

Spotlight on binos: We road test a few of the latest offerings

**AUSTRALIAN**

August 2023  
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# Shooter

THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS



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down wily  
predators

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**NEXT ISSUE**

In November 2021, the Woodleigh Bullets company suffered a devastating blow when a fire destroyed their production facility in Victoria. Next month, Sam Garro charts the recovery and rebirth of an Aussie icon and what it took to put one of the country's premier ammunition manufacturers back on the map.

The new Howa Super Lite rifle really lives up to its name, tipping the scales at a fraction over 2kg, being based around a newly-designed reduced scale short action. We put the rifle to the test with reviewer Con Kapralos reporting: "This is a superb option for the stalking hunter looking for an affordable ultra-lightweight rifle."

The Springfield Armory XD-M Elite in 9mm Luger is a polymer-framed, striker-fired self-loading pistol which comes with three stainless steel double-stack magazines. The gun has been carefully and impressively designed both in terms of safety and functionality and, as reviewer Geoff Smith assessed, is: "Well balanced, looks attractive and points well."



Our August cover - see page 64



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## Australian landscape needs hunting now more than ever

**T**he role hunting plays in land and animal management has been a hot topic in news and current events around Australia in recent months as previously flooded land becomes flush with vegetation and firearms laws are rewritten.

Despite the clear connection between hunting and strategies to control pest animals and the cultural place hunting has in society, the validity of the concept is often questioned by our state's leaders.

SSAA National has recently extended its support to the Australian Bowhunters Association in its bid to protect the future of bowhunting in South Australia, as the SA Government considers banning recreational bowhunting.

The future of duck and quail hunting in SA and Victoria is also in question and SSAA National, SSAA South Australia and SSAA Victoria are actively advocating, making formal submissions and have been involved in deputations for several inquiries on the matter. Our hunters are skilled conservation volunteers who care for the environment and prioritise animal welfare by seeking ethical humane kills.

In the west there has been some debate around the need for hunters to help farmers and pastoralists control pest animal populations. But the discussion continues to return to the multiple conflicting demands on landowners and the valuable service hunters provide in helping with pest control responsibilities.

Farmers from Central West New South Wales to Queensland are reporting a surge in pig numbers, with crops being trampled

and livestock being eaten after years of heavier than average rainfall. Farmers using multiple control methods including baiting, trapping and aerial shooting are counting the costs of the damage and the resources needed to control the pigs.

Populations of deer in NSW and Victorian public lands are booming and wild deer are spreading to outer-urban areas and presenting a real management issue.

Hunting is just one tool in the toolbox landowners and state governments have available to manage pest animals and the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia and the 212,000-plus state and territory SSAA members are the perfect resource. The SSAA Farmer Assist program is a free service for landholders to connect with skilled volunteer hunters to outsource pest-control services. Our Conservation and Wildlife Management branch members use their shooting skills to assist in the conservation of native animals and the management or control of pest animals.

As members of your SSAA state or territory Association, consider sharing our message to assist with public perception in your wider networks, involving yourself in public consultations when relevant and volunteering your time with SSAA Farmer Assist or SSAA CWM programs. The actions of our skilled and responsible volunteer hunters speak volumes for the important role we play in conservation.

Visit [ssaa.org.au/hunting](http://ssaa.org.au/hunting) for more information.

# AUSTRALIAN Shooter

THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS

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## Marriage made in heaven

REGARDING THE TOP Shots query from Pete Morrison (*Shooter*, October 2022) about rings/mount for the Ruger Model 1, I have a 1985 Ruger Model 1 Sporter in 22-250 and have fitted a Conetrol base and rings, the base replacing the quarter piece on the standard rifle as pictured (not sure about the Varmint but assume likewise). This enables far better scope placement and I have a Bushnell Elite Tactical 6-24x50 with 30mm tubes mounted with no difficulty at all.

The rings are well known for their lateral adjustment and clean lines though perhaps a more important benefit is the effect the mount has on eliminating vertical 'stringing' of shots when fired in rapid succession, as on a rifle range. This has been seen as an inherent fault in an otherwise fantastic rifle and is the subject of many solutions, the stringing caused by differential heating of the barrel and quarter rib causing minute deformation but significant shot dispersion on a target.



The Conetrol mount attaches to one area of the barrel above the chamber as opposed to the Ruger quarter rib being attached both there and further forward and therein lies the problem. The Varmint model uses two separate mounting blocks but I don't know their effectiveness in this department. Few Model 1 owners could imagine putting 10 shots inside one MOA on a target at 400 yards with no sign of stringing, though I for one have enjoyed this experience and can't speak highly enough of the marriage between the Ruger Model 1 and Conetrol product.

**Kim Davis, WA**

## Thermal Blindness

I HAVE A problem using thermal scopes, etc. Looking through these devices is great. However, as soon as I put them down, I completely lose all central vision in my eye. This occurs no matter how short a period of viewing. At its worst, it can take between three and five minutes to recover before I get some semblance of vision back. I have only been able to find one blog about this, which suggested turning down both the brightness and contrast as much as possible and avoid Hot White and the Hot Black screens, and go for either a red screen or sepia, as the back

of the eye is less affected by these colour screens. I was wondering if either the experts of the magazine, its readers or the retailers of thermal gear have had a similar problem or, better still, can offer a solution? I would like to get another thermal scope but I am hoping to find a tangible fix before parting with my cash.

**Rob Dobie**

## Brass in pocket

OUR LITTLE RIMFIRE Benchrest club as part of a larger outfit has been going for some 20 years now and for most of that time we've swept up the brass, kept it, sieved it to remove the dirt, leaves etc using 'snake and mice' mesh and sold it to a scrap dealer for roughly \$2 a kilo.

With these returns we've funded fertilizer for the grass, operated blowfly traps (we're in a farm area), built rifle racks and bought empty chamber indicators and a BB bench (bags and bums) with a second under way. Throwing away your brass is throwing away cash.

PS: This year we intend to build up our brass dollars and make them a donation to Telethon.

**Alfie Frater, Albany WA**

## Insurance Q&A

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**Q** I'm setting up my own business which initially will be run from home until I establish myself. Will I need anything beyond the standard business insurance considerations?

**A** When you run a business from home there are additional risks which aren't necessarily automatically covered by your home and contents policy and a few things you have to consider, particularly if you're doing more than operating a home-based office.

You must disclose your intentions to your home and contents insurer as they may not

be willing to cover you while a business is being conducted from the home, and their cover may not be adequate to protect your business equipment and stock. As a business owner and operator, having personal injury insurance or income protection should also be considered. These can be tailored to your business needs and SSAA Insurance Brokers can help you understand the process and provide free quotes. For more information contact us on 1800 808 608 or visit [www.ssaaiib.com.au](http://www.ssaaiib.com.au)



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

## Feral pigs under the national spotlight

As SSAA's Wildlife Program's Manager, I recently presented at the National Feral Pig Conference in Cairns, which was the first gathering of its kind and included people from all over Australia and overseas. About 150 people attended in person and a further 50 watched live online.

We heard repeatedly that feral pigs were causing massive environmental and agricultural damage and that resources to prevent this were lacking. Some projects were running on a shoestring budget and others had a bucket of money tipped on them. One thing for certain is that feral pigs pose a wicked problem to the community and that all tools in the toolbox must be utilised to reduce their impacts.

I attended the conference with Damien Ferguson, from SSAA Queensland's Conservation and Wildlife Management (CWM) branch. We co-authored an abstract that was accepted and which I then subsequently presented at the meeting.

Our precis was titled *Community Involvement in pest control – an overview of accredited volunteer shooting programs*. The idea was to showcase our SSAA Conservation and Wildlife Management programs and SSAA Farmer Assist so we could promote their use for feral pig control.

Knowing the functional insides and outs of both programs, I relied on Damien to provide information on local Queensland projects that would fit in with the theme of the forum. CWM Queensland had been involved in a successful feral pig control project in a wetland complex that had been

monitored and surveyed prior to and after their control efforts. This enabled a population size to be determined and with that a target of how many feral pigs needed to be removed annually to ensure a 70 per cent knockdown to suppress population growth. This type of data was exactly what we needed to conduct this type of science-based conference.

The message we told was that community involvement is often essential to successful pest management. Landholders and other community groups are significant resources that many land managers should use to achieve their project goals. So, too, is the access to a wide variety of pest control tools to cater for different situations.

Volunteer hunting, culling or shooting is one such tool, whether by itself or in conjunction with other pest control methods. It can deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes through the removal of pest animals.

We outlined that the SSAA had a proud history of engaging volunteer shooters to use their unique skill sets to undertake pest control activities for both conservation and asset protection purposes.

We explained that our CWM Branch has been in operation since 1992 and that the efforts of CWM in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia became a cornerstone in the success of Operation Bounceback. This project led to the recovery of the yellow-footed rock-wallaby and more recently the reintroduction of the western quoll. In Queensland specifically, CWM commenced more than 20 years ago to help endangered



SSAA Wildlife Programs Manager  
Matthew Godson at the National Feral Pig Conference in Queensland.

species such as the bridled nail-tailed wallaby and the kroombit tinker frog.

We also discussed the more recent roll-out of the SSAA Farmer Assist program across the country, which has engaged even more volunteers to assist landholders with pest animal control for both asset protection and environmental reasons. We shared responses from our landholder survey, which indicated that members are attending to jobs quickly, following landholder instructions and most importantly the program is living up to the landholders' expectations.

Our presentation was well received and we hope that we have increased awareness of the positive activities that SSAA and our members can offer in the pest management space.

Send questions to:  
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## When doubling up is the only way to go

As hunters, fishers, hikers, mountain bike riders, birdwatchers or even back country skiers, we all want to enjoy the outdoors while carrying as little as possible on our person. But when deciding how much stuff we need there are some things you should take, other things you'd like to take and yet others which are simply too cumbersome and are inevitably left in the car.

That's why everything you take bush should have two or more uses and if it doesn't it's time to ask yourself whether, in your circumstances, you *really* need it. Is there a better alternative which, in addition to its primary purpose, promises one or more additional improvised uses? And is there a lighter or more robust version of the item you're reaching for?

The principle of 'dual purposing' doesn't just apply when setting off on foot as it's

also relevant when selecting general camp gear. Take the everyday axe for example where options include full and half-size versions, tomahawks and double-headed axes. And just as there are different sizes, there are also axes with additional tool edges like a claw or Pulaski axe (these come in different sizes too).

For my own part I prefer to carry a half-sized Nordic fire axe on the 4WD so I can chop wood, kindling and the like. And I can do lots more as it has a pick head on the opposite side of the axe blade I use to dig trenches around camp in hard ground when it rains cats and dogs. I also use it to manoeuvre things like levering tent pegs when they're stuck in the ground, moving the billy around the fire and lifting the lid off the camp oven.

When I was a 13-year-old I joined the Army Cadets and was packing for my first

ever bivouac when Dad gave me a goon bag from a wine cask. He told me to use it as a blow-up pillow and reminded me it could also serve as a water bladder in an emergency. While I've always tended to use my Army webbing as a pillow instead, the point he was making wasn't lost on me and I've carried a goon bag ever since.

Being small and light they take up hardly any room when deflated, so I keep one in the car and one in the daypack where they're part of my survival and first-aid kits. Available in five, four and two-litre capacities they can be used as a water bladder, a float for a yabbie trap or fishing line and even a cover for a chest wound. In an emergency situation they're also useful as a passive rescue beacon/signal because, being silver, they reflect the sun.

This means they can help attract aerial and ground-based search and rescue parties from a distance further away than the sound of any human yell will carry. Simply tie the bag to a tree out in the open where people can see it and if this isn't reason enough to carry a goon bag, remember what my dad said: They can be used as a pillow and when all else fails, every comfort is a win.

Whether you're a wine drinker or not, goon bags certainly come in handy. And it's this kind of thinking you should apply to everything you carry because if an item doesn't have more than one purpose, I'd suggest it's the wrong thing to be taking out bush.





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**Q** I recently I bought a secondhand Akkar Churchill Sporter shotgun and for some reason have developed a habit where I just can't pull the trigger when taking a shot. I shoot a bit of everything with this gun and really like it. I previously had a Miroku MK 70 and never had this happen so any advice is appreciated.

**Kevin Muscatt, Vic.**

**A** Without actually seeing you shoot the gun it's hard to be definitive in my answer but I'll try, making the assumption the shotgun is mechanically sound. I'll assume the trigger pull isn't ridiculously heavy and you can buy a cheap set of fish scales to check this for yourself. Typically the first barrel of an under-and-over shotgun will fire when 1.5-2kgs of weight is applied to the trigger. The second shot should be slightly heavier and if this measurement is fine then you may have a more sinister issue.

What you're describing is called a 'flinch' (in golf bad putters call it the 'yips'). I'm sure I've discussed the phenomenon in this forum several times during the past 20 years but it's worth revisiting. What causes a flinch to develop is still largely speculation, though I have found that fear of recoil and even fear of missing are the two most common causes.

Now here's the bad news. There's no definitive fix but there are some things to try. Firstly, make sure you're pulling the trigger with the correct part of your finger. It should be in the middle of the fleshy part of your finger's pad between the last joint and the end. By pulling the trigger here you need less movement to fire the gun than any other part of your finger. If you have an

adjustable trigger you'll probably have to move it further forward to help you pull the trigger in this manner.

If this doesn't cure the problem you can try adding a trigger 'shoe' over the top of the trigger as this will change how it feels on your finger and I've seen this work. Practicing 'dry firing' the gun at home will help with the aid of some snap caps and if these two things don't help, I suggest you really downgrade your ammunition velocity to see if recoil is the issue. Try something with a muzzle velocity up to 50m/second (150ft) slower and you may also want to lighten the amount of shot you're using. Try some 24-gram shells instead of 28-gram for example, as anything which lightens recoil and makes it more pleasurable to shoot is worth trying.

You mention you never have had this problem with your previous shotgun so what was the overall weight of your Miroku compared to the Churchill? Lighter shotguns recoil more so the pain factor is higher and this may be well be the cause of the problem. The last piece of advice before I suggest the most serious course of action is simply to have a rest for a few weeks, come back fresh and try again.

