally made arms that look, well, French. And if you really know your stuff, the history of Japanese arms is clearly recognisable.

Then there were the Prussians, friend of the novice antique arms collector. The Prussians liked the idea of a stock-take, they liked to track their equipment and know who had what. Furthermore, they liked stamping their gear with big hammers so the history of Prussian equipment is usually right in front of you.

It's for this reason I like collecting Prussian swords, a case in point being a recently-purchased short sword. The short sword in question is more properly known as a Sachsen Infanterie Faschinenmesser or Saxony Infantry Fascine knife, designated an M1845 it was very similar in design to the M1841 Prussian Infantry Sidearm. A fascine? It was a bundle of sticks bound together and

stacked one on top of the other to protect infantry and artillery from indirect fire. So a Faschinenmesser or Fascine knife is a machete-like tool used to hack, cut and trim the sticks used in making the fascine.

But you said you like Prussian, not Saxony swords? Well, it's both. As history would have it, in the mid-1860s the Kingdom of Saxony sided with the Austrian Empire during the Austro-Prussian War. The outcome of this fraternal war between the various German states was ultimately Prussian victory and the incorporation of defeated armies into the Grand Prussian Army. Interestingly, this incorporation of armies also included their arms.

Looking at my M1845 it was obviously designed for a foot soldier and is in no way decorative or ornate, while the materials used in its build were simple, robust and very effective. The leather scabbard is in excellent condition for something possibly 170 years old and while superficially damaged, shows no sign of significant deterioration or shrinkage. After a very light clean it does show signs of over-zealous cleaning by previous owners, but for a 19th century soldier's sword it's in a highly collectable condition.

Among its many markings it carries the Royal cypher and Royal crowns of King John of Saxony (1854-1873) so that's the Saxony part. The Royal cypher also gives us a possible build date post-1854 and as to its manufacture, the blade is stamped with the knight's helm of W.R. Kirschbaum & Co of Solingen, Germany.

But it also carries numerous Prussian Army regimental markings. There are actually two separate regimental markings on the cross-guard including 107.R.E.1.211, which has been erased with a single strike through, the other being 134.R.H.398. Finally, the brass fitting

on the leather scabbard shows another regimental marking of 103.R.12.139 which probably means somewhere in its history the original scabbard was replaced.

In considering all this information, research indicates the R implied reserve. Not to be confused with reinforcements, reserves were support troops, often provisional forces brought together to 'fill out' the numbers of more formal regiments. With that in mind, I believe R.E. equates to Reserve Ersatz or Reserve Replacements and R.H. for Reserve Haubitze or Reserve Howitzer. In researching the numbers, the 103rd, 107th and 134th were all Royal Saxon Regiments within the Grand Prussian Army, the 103rd being first raised in 1709 in Bautzen (Saxony), the 107th in Leipzig (Saxony) in 1708 and the 134th in Plauen (Saxony) in 1881.

It also carries a clear U on the blade, scabbard, cross-guard and handle and I reckon it stands for Unfathomable - that is, I've no idea what the U means. Finally there's a crown mark on the brass scabbard fitting and while I can't make it out, it does appear different to the other Royal Cypher and Crown stamps, so the scabbard may be older than the sword.

So in summary it's an infantryman's side-arm. Designed for pioneering more than fighting it formed part of a soldier's kit and no doubt was used for other tasks like cutting firewood, building a shelter and maybe chopping the heads off chickens.

It was made sometime after 1854 and was the property of two armies and possibly a number of soldiers. It was in service until at least 1881 and considering its age, it's probable service and the fact it somehow made its way from Solingen, Germany to Saxony to Brisbane, Australia, it's holding its age very well and makes for a fine, collectable sword. ●



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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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Gun & Knife Show List

2019

October 7		NSW South Coast Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
October 19-20	Melbourne Showgrounds	SSAA Shot Expo	ssaashotexpo.org.au
October 19-20	Belmont Shooting Complex, Belmont	Brisbane Show of modern, sporting, military guns, militaria, edged weapons, collectables	Paul Brush 0412 562 252
October 26	Illawarra Sports Stadium, Berkeley	Illawarra Outdoor & Adventure Expo	Chris Sainsbury 0448 120 932 or ssaexpo@gmail.com
November 3-4		Adelaide Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com
November 9-10	Penrith Panthers Pavilion, Penrith	Sydney Antique & Modern Arms Expo	Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018 or events@razorbackguns.com
December 2		Canberra Knife Show	Gillian Wilson qmacinc@gmail.com

2020

Feb 29-March 1	Eastbank Centre, Welford St, Shepparton	200 tables antique & modern firearms, militaria and collectables Expo	Ricky Seiter 0400 567 353
May 23-24	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 12-13	Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Rd, Toowoomba	350+ tables firearms, ammo, militaria & collectibles	Dan Watson 0407 643 776
September 12-13	Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Cannington	WA Arms & Armour Annual Militaria Fair	Geoff Smith 0419 955 284

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



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

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

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☐ \$236
☐ \$57

Overseas Available to members living overseas.

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



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

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

- ☐ TARGET SHOOTING (longarms only)
- ☐ HUNTING (club membership)
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Ash Hutchins

Communications Officer Sam Talbot

Can target shooting lead to better school grades? Well that has certainly proved to be the case for young shooter Ash Hutchins. “If I make good grades or win medals, dad usually rewards me with better gear so studying and shooting are pretty much all I do at the moment,” said Ash, who has more than taken advantage of the system put in place by her dad Rob.

Almost as soon as she turned 12, Ash was at the range with Rob who got her started on Field Pistol but, according to dad, she quickly tired of it and moved on to the Practical Shooting discipline which better suited her speed and tenacity. “In one month of shooting she had already passed my scores,” said Rob.

Ash didn’t stop there though and it wasn’t long before she was taking on the best from around Australia and filling a cabinet with trophies and medallions. “My first event was the SSAA WA Practical Shooting Championships last year at West Coast Pistol & Revolver Club and I was so nervous,” she said. “That’s where I first met Ron Bryant (SSAA WA State President) who was our range officer. John Goebels of Demon Projectiles was also there and was impressed enough by my shooting to offer me a sponsorship deal.”

The sponsorship involves Ash wearing a

Demon Projectiles shirt in return for having all her projectiles paid for, an arrangement both she and dad describe as a big win. With her rapid improvement in the sport though, Ash has required a lot of upgrades to equipment and is already outperforming her current holster and in the market for a new one. “She’s good enough that she needs the proper stuff so that’s what we’re going to get her,” said Rob.

When asked what she likes about her chosen sport, Ash explained shooting is special and not like other sports or pastimes. “When I was 12 the netball season ended with my team winning the U-12 grand final and with no more netball I was bored, so I started going to the range with dad while he practised. Ever since then it seems it has all been about shooting, from matches to cleaning, reloading, dry fire practice and draw practice - I’m certainly not bored any more.”

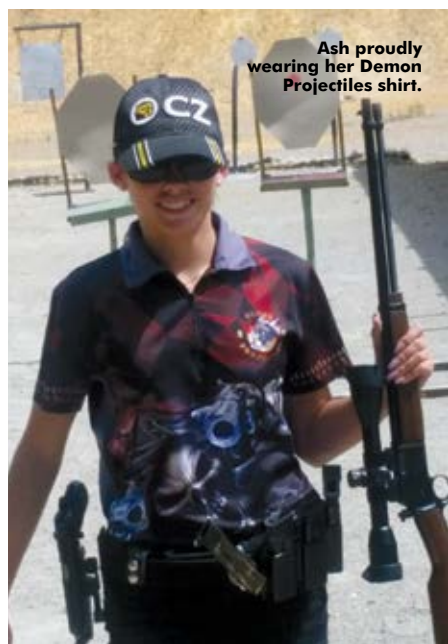
And as proof there are many lines of work which involve firearms, Ash says she’s eventually looking at a career with the police, defence force or even high-end security. We wish her all the best with her shooting, whether that be at her local Jarrahdale club or in national competition and with the right equipment and support from Rob we’re confident she’ll go a long way in the sport. ●



Ash and her beloved cat Monty.



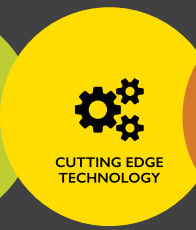
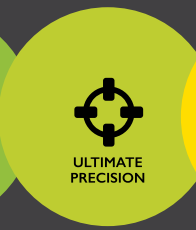
Ash’s talent belies the fact she has only been shooting for two years.



Ash proudly wearing her Demon Projectiles shirt.



Some of her silverware - 2018 was a good year.