If all that fails then: "Houston, we have a problem" and the only way round it might be to try a release-trigger shotgun, though this is absolutely the last course of action. With a release-trigger you have to pull the trigger first to engage the mechanism which means the next movement you make is to let the trigger go to fire the gun. This will absolutely cure a flinch in most cases, though it will take discipline and some steady nerves to become accustomed to it.

In the US a great many Trap shooters have enjoyed huge success after changing to this trigger mechanism.

You say you shoot all types of clay target events so be aware that for any of the Olympic disciplines there's a total ban on release-trigger shotguns, so hold off on those plans to qualify for Paris next year if you're forced to go down this road. The other issue you'll face is not all shotguns can accommodate a release-trigger mechanism, though sadly I don't know if a Churchill will handle this. Sorry I can't be more precise in my answer but this technical/mental problem remains one of the real mysteries of our sport. Good luck with it.



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# Got a question - ask our **TOP SHOTS?**

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

email: [edit@ssaa.org.au](mailto:edit@ssaa.org.au)

**Q** Firstly, thank you for a fine column in a first-class magazine. I've been a SSAA member for more than 25 years and on occasion needed some well-informed advice and once more would like to tap into this wealth of knowledge. My grandson has a Bergara in 6.5 PRC which doesn't like Hornady 143gr ELD projectiles or AR2225 powder, meaning he has very inconsistent results and not much improvement using AR2217.

My suggestion was to try Nosler projectiles and a different powder but as these times dictate, components are in short supply. I have a quantity of AR2213sc and some Noslers which he could try but I can't find any load data using AR2213sc. Can you suggest some loads using bullet weights between 129 and 140gr with this powder and if I can't use it, can you suggest another powder to try? I have some 08, 09 and R17 on hand. Keep up the good work.

**Ian Cameron, via email**

**A** The 6.5 PRC is a fine cartridge and the Bergara an excellent rifle so it's a shame you're not getting accurate loads out of it. Perhaps you could try the Nosler 140gr projectiles you have using that AR2217 powder. ADI doesn't provide loads for the AR2213sc powder you mention, though here are some loads from Nosler using their 140gr HPBT projectiles you could try if the powder is available here.  
**IMR8133:** 51.5gr for 2579fps or 53.5gr for 2693fps. **IMR7828:** 48.5gr for 2765fps or 50.5gr for 2858 fps. **IMR4831:** 48.0gr for 2831fps or 50gr for 2929fps. **RL22:** 50gr for 2828fps or 52gr for 2930fps. And finally **MAGPRO:** 57gr for 2864fps or 59gr for 2963fps.

**Barry Wilmot**

**Q** I have a cased Clabrough and Johnstone 12g side-by-side double-barrel auto ejector shotgun in very good condition but am having difficulty determining the model along with a value for the gun (I believe it may be a model 682). I've had it



for 13 years after it was given to me by my father who owned it for about 20 years. He obtained it from a Mr C. 'Doc' Boulton from Condobolin who bought it new. If you can offer any help with this I'd be obliged.

**Ken Wilson, via email**

**A** There's quite a bit of information about John Plumb Clabrough (1836-1895), his family and his guns on the internet and in several books. He trained as a gunsmith with his father in Yorkshire before moving to the US in 1857, his business operating successfully on both sides of the Atlantic. He sold to Douglas V. Johnstone in 1893 who then traded as Clabrough and Johnstone, merging with Hollis, Bentley & Playfair before selling to John Redgrave in 1918.

I think you're right about it being a model 682 and yours would be the version described as 'side safety, box-lock, Damascus steel 12-gauge with 2¾" chambers'. Their 1915 catalogue has both sidelock and boxlock (Deeley design) models as well as a lot of hammer guns.

There's a lot of contradictory information about models and values for this type of shotgun but high-end ones certainly attract big prices at auction overseas. Douglas Tate's *Birmingham Gunmakers* (Safari Press, California 1997) mentions the firm (P42-44) and gives a breakdown of the years they operated, though I think your gun would've been made just before World War One based on serial number and proof marks. 'Doc' Boulton (Cecil Claude Boulton, 1896-1976) was a motor mechanic from Condobolin who served during WW1.

The value of this gun is hard to estimate as, despite it being a highly regarded brand, there haven't been any recent sales of C&J guns in Australia that I can find. Value depends on condition and while your gun appears in reasonable shape, it would be far more valuable to a genuine shotgun collector than if you simply put it up for auction generally. Certainly cased shotguns with this provenance are somewhat rarer than the average old double gun.

**Geoff Smith**

**Q** I have a Remington 700 VTR chambered in .308 Win which has been my 'go-to' rifle for a number of years. It's perfect for my needs with the integral cut muzzle brake and, fitted with a Leupold VX3 L4.5 14x50 scope, I've lost count of how many feral pigs and wild dogs have fallen to it. Then a few years back there was a recall on the trigger for whatever reason and a replacement provided and fitted at no cost, so what was once a 4lb trigger is now about 12lb with no further adjustment.

This is awful to use and a few times I've even checked to make sure I hadn't engaged the safety, it's that heavy in the pull. What can I do about this? I've seen Timney triggers advertised at low poundage but not sure that's the answer. I loved the rifle so much I bought another one chambered in .243 Win which has the same issue. Any advice welcome.

**Steve Heley, Qld.**

**A** There are a number of ways to address your problem. In the first instance the trigger you have can be adjusted down to a serviceable weight by a competent gunsmith who knows how the trigger works. Alternatively there are a few possible sources of replacements. Timney Triggers have a well-earned reputation and are considered by many shooters as the 'go-to' brand with a range of models available to meet a variety of needs, so talk to your gunsmith about exactly what you require.

TriggerTech also has a good reputation, their chief advantage being they're click adjustable to simplify the process, while Jewell Triggers offer a respected alternative for benchrest and target shooters who like to work with minimal trigger weights in search of accuracy.

From the above it should be clear there's no pat answer that'll meet your needs and the best advice I can give is to contact a reputable gunsmith and talk to him about what you want. Cost of a replacement trigger will generally range from around \$300 to \$500. Robert Tobler from RDT Products in Robertson, NSW will be happy to answer any questions you have and can be contacted during business hours on 0412 722 758. Hope this helps.

**John Dunn**

**Q** I'm after some loading data for Vectan 206-V shotgun powder. Because of the shortage of ADI powder I managed to get hold of some of this but need to know what load will suit both target shooting and hunting. Any advice appreciated and many thanks for a great magazine.

**Fred Payne, via email**

**A** Thanks for your question, Fred. There's a fair bit online about this newer Vectan powder and a search for 'Vectan 206-V loading data' threw up their catalogue with all the data for rifle, pistol and shotgun loads. I used to love Vectan D20 when I was a serious shotgun reloader many years ago, though today I fear it may be hard to find or

has gone the way of the dinosaurs. It was similar to Hercules Green Dot (now Alliant Green Dot) which was also a favourite of mine at the time for lighter recoiling yet fast, smooth-feeling 28-gram loads up to 1300fps.

Looking at data in that online link, the Vectan 206-V is a tad faster than Alliant Red Dot which you may know is a fast-burning powder designed specifically for clay target shooting. Red Dot achieves excellent speeds of 1250fps with an economical 19 or so grains and reasonable pressures. This has been the 'go-to' load for a vast numbers of clay target shooters around the world looking for economical yet clay-crunching loads and would also be suitable for small bird hunting loads where permitted in Australia. The Vectan 206-V should match it very closely both on targets and in the field.

But be careful if you try this powder with either lighter or heavier loads, as its fast burn rate is really designed for 28-gram loads and the margin for powder grains used is fairly narrow. If you follow the data carefully I feel sure you'll create loads you find both comfortable to shoot and that'll smoke those targets - and it doesn't get much better than that! Good luck and straight shooting.

**Paul Miller**

**Q** I've changed my powder from ADI AR-2208 to AR-2206H and am firing an Omark 7.62 target rifle converted to .308 Winchester with a 26" supposedly precision barrel. I've had to use a small base die when reloading the cartridges otherwise they become stuck in the chamber when fired (I'm using Nosler Competition and Hornady match 168gr projectiles).

The problem is my friend swears by using 45gr of this powder as he's winning competitions (not with an Omark rifle). I seem to achieve best results with 43gr of powder in ADI brass as any other brass becomes stuck, which would seem to suggest 43gr is also too much. Can you enlighten me as to what's an appropriate load using 2206H powder? Velocities recorded were: 39.5gr - 2630fps; 40.5gr -

2700fps; 40.8gr - 2714fps; 41.8gr - 2739fps; 42.8gr - 2820fps and 43gr - 2854fps. Notice the sharp jump at 42.8gr. I hope this will give a better idea of the rifle's limits.

**John Titmarsh, via email**

**A** Every rifle will perform best with a load made specifically for that firearm. While your friend's loads work for him, it doesn't necessarily mean those loads will give the same results in your rifle. And remember no two rifle chambers and bores are identical, even for the same cartridge and the distance a bullet has to jump before engaging the rifling will also vary from rifle to rifle.

With that in mind, start with a clean slate working up loads from the recommended starting point in your manual and continue increasing in .2 of a grain increments. I suggest starting with a conservative load of 39gr of AR-2206H behind a 168gr projectile and working up from there. Also, if you're going to experiment with overall cartridge lengths you'll have to repeat the same loadings using different seating depths.

You listed muzzle velocities from trials and note a sharp rise in velocity of more than 100fps between 41.8gr and 42.8gr of powder, so you might actually find your desired load sits somewhere between those two. However, I think your 43gr load at 2854fps is too fast for the 168gr projectile and the pressure could be excessive.

You also mention cases becoming stuck and again, higher than normal pressure may be the cause. With all increases in powder charge during load development your primers will usually tell you what's going on in terms of pressure long before the point where cases become hard to remove.

I'm not sure why you're using a small base sizing die in a bolt-action rifle as this suggests your chamber may be undersize. These dies are normally reserved for semi-auto, pump or lever-action rifles but if it helps with chambering and extracting your rounds, even when you get the pressure under control by all means keep using it.

**Rod Pascoe**



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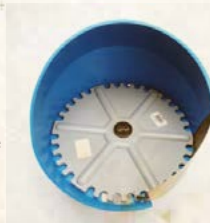


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# Always on my mind

This is the seventh instalment of the Hunter's Mancave in which some of our regular contributors look back on treasured mementoes



Continuing our series, **Scott Heiman** salutes his heritage and more in a purpose-built space

**B**ack in the days before paternity leave I used all my accrued government time-out to take three months off work, in one go, after we had our first child. At that point my wife had exhausted all maternity leave and returned to her job but when my own sabbatical ended, we decided we didn't want our daughter to spend all day in childcare. There was another way of child-rearing and it was a route we wanted to follow - I'd become a stay-at-home dad.

Not only that, we'd take this opportunity to do something I always wanted, I'd leave the rat-race and start my own business from home. Alas our house wasn't really configured for this kind of thing as we had three bedrooms, one for my wife and I, one for our daughter and the other operating as a study where my wife ran the family affairs. Trouble is she operates with a 'clean desk' policy while I prefer a more cyclonic approach to administration, so it didn't take a genius to realise a co-share arrangement in this space wasn't going to cut it.



Where Scott's written articles come to life.

#### **Purpose-made**

The solution was simple but wouldn't be cheap. We took the once-in-a-lifetime chance to knock down the old carport and create a garage with an upper-mezzanine level I could call my own. My brief to the architect was clear: Make a garage tall

enough to accommodate the ute (with roof-racks mounted) and use as much of our suburban block as the law allows. And so it was a 16m x 4m structure was built with a garage, workshop, laundry and en suite downstairs and my mancave above.

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## Always on my mind

I asked the builder to make my office space look like a log cabin in the woods. As a result, the walls and fixed bookshelves comprise 20mm-thick A-grade plywood stained with linseed oil to bring out the grain, the window frames made of merbau to provide a 'picture frame' for the views beyond. Being double-glazed the windows eliminate noise from passing trucks, neighbours' dogs and other background chatter and what would a log cabin be without a wood-burning stove? Behind the stove is a rock wall and in combination, these features create a space where I can truly do my thing and, best of all, no-one tidies my desk.

From the street you wouldn't know my mancave exists as due to the lay of the land, the structure simply looks like a garage. The only clue to its dual-purpose is the 7m dormer window from which I have a great view of treetops and the Brindabella Range. In winter I stand at the desk with my back to the fire, writing stories and conducting historical research. The fire warms the seat of my intelligence, the stove also heats the pizza that promises a full belly at lunch and the pot of coffee percolating on top gently infuses the air.

### Frozen trophies

I don't call my mancave a trophy room because I'm not a trophy hunter, I hunt for food. Indeed, I have just three deer skulls mounted in one corner of the room, all of them significant due to the context in which the hunt took place, not the size of the antlers. But what these skulls lack in coat



hangers they make up for (and more) in their associated memories. The same can be said of the cat, fox and dog skulls which decorate several shelves and as for the rest of the animals I've dropped during 40-odd years of hunting, they've filled my dad's freezer, the freezers of property owners and mates.

Of course they've filled my freezers too and as I write, that section of the garage beer fridge is crammed with wild harvested game as are two 40-litre camp fridges set on freezer mode. Dishes such as goat goulash, rabbit and mushroom pie and my child's favourite marinated and slow-cooked deer ribs are always on the menu at our place. As an environmental scientist I take pride in lowering the number of ferals out there and it's a happy coincidence they taste so good.

Granddad  
was only five  
when he was  
locked up

### A walk down. . .

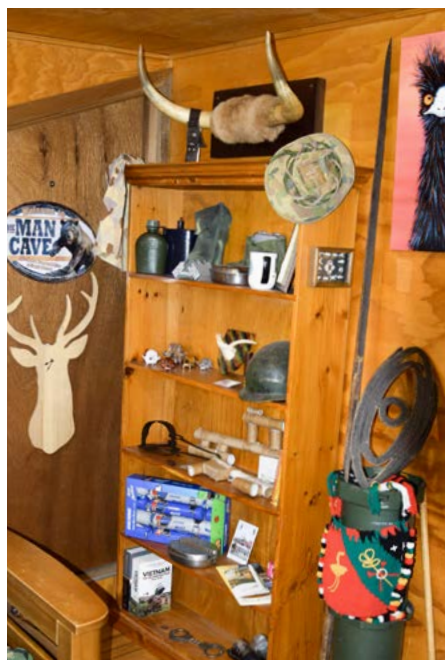
So if it's not a trophy room then what fills this mancave? In reality it's more like a memory room, a physical storage device which, at a single glance, represents a walk through time. Look around and you'll find the horns of a scrub bull and rabbit traps affixed to the walls, shotgun championship sashes draped on the bookshelf, all of which belonged to my grandfather.

Other artefacts include the antique kerosene blowtorch he used to teach me how to melt lead, pour it into moulds and make fishing sinkers when I was seven. When I see these things I feel he's somehow still with me, sharing my cave, as does the black and white photo of Trial Bay Gaol. This is where my family was interred during World War One and even though they were all born in Australia, it happened because of their German heritage.

It's particularly ironic this incarceration occurred as my European forebears sold ammunition and gunpowder to nations across the globe. Even though granddad was only five when he was locked up, he still went on to serve in the Australian Light Horse during the 1930s and RAAF during WWII.



Reminders of long-gone hunts.



Another shelf heaving with nick-nacks which give Scott pleasure.

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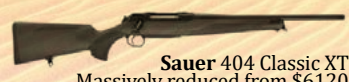


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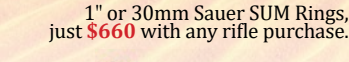
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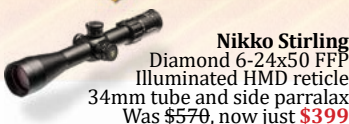
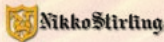
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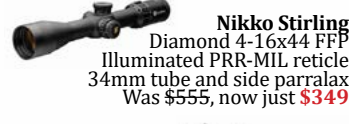
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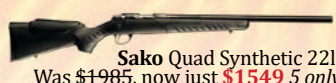
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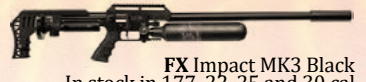
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## Always on my mind

### Living history

While heritage is important the mancave isn't all about paying homage to lives gone by. After all, I've made plenty of memories myself and near the door is a CAD drawing of my very own designed and patented survival knife, an endeavour which brought to fruition years of thought, sketching and prototypes. Elsewhere the lounge chair under the Trial Bay photo is the first brand-new piece of furniture I ever bought as a university student. It's actually a double fold-out futon and, oh, the stories it could tell though these days it's just handy when visitors come to stay.

Around the room are several skins with particular significance including pelts of the first rabbit I took some 40-plus years ago, along with my earliest feral cat. On the floor is a scrub bull skin and another belonging to a feral nanny goat, the latter meaningful as it was taken on a week-long hunt which coincided with Dad's 60th birthday and my wife joined me on the trip while pregnant with our one and only. A portion of frozen nanny meat we subsequently cooked and pureed with vegetables was our little girl's first taste of animal protein.

Beyond these items are many reminders of my role these days as a husband and father. There's a photo of my wife and I walking the Inca Trail on our honeymoon and a picture of her stealing a cuddle from our six-week-old during her first road trip to be introduced to family and friends. And under the window I've pinned some favourite pictures drawn by our daughter, including the one she made aged six after I'd taken her on her first rabbit hunt with our longbows.

### Prepper's library

Any visitor to my mancave soon realises I like books. You see while the mezzanine ceiling is too low in places to stand, it's never too low for a bookcase and most shelves are crammed with books. Here you'll find volumes on military history, firearms, survival, bushcraft, bush tucker, first aid, animals, native birds, DIY, gardening, the environment, explorers . . . the list goes on and I'd estimate around 500 books grace the mancave walls.

And if you ask 'why so many' it's for two reasons, firstly because I like to leaf through hard copy pages. It's a tactile experience and with book in hand I'll 'zone out' by the fireplace on the beanbag with a coffee close by. I enjoy books because not everything's on the internet and many of these volumes don't exist online. Indeed many no longer can be found even in bookshops.



### Stairway to . . .

It's true the mancave's mezzanine heaves with mementos and even the stairwell leading down to the garage hosts a gallery of souvenirs. Pinned to the wall is a map of Papua New Guinea where I spent many months during the past decade searching for WWII soldiers who've no known grave. I previously undertook this role for the Army's Unrecovered War Casualties unit and these days I operate with Kokoda Historical, a company leading tours to Kokoda and other battlegrounds which don't attract the attention they merit.

The nearby map of Nauru is also significant as it reminds me battlefield losses aren't the sole domain of soldiers. In this case Nauru is the location of five Australian Government officials executed by the Japanese. Their status as civilians at the

time of their death (regardless of previous military service) had rendered their recovery inconsequential to the Australian Government until recently. And I'm proud to be involved with the research team determined to rectify this omission.

Finally there are the hats and jackets I reach for when I head out scrub. The Akubra hats overhanging the stairwell on railway spikes have been modified in line with a 1942 Sydney University study intended to help soldiers better camouflage themselves in the jungles of New Guinea. Among other things, the coat rack at the bottom of the stairs holds my favourite warm weather gear and then there's the bear trap suspended over the staircase from a meat hook drilled into the ceiling. Its purpose? You can never be too careful! ●



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Pictured: Geovid Pro 8x42

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# Night into day

## Lightforce hybrid driving lights impressed Nicholas Rositano

Having recently bought a set of Lightforce HTX2 hybrid driving lights I mounted them on my 2022 Landcruiser to give it the final touch. The HTX2s include a dual switching harness for the vehicle as standard though you can also buy one for your model of car to retain the factory look. The lights come with three holes in the mounting bracket for ease of positioning on the bull bar.

Having owned a few different brands in the past, I now understand why Lightforce have the reputation they do as their quality is second to none and being Australian-made is an added bonus. The HTX2 replaces the first generation HTX light, this new and updated version using less power compared to the originals and they're smaller in size. Lightforce supply installation instructions for a simple DIY job, though I opted to have them fitted by a qualified auto electrician.

It was time to hit the road for a deer hunt in the south-east of South Australia and boy I was keen to test these lights on country roads. The HTX2s feature an aluminium casing with clear cover for added protection to both the LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes) and HID (High Intensity Discharge) globes. They're fairly slimline in design which means more options to fit different makes and models of bull bar.

The HTX2 has 20 LEDs around the perimeter of the light to give maximum spread for the flood display option and feature a reliable German-spec Osram ballast as standard to reduce emissions compared to other spotlights. Another standout is the 5000k Philips D1S HID

bulb which gives the maximum one lux at 1650 metres (as claimed by Lightforce). The HTX2 run on a 12-volt battery, draw roughly 11.5 amps and at 2.3kg including bracket are a lightweight unit.

What I liked most about this driving light is the option to use both the flood and spot settings at the same time but also switch between them depending on the situation. The HXT2 includes two blackout filters which can be deployed to suit different driving conditions, though the lights have to be positioned correctly to maximise their potential. And bear in mind you may have to adjust or tweak them slightly when the vehicle is fully loaded as this can change the angle of beam. This tweaking is a simple operation and I recommend doing it before each trip.

On the road it took nothing more than the flick of a switch to turn night into day, such is the power of these lights. Being able to clearly see well over a kilometre ahead makes it easy to distinguish any potential hazards, especially on country roads, giving the driver added confidence in the event of wildlife appearing out of nowhere.

The HTX2s are water and dust-proof which makes them well suited to almost any conditions this country can throw at them and even in foggy conditions they proved their worth. Over rough ground they maintained a perfect spread of flood and spotlight, a big tick for me as previous spotlights I've owned proved 'bouncy' on corrugations which made for a poor field of view.

The next test was out in the paddock and I was genuinely blown away with just how

far the HTX2s reached. The width of flood was superb and spanned a couple of hundred metres, lighting up the paddock surroundings and making it a breeze to avoid wombat holes which can prove a real danger.

The lights have been on my Landcruiser for more than six months now and haven't missed a beat. The HTX2 avoids the need to fit an additional LED light-bar on your vehicle which really gives you the best of both worlds and while I didn't have the chance to do any creek crossings, Lightforce back this product to be submersible up to 1m.

The look of the HTX2 is very stylish and in my opinion one of the best on the market. Priced at around \$1700 the Lightforce HTX2s are backed by a three-year warranty (some competitors offer only a 12-month cover) and Lightforce can supply replacement globes and other components if need be. With years of engineering and design experience behind them, they have really created their most powerful light yet which ticks all the boxes from reliability to looks. More at [www.lightforce.com](http://www.lightforce.com) ●



Fitting the lights to the Landcruiser was a breeze.



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# The ad-Vantage is all yours

The fore-end with chequering and borders cut perfectly using CNC machinery at around 18 lines/inch.

## Webley & Scott shotgun an entry-level winner, says John McDougall

Since contracting their operations to Italy from Turkey, traditional English gunmaker Webley & Scott has progressively overcome a few shortfalls in production which has resulted in a marked improvement in their shotguns. The latest model is no exception with the finish on their Vantage Sporter simply first-class, including striking woodwork and a keen detail for both wood-to-metal and metal-to-metal fit.

The most striking improvement has been in the trigger mechanism as those earlier Turkish models were fitted with quite an agricultural affair, though this latest Italian-made gun has left that well and truly behind with triggers nicely weighted and very responsive. For a shotgun priced below the \$1900 mark it represents good value and, with a five-year warranty, peace of mind is assured. So let's take a look at the Webley & Scott Vantage Sporter 12-gauge shotgun.

### Barrels

These are impeccably blued with no sign of residual solder or flux, something which had been noticeable on Turkish-made models I reviewed 10 years ago. The side ribs run the full length without being ventilated while the top ventilated rib measures 5mm and features a brass bead at the muzzle. There's no-mid bead which was a little disappointing for a Sporter but this can be fitted aftermarket at an affordable price if desired.

At the muzzle end the barrels are fitted with interchangeable choke tubes, five provided with the gun and all fully internal fitting and measuring 50mm. The flat

spanner for removal of the chokes is functional though I'd favour an aftermarket Briley speed wrench for improved ease of use.

At the chamber end the gun is suited to 76mm or 3" chambered cartridges. This is handy for use in water-fowling but be aware the instruction book advises no tighter than half choke when using steel shot as the gun is steel shot proofed for High Performance loads. The sides of the monobloc have an interesting jewel polishing pattern to retain lubricants which is a bonus.

The ejectors are automatic and generally well-timed, occasionally ejecting both shells after only one barrel has been fired. This is a tad frustrating but something which can be easily adjusted by a competent gunsmith or under the five-year warranty, so not a major concern just an occasional nuisance. The barrels are finished well beyond what I found on earlier Turkish-made guns, a credit to the Italian manufacturer and of course Webley & Scott's quality assurance.

### Receiver

Engraving about the stylish receiver is imposed by a spark erosion process. There were a few stray marks on the receiver but overall the scroll engraving suited the gun perfectly, remembering the latest model Vantage sells for below \$1900. It's an entry level affair so far as a sporting shotgun is concerned but given the Vantage's attributes, including the marvellous Turkish walnut, this is a reasonable purchase if not just for a field gun (more on that later).

Design of the top lever is excellent with a little engraving to give a firm and positive action. The safety catch/barrel

selector is on the top tang, a traditional position for many modern guns and convenient location for quick barrel selection or to apply the safety when required. Design of the trigger-guard and trigger-foot is very good, affording plenty of room for those who shoot with thin leather gloves. The triggerfoot isn't adjustable for length of pull but sufficiently placed and comfortable for most shooters. Trigger pulls were a little heavy at just over 5lb each (2.268kg) and I reckon I'd have my gunsmith lighten these to 4lb or even 3½lb if using the gun in competition.

One feature I really like is the fact the triggers are mechanically activated compared to the inertia triggers found on most modern guns. Mechanically activated triggers allow for a second shot in the event of a misfire, whereas inertia triggers provide nothing unless you're super-fast on the barrel selector. With inertia triggers, if the first barrel misfires the selector and cocking mechanism won't allow a second shot to be fired so I view the mechanical system as a huge advantage, especially if you take it out in the field.

### Stock and fore-end

The stock and fore-end are made from quality Turkish walnut you may not even find on a \$7000 gun with the grain, colour and character just superb. The European style cheekpiece on the left of the stock (for a right-handed shooter) is a classic touch which gave the gun a good mount, with my preferred right eye looking straight down the rib. Density of the wood is another plus and helped balance the Vantage perfectly.



The receiver features decorated scroll work done by spark erosion.

Design and rake of the pistol grip is relatively long compared to modern trends

Stock design is quite unusual with a comb piece raised as suited for a right-handed shooter.

I was also impressed to find a slip pad attached to the butt of the stock, this being a style of recoil pad with a plastic cap on top to let clothing slip away as the gun is mounted. I feel not enough people practice correct gun mounting whereby the stock is lifted outward as the mount begins then brought into the shoulder which doesn't require such a butt pad style. The stock doesn't have an adjustable comb-piece which can cost an additional \$350-\$500.



Safety catch/barrel selector is in the traditional position behind the top lever on the top tang.

#### Out and about

The Vantage Sporter performed well on more than several rounds of sporting clays, with a few friends who fired it remarking on how light it felt at 3.4kg (7½lb). The gun moved fairly quickly, felt well balanced and despite the triggers being a little heavy were a great improvement on earlier models reviewed.

I used the gun to shoot a few quail in season and found the chokes hard-hitting and very even in their pattern using Clever size 8 Trap loads supplied for testing. I didn't have a chance to try it on waterfowl but I think using HP steel shot loads travelling in excess of 1500fps you'd need every bit of comfort from that recoil pad. Shooting lighter 28-gram Clever loads was a pleasure on clays and quail, with next to no recoil and superb patterns from the short 50mm choke tubes.