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National

Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships

February 1-November 30, 2019
Program: February 1-May 31: Special Snap. June 1-August 31: Group Three. September 1-November 30: Stopping Double Rifle. Rules: Championships shot as per current National Big Game Rifle rule book. Scoresheets showing competitor's name, club, rifle, scope power and result of each shot to be sent to Graeme Wright, PO Box 5085, Kenmore East, Qld 4069. Awards to 3rd place and juniors. Entries in junior class to include date of birth. Contact: Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

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

SSAA National Muzzleloading Postal Shoot

August 1-December 4, 2019
Various locations
Program: See website for event details. Contact 27honey suckle@msn.com.au

National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships

October 4-7, 2019
SSAA Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW
Program: Friday, October 4: 8am Light Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Saturday, 8am: Heavy Rimfire 50m and 100yds. Sunday/Monday: 8am IRB 50m. Nominations: \$50 a day, juniors half price (pre-registration required by September 25). Rules: SSAA rule book No.9 and IRB rule book. Prizes: National medals as per rule books. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, barbecue. Camping on range (advise beforehand). Free breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee. Dinner for small fee. Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billingham 0418 478 160.

SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette National Championships

October 4-9, 2019
Madden Range, Mt Petrie Rd,

Belmont, Qld
Program: Please see website for full event details. Contact: SSAA Brisbane 07 3395 0911 or Tim Barry 0419 405 696.

SSAA Lever Action National Championships

October 5-7, 2019
SSAA Blue Hills, Copping, Tasmania
Program: Saturday, October 5 practice, Sunday rimfire, Monday centrefire. Classic Teams event will follow Classic Calibre shoot. Nominations: \$35 per event, \$95 all three, juniors half price. Please enter early and bring grading cards, SSAA membership card and firearms licence. Rules: Current Lever Action rule book. Facilities: Food and drinks on competition days, range facilities limited (no showers), accommodation at several nearby towns. Contact: secretary@ssaat.as.com.au or leveraction@ssaa.org.au

SSAA Long Range Precision National Championships

October 12-13, 2019
Port Lincoln Rifle Club, SA
Program: Saturday 500yd and 600yd, Sunday 800yd and 900yd. Nominations: One day \$40, both days \$70 (limited targets available). Rules: Saturday Long Range Precision official rules 2015 No.1; Sunday proposed modified rules. Prizes: National medals and prize table. Facilities: On-site camping (no power), food and drink to buy. Contact: Trenton_Hardie@bigpond.com

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

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

New South Wales

SSAA NSW Big Game Rifle State Championships

October 5-6, 2019
Rankins Springs Complex, Rankins Springs, NSW
Program: Please refer to website for full event details. Contact: 0409 831 258.

NSW Benchrest State Championships

October 24-27, 2019

SSAA Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, NSW
Program: Wednesday, October 23: Practice; Thursday: Unlimited; Friday: 100yds and 200yds Sporter; Saturday: 100yds and 200yds Light Benchrest; Sunday: 100yds and 200yds Heavy Benchrest. Nominations: \$50 per class, juniors half-price. Rules: As per SSAA rule book. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers and barbecue. Camping on range (please advise beforehand). Catered breakfast (6am), lunch, tea and coffee included in entry fee. Contact: David Billingham 0418 478 160 or Ray Munro 0408 649 126.

SSAA NSW Newcastle 50th Anniversary Benchrest Score Shoot

December 7-8, 2019
SSAA Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW
Program: Friday, December 6: Centrefire practice 8am-noon, Rimfire practice noon-close. Saturday: Benchrest Score Heavy Centrefire. Sunday: Benchrest Score Heavy Rimfire. Dinner Friday for small fee, Saturday barbecue \$15 children half-price. Nominations: \$50 a day. Rules: SSAA rule book. Prizes: As per rule book. Facilities: Clubhouse, toilets, showers, camping on range (please advise beforehand). Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or David Billingham 0418 478 160.

Queensland

SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4

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

Police Service Match - Law Enforcement Activities

October 5-6, 2019
QPPC Range, Old Cleveland Rd, Belmont, Qld
Program: This is an individual event, no teams. Shooters may choose revolver or self-loading in one of

the NRA PPC divisions of Open, Distinguished or Duty. Shooters are not compelled to compete against a higher level of equipment. Nominations: Belmont site user levy applies, nomination fee \$5. Rules: SSAA Standard Rules, SSAA LEAD Police Service Match Rules. Facilities: QPPC has basic facilities, others at QRA compound. QRA accepts bookings for motel or barrack-style accommodation, several accommodation options nearby. Contact: Bob Pierce 0427 172 277. See website for full details.