At around \$1890 over the counter, this new-model Webley & Scott Vantage Sporter represents excellent value all things considered, being a lightweight little shotgun offering additional versatility for hunting that could be quite comfortably carried all day. ●



Looking down the barrels from the chamber end you notice the anti-glare rib, strong ejectors and significant bottom bite to the rear bottom of the monobloc.

## Specifications

- Distributor:** Outdoor Sporting Agencies
- Model:** Webley & Scott Vantage Sporter (new model)
- Overall length:** 1210mm/47 ¾"
- Barrel length:** 760mm/30"
- Overall weight:** 3.4kg/7lb 8oz
- Barrel weight:** 1.5kg/3lb 5oz
- Bore size and diameter:** 12-gauge, under 0.724", over: 0.721"
- Chamber length and proof:** 76mm/3" chamber, HP Steel shot proof (steel shot loads not recommended over Modified choke)
- Forcing cones:** Standard
- Chokes:** 50mm fully internal choke tubes with flat choke key supplied. Cylinder: 0.723", Improved Cylinder: 0.714", Modified: 0.703", Improved Modified: 0.694", Full: 0.690"
- Trigger pulls:** Under/over both 2.3kg/5lb
- Stock dimensions:** Length of pull: 380mm/15", drop at comb: 1½", drop at heel: 2¼"
- Price:** Around \$1900 with five-year warranty

# Protecting the lands we hunt practising biosecurity hygiene

Rachael Oxborrow

Hunters accessing public lands or agricultural properties can potentially spread pests and diseases that could decimate Australia's agricultural industries, but some simple measures can reduce this risk and strengthen relationships with landowners.

Cleaning wheel arches on vehicles, sticking to designated tracks and clean footwear are simple biosecurity risk reduction measures hunters can follow as they work with landowners to control pest animals.

When a landowner invites hunters onto their land, they rely on the visiting party being mindful of biosecurity risks and committing to help prevent, reduce or eliminate the introduction and spread of diseases as we go about our activities.

But being a biosecurity aware hunter goes beyond preventing biosecurity breaches at just the properties where we might hunt. It is for the benefit of our whole country. This is why the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA National) has partnered with Grain Producers Australia (GPA) as we work to spread the word that hunters are committed to maintaining biosecurity for all.

The Secure Our Farms-Hunt BioAware campaign was launched earlier this year and widely celebrated by the grain producing and wider agricultural community in Australia.

SSAA National Wildlife Programs Leader Matthew Godson said hunters conducting pest animal control and being conscious of biosecurity risks when entering and exiting properties added to our good reputation in the community.

"Hunters providing the vital service that takes the load off landowners in terms of pest animal control, but also practising good biosecurity practices are the whole package," he said.

"By working with GPA to ensure hunters are aware of the commitment landowners need from visitors to their property, we're ensuring hunters have an ongoing place in land management and our agricultural industry is safe from biosecurity risks into the future."

Farmers have the responsibility to manage authorised visitors to their properties such as contractors, tradespeople and hunters, but are also faced with unauthorised visitors accessing their land.

GPA Chair Barry Large said complacency is the enemy of biosecurity and

vigilance is critical to protecting farm productivity and performance.

"Farmers can't conduct the basic surveillance and inspections for hitchhiker pests if people are accessing our properties without us knowing about it," he said.

"The Secure Our Farms-Hunt BioAware partnership between GPA and SSAA National ensures everyone understands the risks and consequences of ignoring biosecurity; deliberately or not.

"Someone entering a farm without the farmer's knowledge and not following the right protocols also risks spreading serious biosecurity risks, which could decimate our \$28 billion cropping sector," Mr Large said. "If we had a combined biosecurity outbreak for crops and animals, it would also threaten our food security and increases prices for everyday Australians, and the countries we export to."

## What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is the process of preventing the introduction, spread or impact of harmful organisms such as viruses, bacteria, animals, plants, pathogen and insects. These pests have to be managed and planned for at a whole country level through imports and exports, state level, regional level and by property boundaries.

Feral cats, toads, weeds, fungus, insects and airborne diseases are all types of biosecurity risks that threaten our native wildlife, environment and way of life. Measures such as controlling what can be brought into or out of Australia, a state or territory or geographical region, can stop the establishment or reduce spread risks from animal, plant or food items.

Australia's biosecurity system ensures our industries can continue to do business overseas. In many ways it protects our way of life as we know it. Biosecurity safeguards agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries worth \$51 billion, our \$50 billion tourism sector, environmental assets worth \$5.7 trillion and more than 1.6 million jobs.

## What is farm biosecurity?

Australia's grain is produced in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. Across this vast area there are a varying range of soils and climatic conditions in which a wide array of crops are grown. Subsequently, the associated pests and diseases that can pose a risk

to production also threaten production and domestic and international market access vary widely.

Grain farm biosecurity generally involves implementing a set of management practices that protect a property from entry and spread of pests. Growers are encouraged to:

- Monitor crops for the presence of pests
- Report anything unusual
- Manage people movement
- Reduce risks posed by vehicles and equipment
- Manage produce carefully
- Manage risks posed by livestock and feed

## What are hunters' responsibilities?

Weeds and diseases can be spread between farming regions or paddocks through the movement of vehicles and people. Simple measures such as maintaining a clean vehicle and gear, liaising with landowners about any biosecurity requirements and reporting anything unusual take little time for hunters but can make a big difference.

Biosecurity threats posed by contaminated soil and plants passing between properties were often less visible than the pest animals hunters are used to addressing.

"Just like pest animals, these weeds, insects, pathogens and diseases present very real threats to a farmer's bottom line," Mr Godson said.

"The control of pest animals by a hunter is just as vital to biosecurity management as pest weed, disease and insect control. The difference is these more sinister and almost invisible biosecurity threats can be effectively controlled by everyone entering and exiting a property doing the right thing."

Australian agriculture is worth \$81 billion to the economy, providing vital food and commodities for both Australia and overseas countries. It's estimated a large multi-state foot-and-mouth outbreak would cost livestock producers more than \$52 billion over a 10-year period. A potential incursion of African swine fever into the Australian pork sector has estimated total economic losses between \$1.5 to \$2 billion under a high-spread scenario spanning five years. ●

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# Make the most of your

John Moore

**T**o some people brass is slang for money but to us it's the word we often use for empty cases and those cases are integral to our rifle and handgun shooting. They're the small containers which hold the primer, powder and projectile together, enabling us to carry our ammunition around in boxes to the range and often in our pockets when hunting.

And when we do fire the shot they seal the breech, preventing the extraordinarily high pressure that drives the projectile from blowing backwards - potentially damaging our firearm and possibly ourselves - and then spring back in size a fraction to enable us to extract the fired case. Wow!

Yet do we give our brass cases much thought? Maybe not much. Should we? Probably.

If we don't reload fired cases we may simply discard them, yet they're usually worth more than the sum of primer, powder and projectile combined, so if we don't reload or pass our empties to someone who does, we're ditching more than half of what we paid for.

Reloaders understand this value and reuse fired cases to make ammunition that suits their particular needs, ammo that's often tailored to be more



Typical straight walled brass cases: .38 Special, .357 Mag (nickel-plated brass case), .44 Rem Mag, .38-55 Win and .45-70 Govt.



An array of bottleneck brass cases: .222 Rem, .223 Rem, .243 Win, .250 Sav, .257 Rbts, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg and .375 H&H Mag.

# brass

accurate in their firearms than factory-bought. My family are primary producers and a lot of the ammunition we reload is with lower velocity loads to meet our needs for controlling vermin, usually taken at night with a spotlight or thermal scope, so all of this has to be reloaded.

Cases are made of brass which is an alloy of copper and zinc. There are lots of different types of brasses each made with a mixture of the metals, occasionally with a small quantity of other metals added, each type made for a particular purpose. If you search it on the internet you'll find groupings of brasses, with one category being cartridge brass, as for centuries cartridge brass has been crucially important for making ammunition cases.

It's typically 70 per cent copper and 30 per cent zinc and this particular alloy is tough and springy, remarkably so, and thank goodness it is. It's able to be drawn (the technical term used to describe the engineering process of converting a disc of metal into a cylindrical shape) and it takes around 14 separate operations to make a bottleneck rifle case.

The process starts with a disc being punched from a sheet of brass then progressively, each step involves a separate set of dies being formed first into a shallow cup then

in distinct operations. Each time this is into a slightly narrower but longer cup or cylinder to then be trimmed to length, have the neck formed, primer pocket formed, flash hole punched, rim or groove (if a rimless cartridge) turned and head-stamp applied.

Yet like most metals when it's worked, brass hardens and if not softened it'll break as we see when case necks crack. Usually in making rifle cases the brass is softened or annealed after every second operation. As we're well aware at present there's a shortage of some ammunition and many components needed for reloading and this includes brass cases.

A rifle I'm currently using a lot for vermin control is a Ruger M77, originally chambered for 22-250 but rebored for its parent cartridge the 250-3000, known these days as the .250 Savage. While we have reasonable stocks of cases for the other calibres we reload, we have few .250 Savage cases and right now I can't find any more to buy. I know I can make them from other cases available but I'd rather not if I don't have to, so I'm being extra careful with the cases we do have.

Here's what I do. The first thing is to periodically anneal the case necks and when we do need high velocity loads, to load at suggested levels. Next is to only neck size, restricting full-length resizing to when cases eventually become sticky. Some reloading die sets have neck sizing dies but most of ours only have full-length sizing dies and when we just have these we back the die off a bit and only size part of the neck, not working the case body each time.

Years ago when trying to seat both cast and paper-patched bullets (as they're not



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## Make the most of your brass

as tough and forgiving as jacketed bullets) I found it was easy to ruin good bullets if trying to squeeze them into a neck that was a bit too tight. So now we occasionally make different sized neck expander plugs, in particular slightly larger plugs when loading paper-patched or cast bullets as most rifles like these are a thou or two oversize.

To do this you'll need access to a small lathe or a friend who has one. These little plugs are easy to make and given the limited use we put them to, they don't have to be hardened so can be made out of mild steel. Polish them well and use some lubricant - we dip case necks in powdered graphite before neck sizing.

Making separate neck expanding plugs to suit particular bullets is really about reloading, not so much about protecting the case necks by limiting the working of the brass, though the two neck sizing operations do go hand-in-hand. I was still finding that factory neck sizing dies were working the case necks more than I thought I needed for our rifles, and was having to apply quite a lot of pressure to size the necks down then pull the expanding plug out of the case.

The first-class sets of reloading dies we have are made to accommodate (for a given calibre) all makes of firearms and cases. Even though there are tight tolerances used by firearm and ammunition manufacturers, there are always variations, even if it's only from the tooling to make them wear a little in use. Even so, factory neck resizing dies have to be made to reduce the necks to the smallest possible required diameter.

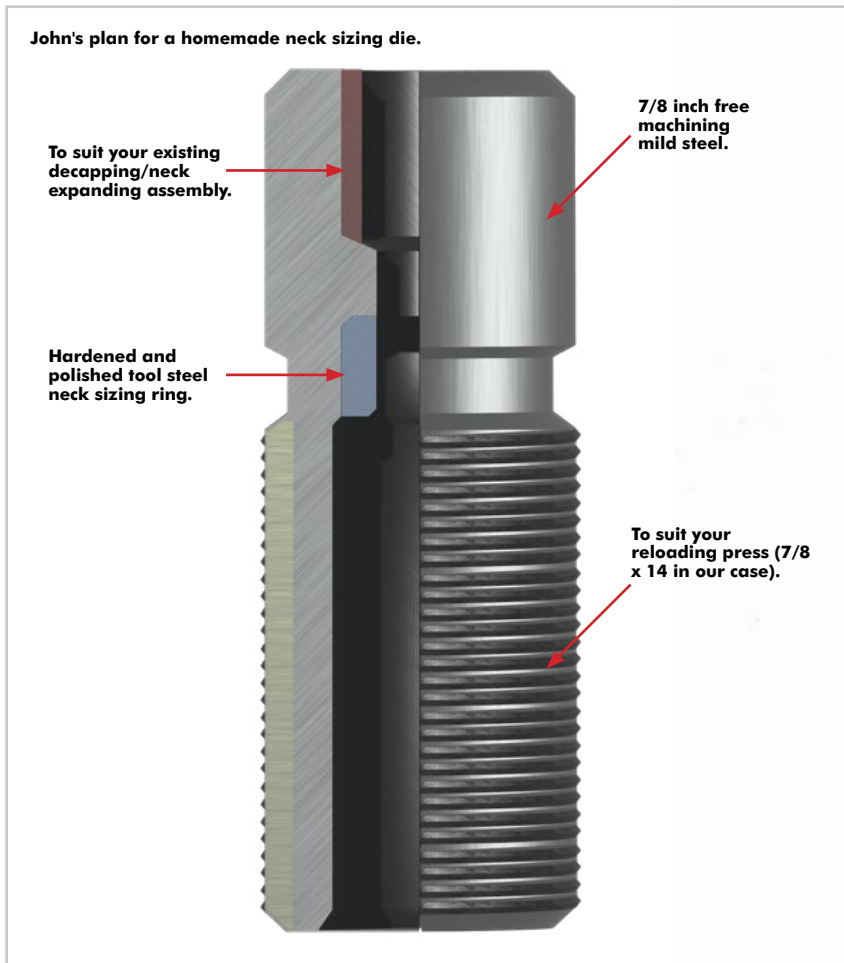
What we do now is make a separate neck sizing die to suit each of our rifles, to size necks down just enough so the expanding plug requires little effort to pull it out the case, probably expanding the neck by only a thou or two. A custom-made die to suit each rifle means less effort's required when neck sizing cases which I equate to less working of the brass case necks.

If you or your machinist friend is able to cut the thread to suit your reloading press and have a suitable tap, you can use the de-capping and neck sizing plug assembly from your bought neck or full-length resizing die. Your die body can be made from a piece of mild steel with preferably free machining as it's easier to work.

The business part of this die is the little ring of steel which sizes the neck down and can be bored, bevelled and polished to size the neck to the required diameter. This can be driven into the die body and it holds there if an interference fit of a thousandth of an inch is used. Make a dolly to seat it and use the heaviest hammer you have, resting the die body on something soft like a block of aluminium when you do this.

Because I'd rather not have to replace the sizing buttons ever and also so I can polish them well with a finish that'll last, I make these from small pieces of tool steel we call silver steel. This grade can be hardened and tempered in a home workshop using a propane torch. This all sounds complex but it's not and when you use a tailor-made neck sizing die and expander plug to suit what you're loading, neck sizing is a real pleasure. And I'm banking the lesser working of my .250 Savage case necks will mean they last a lot longer. ●

**Homemade neck sizing die with factory-made de-capping and neck expanding assembly.**







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# MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

Ted Donaldson salutes those who can shoot a fly at 500m



A century ago the renowned US gun writer Townsend Whelan uttered a statement that “only accurate rifles are interesting” and that pretty much remains the case today and, as an outstanding example, Vince Vaina not so long ago relaunched the 500m Fly Shoot at the Belmont range in Brisbane. There were four of us to start with along with a few observers until eventually the match was overrun, with attendance almost doubling each time. The club responded by doubling the number of targets several times and, prior to COVID restrictions, up to 40 competitors lined up to shoot, which is the capacity of the Fly range.

Shooting an actual-size blow fly at 500m is a challenge achievable only by those determined individuals prepared to seek perfection - it's an art - and because of its popularity Vince has added 300m Centrefire and 200m Rimfire matches. The Fly match involves a series of six targets, your first task being to sight-in then aim at five scoring targets. Vehicles are used to change targets which are returned to the benches and hung on the 'wailing wall' for evaluation. With the scoring targets eight shots are allowed, three into the sighter plate then five on the target to score.

Most shooters started with their existing rifles, many in .308, but these proved inadequate because their relatively slow velocity meant they became victims of the wind. The .308 is adequate for Big Bore matches because of those sizeable targets and scoring rings, but not so when shooting a 20mm Fly (typical Fly rifles are capable of better accuracy at 500m than a .22 Rimfire at 50m).

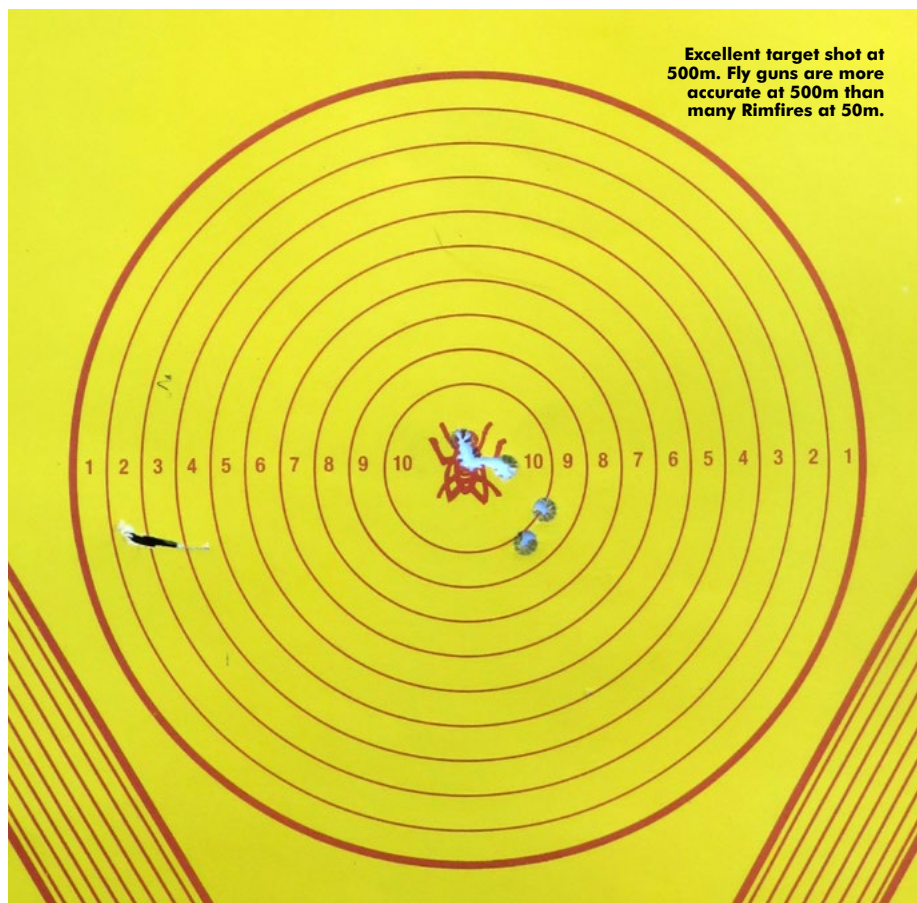
So which calibres work best? Obviously the .30 calibre should be popular as the holes in the target would be clearly visible though sadly there's no free lunch. Wind is the determining factor and the projectile's ballistic coefficient (BC) is the final arbiter, so .30 calibre bullets with high BC and a

weight more than 200gr are essentially loaded into Magnum cases with shovelfuls of powder.

The reality is it's a rare shooter who can sit at a bench and accurately shoot 50 rounds, although Vince does. Bullet weight and high BC are the deciding factors for most shooters who opt for the higher capacity 6.5 cartridges in the light gun category, those firearms having a weight limit of 17lb (they're usually a 6.5). In the light gun category this can produce the highest score on the day, though there are more of them on the line.

After research, my choice of cartridge was the .284 Winchester. Developed some years back, it was an attempt to reduce the length of a .270 to a case to fit into a short action and this was achieved by designing a shorter, fatter case but retaining the .308-size bolt head. It works brilliantly when coupled with long, high BC projectiles and I use 184gr Berger Hybrids with some success as they have a BC approaching .700.

Long-range accuracy can only be maintained with stable high-quality benchrest gear. My rifle has a custom steel stock and



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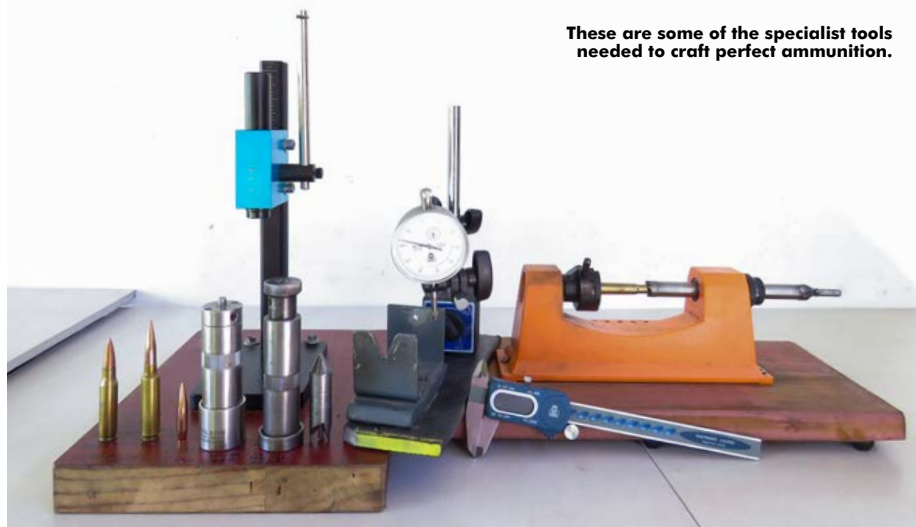
## Mission: Impossible

weighs 25lb, meaning I can position it on the benchrest, line-up the fly target and shoot it free of recoil with only my trigger finger touching the rifle. The benefit is that instead of watching through the scope I can scan for the most favourable wind and touch off the trigger, which works for me.

It must be remembered that if the rifle's touching your shoulder it's another point of contact that'll change where it's aiming during recoil, which occurs while the bullet's still in the barrel. Successful Fly rifles are usually custom-built, starting with specially produced target actions where tolerances are tight and square and lugs lock up perfectly, something which doesn't happen in plinking and hunting rifles (I've inspected many where only one lug engages). Lightweight target triggers are also essential to release without sideways-inducing pressure and it takes a specialist gunsmith to fit the barrels perfectly with bore, chamber and bolt head in exact alignment.

Heavy loads which stretch cases must be avoided. My Lapua cases have been fired more than 30 times without needing resizing, being annealed after each use and none have ever split. It's usual for neck dimensions to be tight and cases to be neck turned. Competition dies work best and I use Wilson dies where the only sizing done is to reduce the neck diameter .002 under the projectile dial. Target barrels 30" in length and 30mm in diameter are the norm and large-power scopes are vital for shooting the heads off flies at 500m. A good quality 25x power is fine on good days though good days are rare, while scopes adjusted to around 40x power will give best results.

Propellant charges are particularly critical and must be identical and while some shooters use elaborate electronic equipment, I manage by weighing each charge. Primer types must be checked and in the beginning I used a popular brand but



These are some of the specialist tools needed to craft perfect ammunition.

was encountering velocity variations of up to 500fps so changed to CCI and resolved the problem.

And there's another mystery. During my time in the Army in a pamphlet on shooting the SMLE .303, mention was made that when a bullet travels down a barrel, forces are accumulated which cause the bullet to jump sideways on exit. Fly Shoot target barrels are much better quality than the old .303s but nevertheless this phenomenon will still be there to a far lesser degree.

Barrel harmonics will remain a problem and change with different bullet types and seating depths, but this can be regulated by adjusting those depths. So on any given day you can wander to the range with perfect gear and a heart full of hope yet it all goes wrong. There could be a badly unreadable wind or mirage which obscures the target and sadly nothing can be done about the latter except pray as you pull the trigger.

Wind is different and uncontrollable and when you encounter gusts about 50m in length which occur at constantly varying heights, believe me when I tell you wind

flags lie! So the winner on the day may not be the shooter with the best equipment but the lucky one with wind calls.

Nature is always the final arbiter yet Vince still wins, though the day's highlight is the trophy presentation which he organises with aplomb. Patches endorsed with the number of flies hit by successful shooters are handed out and winners of the various sections awarded medals in a fitting ending to a thoroughly enjoyable day out. ●

The .284 works well and these are the trophies it has collected.



The rifle is a .284 Winchester fitted to a Barnard action. The scope is a variable power Nightforce. The steel stock adds weight and reduces recoil.



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Rubber fins on the button pads make for superb grip in poor conditions.

# GLASS HALF FULL

Classy Meopta binos a winner with **Chris Redlich**

It's hard to imagine that just a little more than a comparative stretch from Brisbane to Sydney is the Czech Republic's distance from the war in Ukraine, yet despite the conflict many European countries close to the hostilities are still manufacturing and exporting strongly. Czech firm Meopta have been sending out high-quality optics for more than 80 years and their brand is definitively familiar to the Australian shooting scene. I've never owned a Meopta product but know many friends who have and hold them in high regard.

I received an invitation by sole distributor Winchester Australia to review two pairs of Meopta MeoPro Optika binoculars and was keen to form my own opinion.

Beautifully presented, both come with rubber lens flip covers, cleaning cloth and neck strap with a hard case for the 8x42s and a quality softer nylon, felt-type padded case for the 10x42LRs (laser range-finders). Noticeable at first glance is the 10x42s are a lot bulkier, though this was expected as they're housing a substantial amount of electronics to enable their rangefinding capability.

Very robust by feel, both binoculars look as though they can take a beating, though I was particularly impressed by the 8x42s as they're the most compact hunting binoculars in that configuration I've ever laid my hands on. As with most modern binos the parallel lens barrels are of a roof prism design with Optika's made from magnesium

alloy coated in Meopta's distinguishable, protective, olive-coloured durable rubber. Both review models measure a tad over 140mm with the 8x weighing a miniscule 713g compared to 933g for the 10xLR.

#### MeoPro Optika features

Strangely the 8x42 eyepieces have three firm adjustment clicks for eye relief and the 10x42LR only two. I found clicks on the 10x42s much softer compared to the 8x42s which became a minor concern for readjusting after removing from the pouch during field testing. The 10x42LR has dual dioptre adjustment compared to single for the 8x42. The dioptre dials were firm but easy to manipulate, enabling a customised clear image and their closed bridge design

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## Glass half full

moved freely to allow correct interpupillary distance for the operator's eye width.

All MeoPro Optika binos are ergonomically designed for ease of use and the review pairs felt comfortable in my large fingers yet suited my wife Sue-Ann's smaller hands just as well. The focus wheel, sitting central to the bridge hinge, is easily rotated by either index finger thanks to a zig-zag pattern on the rubber surface.

Meopta engineers have done a great job squeezing all the laser range-finding electronics into the 10x42LR bridge. Its battery compartment is neatly housed within the focus wheel and sealed to be waterproof, while the main binocular bodies of all Optika models are purged with nitrogen for trouble-free viewing in humidity, rain and snow.

The 10x42LR power is drawn from a single CR2 3-volt battery which provides up to 1500 range calculations before swapping out. Manual operation of the 10x laser range-finding capabilities are two buttons within easy finger touch, located either side of the top of the bridge hinge. Interestingly, the button pads have tiny rubber fins which provide a distinct and superb grip surface in cold or wet weather, the right button for rangefinding and the left handling all mode functions. The user manual clearly states all the functions and not once did I feel challenged during operation.

The head-up digital display has five brightness settings and the circular reticle makes for rapid target acquisition. Scan mode facilitates fast, updated ranging on the run and the 'Class 1' laser capability enables accurate range-finding out to an impressive 2380m (2600 yards) with a forgivable plus or minus error parameter of 2m when ranging past 1000m.

The added feature of angle compensation for shots on steep up or downhill targets isn't uncommon on modern LR binoculars but a handy inclusion all the same and a useful aid in terrain such as the New Zealand Alps. At the business end of both pairs are their 42mm high-definition (HD) lenses providing clear images and a wide field of view extending 131m at 1000m for the 8x and a slightly narrower but generous 108m at 1000m for the 10xLR.