Qld Muzzleloading State Championships

October 12-13, 2019
SSAA Mackay branch
Program: Friday, October 11: Practice. Saturday and Sunday: Competition. Rules: National rule book No.8. Nominations: \$5 per event, \$10 shotgun to maximum \$80. Facilities: Camping at range, showers, toilets, power, canteen, coffee and drinks available. Contact: Ben Bruggeman 0455 853 533 ben458bgrmackay@yahoo.com or Des Prowse 0427 204 906 prowsedj@bigpond.com. Full details on website.

Qld Big Game and Hunting Rifle State Championships

October 18-20, 2019
SSAA Bundaberg Rifle Range, 2993 Isis Highway via Bundaberg
Program: Friday, October 18: Practice. Saturday: African Plains, Classic Cartridge, Rook and Rabbit Rifle, Group 1 Nitro, Light Black Powder, Black Powder Express, Group 2 Nitro. Sunday: Special Snap, Stalker Double Rifle, Pot Rifle, Stopper Double Rifle, Bore Gun, Group 3 Nitro. Nominations: \$6 per event to maximum \$50, juniors half price (pay on the day). Rules: As per 2015 SSAA (Qld) Big Game and Hunting Rifle rules. Prizes: State medals 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Facilities: Camping at range, accommodation in Bundaberg or Childers. Contact: Barry Smith 0419 621 226 or Ted Rogers 5486 4135. Full details on website.

ACT

SSAA ACT Single Action State Championships

October 18-20, 2019
SSAA Majura Range, Hector McIntosh Grove, ACT
Program: Friday, October 18: Side Matches, Long Range Precision, Pistol Speed Events, Cowboy Clays. Saturday: Opening and Main Match. Sunday: Main Match and presentation. Nominations: \$85 for Main Match and one entry to all Side

Matches plus Saturday shindig. Rules: Current SSAA rule book and local range rules. Contact: majurarangers.matchdirector@gmail.com

SSAA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette ACT state championships

January 20, 2020
SSAA Majura, Hector McIntosh Grove, Majura, ACT
Program: January 20, 8.30am BPCR match; 2pm 40-shot BPCR match (see website for details).
Nominations: \$10 per event, juniors and pensioners half price.
Rules: When in the ACT carry your home state's firearms registration or shooter's licence. Facilities: Camping on range with water, power, showers, \$10 per person per night, juniors no charge. Fires allowed if no fire ban. Contact: Mark Lovell 0401 867 839 or email mnl1@live.com.au

SSAA ACT 40th anniversary Australia Day Benchrest competition

January 24-26, 2020
Jim McKinley Range, Majura, ACT
Program: Friday, January 24: Practice. Saturday: 9am Light Benchrest 100yds and 200yds. Sunday: 9am Heavy Benchrest 100yds and

200yds. Nominations: \$60 per class. Email nomination and contact details to sixppc@iinet.net.au. Bring current shooter's licence and SSAA membership card. Numbers limited so apply early. Rules: SSAA Benchrest rule book. Facilities: Canteen, utility service fee of \$10 per day per person. Contact: Alex Chryss at sixppc@iinet.net.au

Tasmania

SSAA/IHMSA Tasmania Big Bore Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships

November 16-17, 2019
Oakdale Pistol Range, Flagstaff Gully Rd, Clarence, Tas
Program: Gun checks 9am daily, match starts 10am. Entries must be received by November 4, 2019. Contact Cody Abel codyabel@spin.net.au. See website for full details.

SSAA Tas Rimfire Field Rifle and 3-Positional State Championships

November 23, 2019
T03 Glenorchy, Tolosa St, Glenorchy, Tas 7010
Program: 9am practice/weigh-in, 10am start Field Rifle. 3-P starts 45mins after conclusion of Field

Rifle. Nominations: Adults \$15 per event or \$25 for both, juniors \$7 or \$12 for both. Current SSAA membership/grading cards must be shown. Rules: Current SSAA rule book. Prizes: State medals for all grades incl. juniors; 1st, 2nd, 3rd for 2-Gun. Contact: Tom Banks 0403 127 732.

SSAA Tas Centrefire Field Rifle and 3-Positional State Championships

November 24, 2019
T13 Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas
Program: 9am practice/weigh-in. 10am start Field Rifle. 3-P starts 45mins after conclusion of Field Rifle. Nominations: Adults \$15 per event or \$25 for both, juniors \$7 or \$12 for both. Current SSAA membership/grading cards must be shown. Rules: As per current SSAA rule book. Prizes: State medals for all grades incl. juniors; 1st, 2nd, 3rd for 2-Gun. Contact: Shane Bowden 0400 158 659.

Victoria

SSAA Vic Single Action State Championships

November 1-3, 2019
Eagle Park Range, Little River, Vic
Program: Friday, Nov 1: Long Range

Rifle, side events, warm-up stages, derringer match. Saturday: Opening and six main stages. Sunday: Six main stages, Top Gun shoot-off. Nominations: \$95 main match, shooting partner \$75, juniors \$35. Rules: Single Action Shooting Society and local range rules. Prizes: State medals and trophies. Facilities: Free camping, limited powered, toilets and showers. Contact: Tony Diablo diablo6@bigpond.com See website for full event details.

South Australia

SSAA SA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette State Championships

November 23-24, 2019
SSAA Monarto, SA
Program: Saturday 9am-noon practice, 12.30pm 40-shot iron sight match. Sunday 8.30-9.30am practice, 10am 40-shot scoped match. Nominations: \$20 per event, \$35 for both. Current RMS rule book applies. Prize draw on Saturday evening. Contact: Dave McCarthy 0414 880 333 or atm3855@yahoo.com.au

SSAA Official Calendar

NATIONAL

Feb 1-Nov 30, 2019 Big Game Rifle National Postal Championships
June 1-Nov 30, 2019 National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships
August 1-Dec 4, 2019 SSAA National Muzzleloading Postal Shoot
Sept 27-October 4, 2019 SSAA/IHMSA National Championships
October 4-7, 2019 National Benchrest Rimfire Group and IRB Championships
October 5-7, 2019 SSAA Lever Action National Championships
October 17-20, 2019 SSAA Combined Services National Championships

All clubs/branches
Various locations
Eagle Park, Vic
Newcastle Range, Seaham, NSW
SSAA Blue Hills, Copping, Tas
Micket Creek Shooting Complex, NT

Graeme Wright thepilotgw@hotmail.com
juniorsports@ssaa.org.au
27honeyuck@msn.com.au
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0429 335 389 or 0418 478 160
secretary@ssaatas.com.au
treasurerssaant@bigpond.com
or sean.glendenning@cdu.edu.au

STATE

August 1-Nov 30, 2019 SSAA Qld NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoot No.4
October 4-9, 2019 SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette National Championships
October 5-6, 2019 Police Service Match Qld State Championships
October 5-6, 2019 SSAA NSW Big Game Rifle state championships
October 12-13, 2019 Qld Muzzleloading State Championships
October 12-13, 2019 SSAA Long Range Precision National Championships
October 18-20, 2019 SSAA ACT Single Action State Championships
October 18-20, 2019 Qld Big Game and Hunting Rifle State Championships
October 19-20, 2019 SSAA NSW Muzzleloading Shotgun Cannon State Championships
October 24-27, 2019 NSW Benchrest State Championships
November 1-3, 2019 SSAA Vic Single Action State Championships
November 16-17, 2019 SSAA/IHMSA Tasmania Big Bore Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships
November 23, 2019 SSAA Tas Rimfire Field Rifle and 3-P State Championships
November 23-24, 2019 SSAA SA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette State Championships
November 24, 2019 SSAA Tas Centrefire Field Rifle and 3-P State Championships
December 7-8, 2019 SSAA NSW Newcastle 50th Anniversary Benchrest Score Shoot
January 20, 2020 SSAA Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette ACT State Championships
January 24-26, 2020 SSAA ACT 40th anniversary Australia Day Benchrest competition

Madden Range, Mt Petrie Rd, Belmont, Qld
QPPC Range, Belmont, Qld
Rankins Springs Complex, NSW
SSAA Mackay
Port Lincoln Rifle Club, SA
Majura Range, ACT
Bundaberg Rifle Range
SSAA Bathurst, NSW
SSAA Dairyville, Coffs Harbour
Eagle Park Range, Vic

Oakdale Pistol Range, Clarence, Tas
T03 Glenorchy, Tas
SSAA Monarto
T13 Blue Hills Range, Copping, Tas
Newcastle Range, East Seaham, NSW
SSAA Majura, ACT
Jim McKinley Range, Majura, ACT

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CLOTHING

SSAA Shotgun Vest

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

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

Comes in blue and green.



Green

SVG001 - Small
SVG002 - Medium
SVG003 - Large
SVG004 - XL
SVG005 - 2XL
SVG006 - 3XL

Blue

SVB001 - Small
SVB002 - Medium
SVB003 - Large
SVB004 - XL
SVB005 - 2XL
SVB006 - 3XL

\$74.95

SSAA beanies



Black
C0024

Navy
C0017



Pink
C0019

Black
C0021

\$14.95

SSAA Softshell Vest

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

CSV001 - small
CSV002 - medium
CSV003 - large
CSV004 - XL
CSV005 - 2XL
CSV006 - 3XL

\$64.95



Front

Back

SSAA men's t-shirt

Get noticed with the Gildan Soft-styled SSAA men's shirts and wear the SSAA logo with pride.