### Field testing

During a few months on loan I was able to rigorously test both binoculars in varying conditions and enjoyed their use, though the setting on one particular hunt challenged the abilities of the lenses. Both pairs gave excellent resolution in lowlight

Laser ranging capability is one of the best I've seen



One of numerous mountain pigs glassed and ranged with the Optika binos prior to shooting.



The 10x42LR HD (left) and 8x42HD as supplied with accessories.



The battery compartment on the 10x42LR is neatly housed within the focus wheel and O-ring sealed to be waterproof.

situations and this is a major advantage in poor visibility during inclement weather, typical of heavily forested land. The Optikas gave no grief at all while stalking shaded areas of our hunting grounds and the laser rangefinding capability of the 10x42LRs performed flawlessly.

I was able to effortlessly range objects freehand beyond 1500m and the scan feature provided split-second range updates when sweeping target areas. While able to easily assess three chital deer through thick lantana at a ranged distance of 230m on the shaded side of a gully, I was surprised to discover the lenses' ability to diffuse bright light in sunny conditions when my

attention turned to glassing the opposite side of the ridge. Initially I thought there must have been fine dust reflecting on the objective lenses but both were spotless. By no means were the binoculars staring into direct sunlight (and nor should they) but my view was partially affected by glare as the afternoon sun had started sinking beyond the heights.

Making a few Di optical adjustments, some glare remained, slightly reducing resolution and when Sue-Ann passed me the 8x42s they were affected in the same way. I can only assume Meopta had gone to a lot of effort to improve the Optikas' lowlight performance in their northern



hemisphere backyard while perhaps overlooking essential glare filtration experienced in our sunny Queensland conditions.

In fairness to the binoculars Sue-Ann couldn't distinguish this discrepancy and thoroughly enjoyed their use, particularly the 8x, and my personal critique (or fussiness) can be put down to comparing numerous brands over the years.

**Conclusion**

During our field-testing period, both Optikas were used extensively for months in thick and mountainous country and assisted in locating a meat deer and numerous feral pigs. I thoroughly enjoyed having the ability to range objects easily and accurately at long distance and the 10x42LRs laser ranging capability is one of the best I've seen on binoculars in their price bracket. For a substantial increase in field of view the Optika LR binos are also available in an 8x50 model and additional to the standard Optika 8x (non LR) is a 10x42HD model.

Although the HD lenses' clarity fell marginally short when filtering glare in bright light, the images through both European-made binoculars were of high definition, especially in lowlight. Impressed overall, we bought the 8x42HD model purely

on its merits and compact size. Well priced for quality entry level laser rangefinder binoculars, the 10x42LRs retail for \$2150 (at time of writing) while the compact 8x42s are a bargain at \$695. Both are covered by Meopta's standard two-year warranty with

an extended 10-year option available when the product is registered. More at [www.winchesteraustralia.com.au](http://www.winchesteraustralia.com.au)



A tree ranged with ease freehand at a distance of 1538m. Note the circular reticle and 2.3-degree trajectory. The business end of both Optika binoculars are their 42mm objective lenses providing great lowlight performance.




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# Not for love *nor bunny*

Sam Garro puzzles over  
unpredictable rabbit cycles



**B**y the end of autumn the previous year, regular rabbit culls on a small cattle property in regional Victoria both day and night had helped in greatly reducing their numbers and I felt we'd attained a level of control over the furry critters for a farmer who valued the fodder for his cattle. Although few rabbits were sighted towards the end, newly excavated burrows here and there, noticeable by long trails of freshly-dug red soil, planted seeds of doubt as to their perceived low numbers. Perhaps constant shooting pressure had forced them to change their feeding habits, most likely venturing out late at night into the early hours of the morning.

#### **Survivors**

Apart from culling rabbits in open and accessible areas, the extensive stands of tangled blackberry bushes along creeks, gullies, hill slopes and ridges gave them a safe haven difficult to penetrate. Despite concerted eradication efforts a few will always survive to restore numbers when conditions are optimal, as history has demonstrated time and time again.

#### **Back in numbers**

A wet period preceding spring made access to the property impracticable and would've certainly played havoc with tracks which the farmer wouldn't have favoured or be pleased with. The La Nina weather phenomenon with its above average winter-spring rainfall certainly aided in this regard. If undisturbed, rabbits will increase their numbers quickly when we consider a female reaches sexual maturity at six months, meaning a litter of seven or more and four litters a year.

As we'd been absent from the property for a good eight months or so and no shooting had been done this, combined with lush vegetation, had given rabbits the perfect conditions and time to rebound. So when we arrived at the end of September they were back in numbers, even in less productive areas around a couple of dams and rocky outcrops, the blackberry and bracken fern-choked gullies in particular holding substantial numbers.

#### **Out with the .22LR**

Early afternoon produced a few good rabbits with the Brno 2 .22LR using 42gr Winchester Power-Points. Three were taken early on at no more than 40m as

they grazed just feet from each other on an open grassy slope surrounded by scrub and partly shaded by tall trees. Hidden from view in my camo wear and assisted by a favourable breeze which lessened the shot sound, the trio dropped in succession to head shots.

Yet retrieving them meant weaving my way through a thick stand of prickly blackberry bushes and crossing a hip-high narrow creek which turned out to be much deeper than anticipated, though the effort was worth it as rabbit meat is always appreciated at home, especially by the grandkids who savour fresh bread dipped in that tasty juice.

As I'd also covered a bit of ground over some hilly country under the hot sun and was feeling the strain, I made for the shade of some large pine trees to dress the rabbits and rehydrate from the backpack. These are body signs we need to pay greater attention to and address, particularly as we grow older, rather than ignore them and pay the price later.

The short rest made all the difference and a few more rabbits were dropped outside their burrows on the way back to the vehicle. "Not a bad morning's result," I thought to myself. To stop the meat from spoiling it's best to gut rabbits no more than 15 minutes after they're shot, as rye grass in particular can cause stomach acids to leach out and ruin the meat. Carrying them in breathable game bags also keeps dust out and prevents those nuisance blowflies reaching the meat.

#### **Late-evening sniping**

Some places frequented by rabbits around dams and hilltops were difficult to approach any closer than 100m or more before they scattered and the terrain wasn't best suited to the 22LR. Here the flat-shooting Sako A111 .222 Rem HB varmint rifle mounted with a Swarovski Z3 4-12 x 50 scope, coupled with the quick-adjustable Atac Pro Shooting Hunter Trigger tripod came into its own and was ideal for longer range objectives.

After lunch a couple of hours passed quickly before it was time to head out again. Positioned some 150m from the first small dam skirted by elevated mounds riddled with rabbit warrens and aided by the tripod, another couple dropped to the high velocity 40gr bullets. From then things went quiet for a while and as the afternoon shadows lengthened with only an hour's daylight or

Sam in the shade of pine trees after a strenuous morning's hunt.

It can be tricky trying to figure out what's going on with rabbits



Sam gutting rabbits before they spoil.

so remaining, attention turned to a line of bracken fern bordering a fence line where rabbits were sure to be.

A distant lone prickly bush provided the only concealing cover to shoot from. Within minutes bunnies started to emerge one by one, momentarily sitting just on the outer to absorb the sun's rays before hopping out a metre or two and nibbling on some green pick. A few more were bagged before light faded and put an end to the day's shooting.

**Rabbits bagged**

Compared to the previous couple of trips the occasional doe and young male were taken and this time there was a mix of gender with mature bucks, does and three-quarter grown rabbits. Condition-wise they were plump and fatty inside owing to the plentiful feed, though a couple of bucks had clearly evaded shooters previously and were as tough as leather to skin and equally as tough to eat.

**Suddenly they're gone**

Returning in early summer that year the rabbits seemed to have inexplicably disappeared from the property altogether, similar to a time two years earlier. My hunting companion one night in February went out with his newly-acquired thermal scope to gain an edge on them and hopefully bag a few, but also to survey paddocks and determine where they might be concentrated. Despite driving round the property for most of the night he only saw three rabbits, a strange experience considering 50 or more would normally be sighted on any given night at that time of year.

**Local knowledge**

Talking to the property owner more recently I asked whether a stronger strain of calicivirus or myxomatosis, more actively spread by fleas in the warmer months of spring to autumn, may have been the cause of their apparent absence. He reckoned it was neither and put it down to predatory foxes moving in, one of which his little terrier managed to catch. The rabbits themselves had remained underground for long periods rearing young, as attested to by the presence of kittens currently about the place, particularly around bales of stacked hay and farm buildings.

The situation was also largely due to abundant growth which had prevailed for so long, triggering rabbits to proliferate under favourable conditions. In a few months they'll be back again and it looks like we might be also targeting a fox or two when we next return.

It's one of those mysteries of nature where only the creatures themselves sense or know when it's the right time to procreate and/or adopt predator-evasive behaviour. As hunters it can be tricky trying to figure out what's going on with rabbits in an area when one time there's plenty of them and a few months later virtually none. This is particularly so when considering introduced rabbit viruses can spread from property to property and virtually wipe out whole populations, hence the value of local knowledge. ●

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# Bans, buybacks and digital registries impact our international peers

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA National) works closely with the international firearms community to discuss issues and legislation of relevance. Both Canada and New Zealand firearm owners are dealing with similar legislative environments to that in Australia and SSAA National Media and Politics Officer **Rachael Oxborrow** has worked with these groups to provide an update for *Australian Shooter* readers.

## Canadian firearms bill progresses and buyback begins

Canada's licensed firearm owners are the target of legislative changes and buybacks the Canadian Government says will make the country safer from criminal activities and violence. However, the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA) has grave concerns for the future of target shooting and hunting in Canada, with reduced access to firearms licenses, many makes and models of firearms and increased red tape creating significant barriers to law-abiding licensed firearm ownership.

Since 2020, more than 2000 makes and models of firearms have been outlawed and Bill C-21 – which deals with the ownership of handguns - has now passed the lower house and is expected to be passed by the Senate later this year. Meanwhile, the border between Canada and the United States remains effectively open for criminals to exploit and move illegal firearms with little consequence.

Of particular concern to the CSSA is a government-mandated 'freeze' on handguns preventing individuals and businesses from bringing any handguns into Canada and buying, selling and transferring handguns within the country.



CSSA Executive Director Tony Bernardo.  
Image source: Durham Region News.

Other measures, which the government has introduced in its attempts to reduce firearm crime that have drawn criticism include, magazine capacity limits to some long arms and handguns, particularly semi-automatic firearms.

CSSA Executive Director Tony Bernardo said the Canadian Government had showed zero interest in common-sense changes to improve their proposed legislation or listen to hunters, farmers and sport shooters about how Bill C-21 is negatively impacting their way of life.

"There are many measures that could be explored to help stop drug dealers, gangs and the use of illegal firearms in our major cities, but banning hunting rifles is not one of them," he said.

"Bill C-21 does not and cannot affect gun smugglers, drug dealers, gang members or any of the hundreds of criminals who flood our streets with illegal drugs and firearms; the same violent criminals who commit murder and other violence to protect their illegal drug trade."

As a part of measures to prohibit and 'buy back' all firearms with muzzle energy greater than 10,000 Joules or with a bore diameter of 20 millimetres or greater, the government was forced to backpedal and make amendments when many firearms used by hunters were 'caught' up in the process.

"Preventing highly-vetted and licensed firearm owners from legally purchasing firearms will not magically and miraculously stop criminal violence using smuggled, illegal guns," Mr Bernardo said.

Measures targeting domestic violence perpetrators and other violent or repeat offenders from owning firearms are on the right track but are being poorly funded and enforced according to the CSSA. The Association is calling for law enforcement resources to be increased across the board and a no-tolerance approach employed to help address the criminal element in Canada.



## New Zealand firearms online registry launches

Requirements for New Zealand's licensed firearm owners to register their legally held firearms in the country's newly launched online firearm registry have unfairly insinuated this portion of the community is to blame for firearm crime.

The New Zealand Government introduced the concept of a firearm registry in 2019 as a measure to address firearm crime. This was during the aftermath of a terror attack on a Christchurch Mosque that tragically took 51 lives. Rhetoric in this time suggested weak laws on firearms were identified as a key reason why the perpetrator was able to access firearms.

The Sporting Shooters' Association of New Zealand (SSANZ), however, says the efforts to track illegal firearms through the law-abiding firearm owners is a scapegoat by the government to appear proactive in response to tragic events. Instead, they say NZ Police need to look at their internal processes, as there was a failure to properly follow their own procedures during the firearms licence vetting process that allowed the Christchurch terrorist to arm himself.

SSANZ also holds concerns that if the register was hacked or details were leaked that the information would provide a 'shopping list' for criminals.



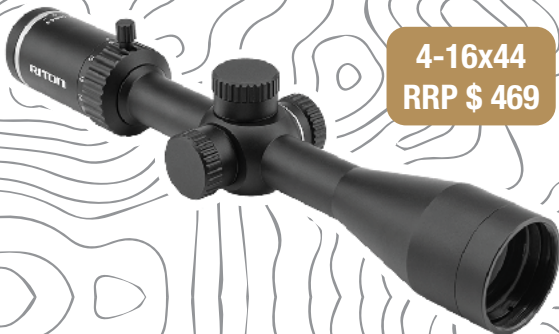
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## Bans, buybacks and digital registries impact our international peers

When announcing the launch of the firearm register, New Zealand Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said over time the registry would create a comprehensive picture of all lawfully held firearms and arms items in New Zealand linked to each individual firearms licence holder.

“The registry will give us a much clearer picture of where all the licensed firearms are, and especially when they are changing hands,” he said.

“This will allow us to better identify suspicious looking transactions, and to be better able to trace firearms that might turn up in crimes.”

New Zealand-based political lobby group the Council of Licensed Firearm Owners (COLFO), of which SSANZ is a founding member, continues to advocate in this space and is working with supporting politicians to represent the community in parliament. COLFO spokesperson Hugh Devereux-Mack said licensed firearms owners were being singled out for police failures to control gun violence.

“We see rising gun crime and then the police saying ‘the way we stop gun crime in New Zealand is bringing in further regulation on licensed firearms owners’ - it doesn't make any sense and our community is sick and tired of being scapegoated for these failures to address the increase in firearms crime rates,” he said.

In addition to creating a digital firearms registry as a part of efforts to reduce firearms crime, the NZ Government has introduced Firearms Prohibition Orders in legislation and has enforced the buy back and prohibition of semi-automatic centrefire firearms with detachable magazines, pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns with detachable magazines or non-detachable magazines with a capacity of more than five rounds and any .22 calibre or lower semi-automatic rifle with a magazine capacity greater than 10 rounds.

NZ Police have set up a new business unit known as the Firearm Safety Authority, with 500 employees and an initial budget of \$208 million over four years, to administer the registry, licence and permit applications and provide greater scrutiny of shooting clubs and ranges.

### Australia's National Cabinet preparing for register decision

Options for the National Firearms Register were informed by feedback provided by the firearms community and the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA National).

The Police Ministers Council agreed to these options in early June in preparation



COLFO spokesperson  
Hugh Devereux-Mack.

for the National Cabinet to consider in the next few months.

SSAA National will be able to provide a more comprehensive update on how this will look post National Cabinet.

As government continues with this process, SSAA National remains in regular contact with relevant departments and entities such as the Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Communication between the Attorney-General's Department Firearms and Illicit Drugs Section and SSAA National has been ongoing since the election of the Albanese Labor Government in 2022 as a part of continued efforts to advocate, protect and promote firearm owners' interests. These relationships, which allow SSAA National, the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia (SIFA) and other likeminded groups to collaborate on constructive outcomes with the government and prevent the occurrence of

unintended consequences from policy decisions, are vital to ensuring our future.

Public submissions on the concept of a National Firearm Register were called for in April after Australia's state and territory police ministers were tasked with investigating options by National Cabinet earlier this year.

Talks of a National Register began in the first few months of 2023 in the wake of a series of tragic events in rural Queensland in December 2022, when an act of domestic terrorism involving unlicensed people acting illegally with firearms resulted in tragic losses of lives. The kneejerk commentary that followed these events called for firearms law reform. As details of law enforcement access to firearms licensing details came to light, the tune of the conversation changed to a perceived need for a National Firearms Register, which would allow police from all jurisdictions to access firearms licensee details with more ease than they can at present. ●





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# Make your own Pritchett cartridges

Paul Heiser says the effort is worthwhile



Brass tube used as a mandrel, natural fibre twine for sealing the cartridge and choker for tightening the base before closing with twine.

In 1847 two Frenchmen, Claude-Etienne Minié and Henri-Gustave Delvigne created the Minié ball, one of the great leaps forward in firearms and ammunition technology. These projectiles had a small iron cup fixed into the hollow base and when the powder charge was ignited, the force of hot gases forced the cup into the base causing the skirt of the projectile to expand and engage the rifling.

Despite its breakthrough status there were some issues with the design but even so, the French adopted the projectile for use in their Pattern 1849 rifled musket. Occasionally the iron cup would do too good a job by going deep into the cavity, causing the skirt of the projectile to rip from the main body and form an obstruction in the barrel.

Robert Taylor Pritchett (1828-1907), a London gunmaker, in conjunction with engineer William Ellis Metford decided to improve the French Minié and work

on a projectile that would perform well in a paper cartridge. Pritchett and Metford revamped the Minié by removing its three grease grooves to form a smooth-sided slug with a deep hollow base and either a timber or baked clay plug was inserted into the base of the projectile. It relied on hot gases to push the plug deeper into the base but didn't cause any detaching of the base of the shell as occasionally happened with the original design.

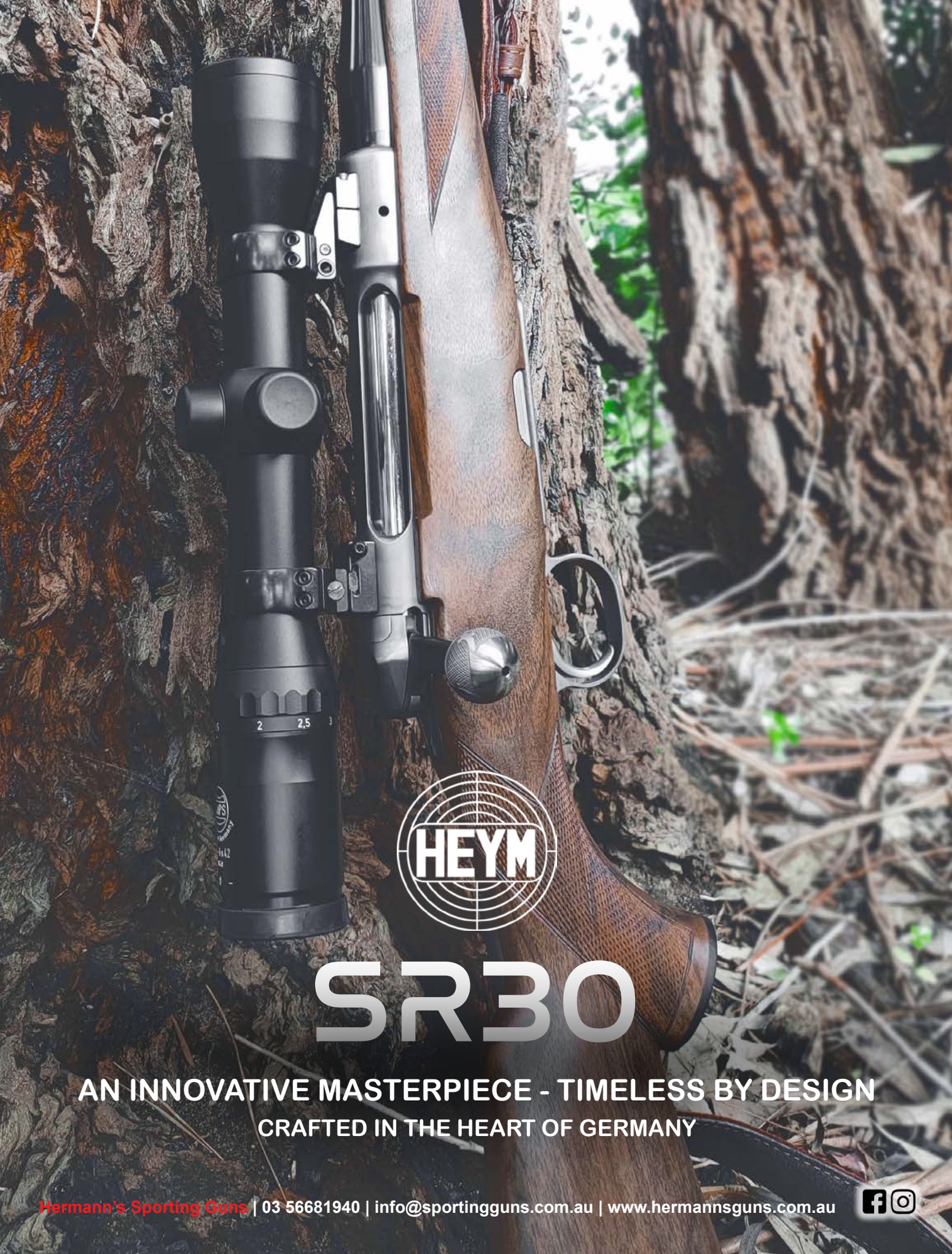
Initial projectiles were devised for the Pattern 1851 Minié rifle and the later Pattern 1853 .577 rifle. The diameter was originally .568" but this was later reduced to .55" to make loading easier and there was no noticeable loss of accuracy with the smaller pellet.

The tip of the paper projectile was torn or bitten off, powder poured down the barrel and the lubricated base of the cartridge sat in the muzzle, the empty top portion of the cartridge then torn away from the

paper-patched projectile which was rammed down the barrel. It was a good design and served well in the Pattern 1851 and 1853 rifles, Pritchett awarded a £1000 prize by Parliament and he graciously shared both the money and credit with Metford.

For several years, making paper cartridges was something I wanted to try and I finally motivated myself to tackle the project. For paper cartridges I've used a .55 projectile rather than a .568 as it gives a little more latitude with the final dimensions of the completed cartridge. I used Bienfang 360 rag paper for both the large outer wrapper and inner wrapper for the powder charge container, the inner container for the powder charge being traditionally stiff paper. Normal A4 80 gsm paper can be used and I favour tracing paper for both the small inner and large outer wrapper.

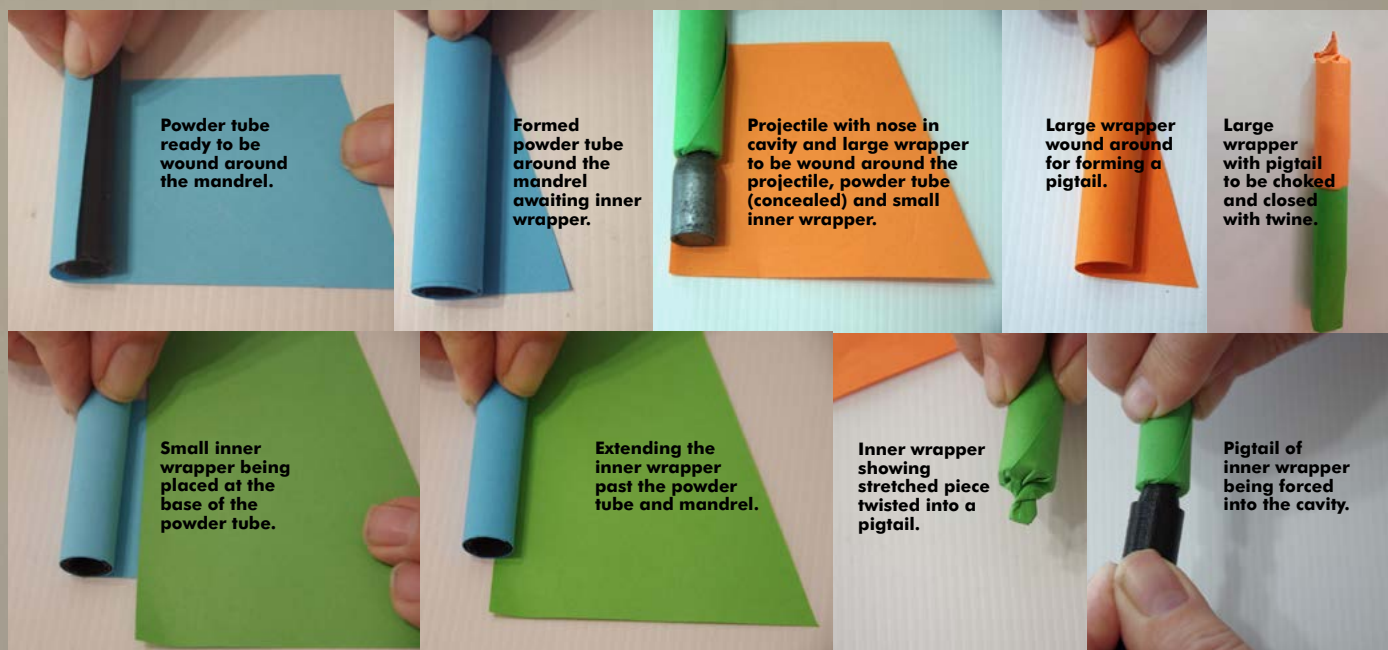
I made templates from an old cardboard file backer and plastic place mats for the three pieces of paper required to construct



# SR30

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## Make your own Pritchett cartridges



the cartridges. Several pieces of paper were stapled together and I traced round the templates then cut them out using a small craft paper guillotine. The mandrels and formers shown in the official instructions are works of art but aren't the easiest to make if you don't have access to a wood lathe and correct tools.

I took the easy way out and bought a half-inch external diameter piece of brass tubing and used it as the mandrel. This system worked well and then I saw on the internet a review of Pritchett paper cartridges made by Forth Armoury ([forth-armoury.com](http://forth-armoury.com)) in the US. They make kits for various types of paper cartridges using plastic mandrels formed in 3D printers and templates created from steel sheet. The quality is good and I bought a kit to make an Enfield Pattern 1860 paper cartridge (the only modification was I blued the steel templates to protect them from rust). Forth Armoury has good instructional videos on YouTube and once you've made several cartridges following the directions you should've no problems.

For constructing paper cartridges I'm using my homemade templates and the instructions apply equally to the kits. Over years of use the authorities introduced several variations of paper cartridges which became more sophisticated, though I've tried to keep mine fairly generic and simple. As photos of white paper layered on white paper don't always give clarity, I've used coloured paper to more easily illustrate the construction process.

The powder tube shown as blue is firstly wound around the mandrel and the short wrapper shown as green is placed along the edge of the powder tube which is roughly 10mm back from the outer edge of the small wrapper, the green wrapper then tightly wrapped around the mandrel and powder container. Some pieces of paper may have a curl in them and you have to work with the curl, not against it. The tiny piece of paper belonging to the small wrapper beyond the mandrel is twisted into a pigtail and pushed into the brass tube.

I use the blunt end of a pencil or cap of a pen to push the twisted paper into the base of the powder container. Just shove in the end of the paper enough so the projectile's nose can protrude into the base of the powder container. I allow 5-7mm between the base of the projectile and edge of the large wrapper shown as orange that's wrapped tightly around. This end is then twisted into a pigtail and can be either tied off with string or left.

The string needs to be made of natural fibre such as jute, as synthetic cord can leave deposits of black tacky lumps in the barrel which are difficult to remove. The neatest way of tying the top is to make a choker out of string with one end attached to a piece of flat timber, the other end having a small piece of dowel as a handle. A loop is formed with the string and it's pulled gently around the tip of the cartridge which gives good tight closure, the string can then be wrapped around the top of the cartridge and tied off.