- Pre-shrunk jersey knit
- Seamless double-needled 1.9cm collar
- Taped neck and shoulders
- Rolled forward shoulders
- Double needle sleeve and bottom hems
- Quarter-turned to eliminate centre crease

MSN001 - small
MSN002 - medium
MSN003 - large
MSN004 - XL
MSN005 - 2XL
MSN006 - 3XL

[See complete
size details
online](#)

\$29.45



NEW

SSAA Ladies Polo

The SSAA Ladies' Polo has a feminine styled 'V' neck with contrasting piping panels. The easy care fabric is 160gm 100 per cent DriWear polyester with moisture removal and mini-waffle knit.

Purple/white

LP008 - Size 8
LP010 - Size 10
LP012 - Size 12
LP014 - Size 14
LP016 - Size 16
LP018 - Size 18
LP020 - Size 20
LP022 - Size 22
LP024 - Size 24
LP026 - Size 26

[See complete
size details
online](#)

\$42

Black/teal

LPB08 - Size 8
LPB10 - Size 10
LPB12 - Size 12
LPB14 - Size 14
LPB16 - Size 16
LPB18 - Size 18
LPB20 - Size 20
LPB22 - Size 22
LPB24 - Size 24
LPB26 - Size 26

CLOTHING

SSAA Buffwear



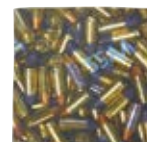
These SSAA Buffs offer a multitude of uses and can be worn to keep dust and dirt out of your face when riding the quad or as a basic headscarf.

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

\$17.95



CBW001
Iron Bark



CBW002
Bullet



CBW003
Coloured Leaf



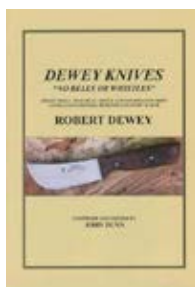
CBW004
Distressed Leaf



CBW005
Oz Flag

Student discount of \$20 on phone orders of this book only.

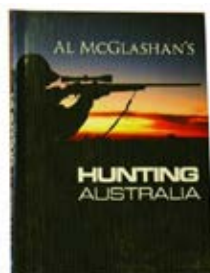
BOOKS



No Bells or Whistles

The story of Rob Dewey's journey as a knifemaker, giving an insight into his philosophy on knife-making and design and a wealth of technical detail about materials and construction.

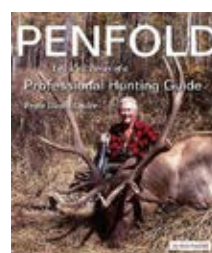
P0058
\$34.95



Hunting Australia

Al is one of Australia's favourite outdoors men. A must read for all hunters.

\$29.95 PHA28



Penfold: Life and Times of a Professional Hunting Guide From Down Under

P0050
\$99.95 See online for special offer for Hunter subscribers



This book contains the edited proceedings of papers presented at the Conservation Through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife conference in Brisbane in September 2016.

P0055
\$94.95

PATCHES AND PINS



Hat badge antique gold

Our SSAA hat badge is finished in fine antique gold (not real gold). Attach on your favourite hat or shirt.

A0068
\$12.95



Hat badge SSAA logo (brooch)

Traditional logo SSAA metal badge for you to proudly wear.
Measuring 22mm x 24mm

B0006
\$8.20

SSAA bullet-case pen

The SSAA bullet-case pen has been crafted from a part form bullet case. They take a standard pen refill and are comfortable to hold for smooth writing. The pen comes with black ink and is beautifully presented in a velvet pouch. It measures approximately 14 1/2cm long with a 13mm diameter.



A0020
\$35.95

SHOP NOW - IT'S EASY! Go to

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**or call 02 8805 3900
for phone orders**





onlineshop.ssaa.org.au

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Fill in the Mail Order below

KNIVES

SSAA Ka-Bar folder

The SSAA Ka-Bar folder comes beautifully presented in a box to make gift giving a pleasure.

Measurements

Blade length: 10cm

Blade width: 3.5cm (at its widest part)

Handle length: 12.5cm

Handle width: 3cm

Weight: 187grams

\$48.95 KBF001



Pocket-size knife sharpener

This carbide and ceramic hand-held knife sharpener features:

- Non-skid base for stable sharpening
- Crossed carbide blades providing quick edge setting
- Crossed ceramic rods providing a razor-sharp edge
- Pre-set sharpening angles providing guaranteed results

KNS001
\$14.95



CAMPING AND HUNTING

SSAA bush kettle

These custom-made bush kettles run on a few twigs and leaves and will boil water in less than 10 minutes. Simply get a handful of twigs/leaves and kindling then place under the kettle and light it - the clever design directs heat into the kettle to boil the water.

The kettle can be used with gas stoves and has a stainless construction.

\$84.95 3L Kettle BK003



SSAA outdoors bag - black



NEW

- * 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

\$74

OBB001

MAIL ORDER FORM

ALL ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE
WHILE STOCKS LAST

October 2019

SEND ORDER TO SSAA SHOP, PO BOX 282, PLUMPTON, NSW 2761 INQUIRIES 02 8805 3900

PRODUCT CODE	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	QTY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL

Please note: For knife purchases, Member No. needed for age verification, as purchaser must be over 18.

DELIVER TO

NAME

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STATE..... P/CODE.....

PHONE

EMAIL.....

MEMBER NUMBER.....

Please allow 14-21 days for delivery

ALL PRICES GST INCLUSIVE

Please find enclosed payment in the amount of \$.....

or charge my MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐

Card No.

Expiry date/..... Signature.....

DISCOUNT RATES AVAILABLE FOR SSAA CLUBS - CONTACT 02 8805 3900.

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

Members-only competitions

WIN

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

(Name of competition)

SSAA National

PO Box 2520

Unley SA 5061

Enter online at
ssaa.org.au/win

Black double rifle bag Valued at \$195

Kindly donated by Evolution Gear
evolutiongear.com.au



MOA or MIL Sight-in Targets

Valued at \$75.80

Kindly donated by Black Carbon
blackcarbon.com.au



Juniors

The Outdoor Connection Raptor Sling with Tikka logo

Valued at \$55

Kindly donated by Beretta Australia
berettaaustralia.com.au



Competition winners!

Australian Shooter August 2019

Nextorch - TA40 Hunting Set
Peter Woodley, NSW

MOA or MIL Sight-in Targets
Rene Ahnstrom, WA

**August Junior - 1 of 2
.22 ammo dispensers**
John Harley, NSW
Eliza Bliss, WA

August Best Shots Mug
Gilford McLaughlin, ACT

Hunter 69

SmartRest MaxBox II magnetic gun rest
Scott Edmonds, Qld

GlowShot steel heavy-duty target stand
Tony Ricketts, NSW

Tramontina 3-piece knife roll set
John Becker, Qld

Advertisers' index

5-Star Deer Guide.....	95
Australian Hunter.....	87
Beretta Australia.....	9,29,59,61
Bradford Exchange.....	41
Brisbane Gun Show.....	95
Claremont Firearms.....	95
Cleaver Firearms.....	18,19
CR Kennedy.....	13,67
DC Precision Developments.....	99
Eagleye Hunting Gear.....	20
Earmold Australia.....	54
EuroOptics.....	35
Field to Fork.....	90
Forbes Wholesale.....	64
Frontier Arms.....	55
Glenn Kable.....	95
Gold Coast Shooters Supplies.....	26
Great Australian Outdoors magazine.....	83
Grycol.....	39
Hermann's Sporting Guns.....	31
Horsley Park Gun Shop.....	69
Inland Hunting Properties.....	95
Jeff Pannan.....	95
Keen Hunter Pty Ltd.....	73
Knife Shop Australia.....	14
Lynx Optics.....	10
Magnum Sports.....	25,63,95
Night-Vision Australia.....	12
Nioa.....	5,27,47
Nyati.....	57
Outdoor Sporting Agencies.....	37
Polaris.....	21,80
Pro-Tactical.....	33
Qld Gun Exchange.....	43
Raytrade.....	IBC,23
Secure Your Gun, Secure Your Sport.....	74
Shooter available online.....	91
Spika.....	32,56
SSAA e-Newsletter.....	89
SSAA Farmer Assist.....	86
SSAA General Insurance.....	77
SSAA Gun Sales.....	96
SSAA Members Firearms Insurance.....	OBC
SSAA Membership Form.....	97
SSAA SHOT Expo.....	IFC,3
Swarovski.....	81
Thales.....	42
TSA Outdoors.....	15,65
Winchester Australia.....	11,45,71,82
Wolf-Eyes.....	8

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTER is published monthly and is printed by Blue Star Web, 81 Derby St, Silverwater, NSW 2128.

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Tales from a tree stand

We came off the mountain half an hour before dark and stopped for a breather under a tree stand that used to be one of my favourite places to sit and wait. Unused for years, it looked as old and decrepit as I sometimes feel, the major difference being I'm still occasionally useful whereas the stand no longer was.

The tree had been dead for years. A leafy branch that once supported and screened the stand was broken off short, the plywood seat and most of the floor had rotted and fallen away, the square tube steel frame now rusting in peace. It all looked rather sad despite the fact it brought back a swag of memories.

One afternoon not long after I hung the stand, a couple of small sambar stags popped out of the scrub and trotted down on to the flat to feed. It was going to be a cold night and they no doubt wanted to fill their bellies before the frost started to settle or the locally dominant stag arrived.

All was peaceful for 10 minutes or so until they fed too close to each other at which point the slightly larger stag shook his antlers at the other in what was clearly a 'mine are bigger than yours' moment. The second stag responded in kind and without any further preliminaries they began to fight, their antlers clattering and rattling as they huffed and puffed and pushed each other around, as most young males are prone to do from time to time.

Perhaps attracted by the noise, a third stag sporting his first set of spikes pranced out of the scrub with his tail in the air, seemingly excited about what was happening. I'm not sure if he wanted to get involved or



The old tree stand has seen better days but retains a stack of memories.

simply watch but either way, he got more than he'd bargained for.

Without breaking stride the combatants turned on him, prodding him with their antlers, knocking him over and rolling him along the ground. Squealing and protesting, the spiker regained his feet and raced for the bush. The combatant stags eyed each other off, backed away then went back to feeding, their differences apparently settled.

Another night a skinny sambar hind was feeding on some thistles below the mound of a wombat burrow when the 'bat emerged from underground. He clearly objected to the deer's presence and made his feelings known by initiating a number

of false charges. The hind ignored him. Not to be thwarted, the wombat trudged up the slope to higher ground. There he puffed himself up to half a size larger with raised hackles and charged down at the deer with an obviously higher level of conviction and momentum. The hind side-stepped him at the last moment and pranced away to quieter pastures, more in need of a feed than a fight. Seemingly satisfied with the outcome the wombat lowered his bristles, rolled his shoulders in what looked like a self-satisfied way and disappeared back down his burrow.

Though I never shot a deer from the stand, I was sitting in it the afternoon my best-ever sambar stag showed up. He was over a little spur and gone before I could lay a sight on him so I scrambled down and went after him as quickly as I could. He was feeding in the next gully over when I shot him from a rest against a tree. I heard the bullet connect, saw the deer stagger then right himself and race away.

Despite my best efforts I lost his marks in the dark. At daylight the next morning I followed them up, found the deer and put him out of his misery. My bullet had hit him too far back. These days he's a constant reminder that nobody gets it right every time, that the best bullets in the world can't work unless you place them properly and blaming your tools doesn't cut it when the fault is plainly yours.

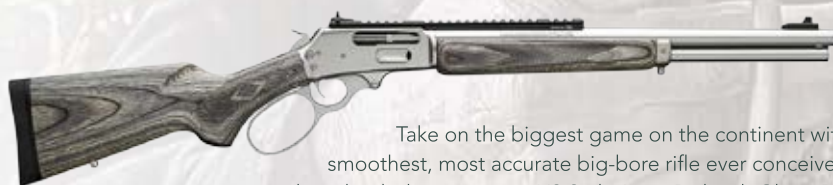
For old times' sake I photographed the remnant stand then shouldered my pack and rifle and headed for the hut. On a wintry mountain night you need more than memories to ward off the cold.





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AND HAS BEEN LEADING THE WAY EVER SINCE



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Take on the biggest game on the continent with six rounds of knockout power delivered by the strongest, smoothest, most accurate big-bore rifle ever conceived. Chambered in .45-70 Govt. this gun features a 6 shot full length tubular magazine, XS Sight LeverRail with Ghost Ring Sight, a quick pointing 18.5" barrel and Big Loop Lever.

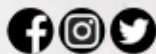
RRP \$2195



MODEL 1894SBL/CSBL

Fast handling meets magnum punch. Its stainless steel barrelled action with big loop lever cycles flawlessly and the XS Sight LeverRail with Ghost Ring Sight makes for easy handling in tight quarters, rapid target acquisition and durability in all weather. Available in both .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum.

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- Accidental loss and damage of the equipment (including whilst in use, excluding chipping and scratching of stock).
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- Flood
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