If trying to achieve total historical accuracy a plug needs to be inserted into the base of the projectile. NOE Moulds in the US make moulds for these plugs but I don't bother with them for casual plinking. I then made a double boiler set-up for applying lubricant to the base of the cartridge, using an old cake tin to hold water and sardine tin to keep the wax in. I found a sardine tin is the right depth and lubricant has to only go up to the beginning of the projectile's nose.

The cartridge case has to be quickly dipped in the lubricant as you don't want an overly thick layer which makes seating the projectile in the muzzle and ramming it home difficult. I used beeswax as lubricant but tallow or lard will do (avoid commercial tallow or frying oil as they may contain salt that's cruel to the bores). The paper cartridges can then either be charged with 60 grains of 2F powder or stored unloaded for later.

All this may seem like a lot of work but I find paper cartridges have far less fouling and you can fire more shots using them. They're also much cleaner as you don't have lubricant over your fingers and clothes. Just remember if using them to put used ones in a proper waste receptacle and don't leave them lying around the firing line. ●



Completed Pritchett cartridge containing a .55" projectile.

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# Get set up

Ben Unten

The synthetic rope effortlessly free-spooled and was easy on the hands.

## Warn VR Evo 10-S winch

There are some essentials when you go bush. But probably the first thing that should be considered is how you're going to reach there and, more importantly, how you're going to return home again.

If you've been unconvinced about a winch, let me share a quick story...

Some mates of mine were recently hunting in a NSW State Forest. They arrived at their e-scouted campsite early on Monday morning and were setting up when they noticed a ute drive past them on the dirt road. Both parties acknowledged each other with an understated wave and the other vehicle drove off.

My mates hunted hard for the next three days and although no shooting opportunities presented, they had a great outing. On the Wednesday afternoon, they packed up and were driving home via an alternate route when they came across a ute clearly stuck at the edge of a large bog hole. My mate described the scene as like something out of *Day of the Dinosaurs*, as there were small trees and branches and shrubs strewn right across the area in what were obviously futile attempts to 'un-bog' it.

As they cautiously pulled up and offered assistance, they were met by an exhausted

and frustrated bloke. It turned out that he had also registered to hunt the same forest and that this was the ute that had driven past them three days earlier. The vehicle had been bogged for the entire time.

To make matters worse, he had his two young sons with him, so aside from the disappointment of doing zero hunting, I'm guessing they would have had to deal with a grumpy father who I imagine would have felt terrible for letting his kids down and had done everything he could think in the way of digging branches under the tyres to try to free the vehicle (hence, the *Day of the Dinosaurs* look to the area).

A plan was quickly forged so my mates backtracked and drove the long way round to eventually make their way back to the front of the vehicle. The actual recovery took less than 15 minutes, as the vehicle was easily snatched to safety. Genuine thanks all round from the rescued trio and the groups parted ways.

Their tale started me thinking. I wondered what the longer-term plan was for the stuck vehicle, other than 'hoping that somebody better prepared' would happen to come by? There was no mobile phone service near the bog hole, so I presume he would have needed to hike,

most likely with kids in tow, to a better reception area and make a call to friends or the emergency services. Then I had the shivers, as my mind raced with concern about how well-equipped and skilled a person might be for bush navigation if he or she were not prepared enough to get a vehicle un-bogged...

However, all ended well in this case and I prefer to think that the dad just caught some back luck. But something that doesn't require any luck is to better equip your off-road vehicle with some self-recovery gear (as well as some equipment to recover someone else's vehicle if required – just as my mates did).

Had the luckless dad possessed a front-mounted winch and some know-how, becoming bogged would have been the intro to his family hunt story instead of the tale of the whole trip.

Warn Winches have been around for ever and by my reckoning they are the ones that all others are judged against.

For review, *Australian Shooter* was sent a Warn VR Evo 10-S winch. They have a nominal line pull capacity of 4500kg (10,000lb) and weigh around 35kg. The approximate overall dimensions are: 530mm L x 160mm D x 250mm H. The

VR EVO 10-S comes with around 27m of 9.5mm synthetic rope. The remote has been redesigned so that you have the option to go wireless, but a 3.5m lead is included as back-up if required. The motor boasts increased line pull speeds with reduced amp draw.

**Installation**

The winch comes with a full set of easy-to-follow instructions designed for the home-handyperson to install. You will need a reasonable set of tools and some know-how, though my suggestion would be to consider having the wiring fitting done by a professional. Putting in place took around four hours for two blokes.

**In the field**

For testing, I was planning to head out into some rugged hilly country to put the Warn VR Evo 10-S through its paces. However, unfortunately most of the local roads were closed due to recent flooding. So, I was stuck field testing in a paddock.

However, I did multiple pulls, with and without light braking and even had the winch pull two Toyota HiLuxes at the same time. This was done under controlled conditions so do not try this at home. The winch performed exactly as expected during the trials - it free spooled easily, there were no mechanical issues experienced, and the wireless remote worked perfectly. The unit was checked for excessive heat and there was none.

Yes, there are cheaper units on the market from the bulk-megastore type suppliers, but the thing with a winch is, you don't operate it very often. But when you do, you absolutely need it to work.

In the aforementioned story, if the gentlemen had a winch mounted, he wouldn't have appeared in the tale.

The Warn VR Evo 10-S winch retails for around \$1350.



Smooth cable feed ensures maximum lifespan of the rope.



Warn VR EVO 10-S.

## Get set up with Upfitter



Makes packing a breeze.

### Bedslide 1000CL

Occasionally, a product comes across my desk that is such a good idea I wonder why I didn't think of it. If you own a ute with a tray, canopy or a tub back, eventually you will need to crawl inside or onto the back to retrieve gear. The Bedslide from Upfitter eliminates this by 'bringing your gear to you'.

Designed for a range of vehicles, the Bedslide works like a trundle tray but has the huge advantage of being above your tray rather than underneath, so you are not limited by a restrictive drawer height. Bedslides come in an array of sizes to fit a large range of utes.

The Bedslide 1000CL was sent to *Australian Shooter* for review. The '1000' means that it is designed to carry 1000lb (over 450kg almost half a tonne) on a sliding bed. This is achieved by utilising a bolt-down frame and a roller system that allows you to pull the contents of your tray out to where you can reach it.

The Bedslide 1000 utilises a 75-25 ratio, meaning that the tray will pull out to 75 per cent of its overall length.

#### Out of the box

Any product designed to partially cantilever almost half a tonne is going to have some weight about it. I won't lie - manhandling this thing onto my poor bathroom scales was a major pain. The digital readout was 54.5kg. However, this isn't as big an issue as you might think, as I reckon you'll lift it onto your ute once when you install it. Then lift it off once when you sell the ute because you can't bear to part with it.

Some assembly is required for the upper rail and for the tie-down points. The Bedslide 1000 utilises sliding mounting blocks that fit inside a profile rail system. This is a great technique, as it is strong and flexible, meaning you can simply loosen tie-down screw-eyes, slide the mounting block to where you need it and retighten.

The mounting frame features what feels like a million slotted openings for a myriad of installation options, including some side-bolting opportunities. Once mounted, the Bedslide 1000CL unit measures: 1460mm L (including handle) x 1105mm W. The bed itself is 1325mm x 1030mm W and sits approximately 105mm up off the

floor of your tray. The side and rear rails lie about 120mm off the bed (or 220mm off the tray floor).

Operation is simple as the slide comes locked in place. To unlock it, you simply pull on a T-handle to release the lock, pull the handle and the bed slides towards you. The Bedslide has two locking positions, halfway and fully (75 per cent) open. In both instances, the T-handle requires pulling out to release. Alternatively, you can keep the handle pulled and bypass the middle locking position.

It is apparent that the Bedslide has a slight incline in the fully open position. This is clever engineering, as it allows the unit to cope with the downward force that 450kg exerts while still ensuring smooth functioning.

The top of the Bedslide features the company's Weatherdek coating, which is a composite, lightweight veneer claimed to be extremely durable.

The smoothness of operation can be attributed to a pair of rated Cam Follower bearings with two ball sealed roller bearings for guides. Sizes for the Classic





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## Get set up with Upfitter



T-handle release.



Easy to undo and move.



Sturdy tie-down points.

vary from 1470mm-2400mm Long x 990mm-1200mm Wide.

I can see so much potential for a product such as this. To fully envisage the Bedslide, picture a fridge slide that has been working out with Arnold Schwarzenegger on supplements for a decade. Instead of just accessing your fridge or esky, with the addition of a few well thought out, secured storage boxes you would have easy access to the entire contents of your ute.

Alternatively, leave enough space down each side for longer items that are less likely to sneak their way up to the front of the tray. The possibilities for campers and tradies are only limited by your imagination.

Not only does it make unpacking/accessing your gear so easy, envisage being able to fully open the tray, then pack your gear and slide it home.

The side rails and sports rails feature a C channel type system, which allows easy variation of the position of the four supplied tie-down bolts. You can add extra tie-down points or other accessories if you wish.

I find it hard to find fault with the Bedslide. However, if you search their website it appears to be based on the US market and aimed primarily at Ford F-Series and Dodge RAM type utes. If you enter your vehicle's details as perhaps 'Toyota HiLux', it says there are no models

available. However, the alloy tray on my Dual Cab Lux could easily have accommodated a much larger Bedslide. My suggestion is to measure your available space side to side and front to back (and then convert inches into millimetres) and you might be pleasantly surprised.

The units vary in price depending on the vehicle and size you're after, but start at around \$2000, (which is excellent value when you consider that a quality fridge slide with drop-down is around \$1000).

More information on the full range of products is available by visiting [upfitter.com.au](http://upfitter.com.au) Use SSAA15 for 15% off. ●

\*image taken by remote means



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# Adopt and adapt



Overall view of the M27.

## How Finland's Army 'made do' with a Russian cast-off

Ivo Dimitrov

During the Second World War following the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Finland joined in as a co-belligerent of Germany to recover the territory it had lost in conflict the previous year. From here we'll detail development of the excellent M27 which was the main battle rifle of the Finnish Army during the Winter War (1939-40). In the mid-1920s talks began concerning a new service rifle to replace the older imperial Russian M91 Mosin-Nagant which had been the mainstay of the Finnish Army since the country gained independence from Russia in 1917.

Many examples in service were well worn and a good number required new barrels, stocks and other parts and despite the country's best efforts to acquire these spares abroad, it was becoming clear an update was needed. In 1924 the Civil Guard (a military organisation separate from the Army) began building the M24 which was essentially an M91 with a heavier foreign-made barrel, new stock and in some cases updated sights.

The Army was also actively re-barrelling many M91s at the time and talks revolved around two separate proposals - modification of the existing M91 or a completely new design from scratch. After submittal of the proposals it was decided it wasn't feasible both economically and politically to produce a rifle from scratch for the Finnish Army and to circumvent the cost factor, the Army Ordnance Department proposed one based on the M91 action. At this point it was becoming evident the trend internationally was towards shorter carbine-length rifles for issue to most or all services within the armed forces.

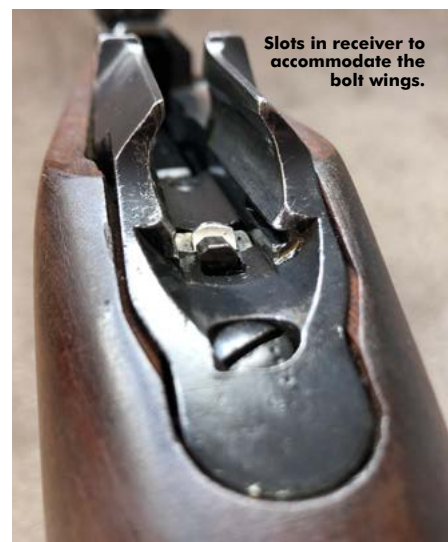
Both the Army and Civil Guard began experimenting with designs to supplement or replace the M91 rifle, the Army being first to field a new rifle originally in 1927 followed a year later by the Civil Guard. Designated the M27 it incorporated the M91 action but had a shorter barrel with a thicker profile. Finnish barrels were always thicker than their Russian counterparts which greatly contributed to their improved accuracy and with this barrel reduction, new handguard and retaining bands were introduced.

Further modifications to improve the trigger operation were also included, new sights were introduced front and rear, while stocks were to be shortened M91 versions with a deeper barrel channel to accommodate the thicker barrel of the M27. This resulted in a slightly thinner barrel channel wall that would later come back to haunt the design.

One other minor modification to the M91 bolt was also undertaken, the connecting bar for the bolt head and body replaced by a Finnish version with two small 'wings' on



Checking out the wing on the back of the bolt.



Slots in receiver to accommodate the bolt wings.

the rear of the bolt. These wings or guides fit into corresponding slots cut into the rear of the receiver where the bolt was inserted, this addition meant to stabilise the bolt and improve the loading of cartridges.

This was fine in theory but under field conditions it later proved an unforeseen problem. If the slot guides had dirt or snow in them the bolt wouldn't close properly, which also meant the bolt could only be



Rear sight with an additional step of 200m.

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## Adopt and adapt

used in an M27 with those guide slots milled into the rear of the receiver. This guide and slot modification of the bolt appeared on the first M27s and continued to be used until early 1933 when it was dropped. It's noted from interviews with some Finnish veterans during the Winter War that, when the opportunity presented, often they'd remove the Finnish M27 bolt and replace it with a Russian one without those guides.

The primary manufacturer of barrels for the M27 was Tikkakoski (Tikka), a private enterprise heavily connected to the government through contracts for military hardware, the identifying mark of the Tikka arsenal being a capital 'T' inside an inverted triangle. The other arsenal to produce M27 barrels was that of VKT or government-owned State Rifle Factory.

Early in the production schedule, various parts of the rifle suitable for sub-contracting were beginning to be outsourced around Finland, sub-contracted makers of stocks including Lindomin, Haikka and Palmin Malmin. Other parts of the rifle itself were also included in a contracted basis while the final product was assembled in several weapons depots, Asevarikko (AV) as they're known in Finnish.

Other markings commonly found on the M27 are the Finnish Army property stamp of a boxed 'SA' which can be found in several places on the barrels, as well as



A look at the Tikka barrel and F marking.



SA property stamp and D marking.

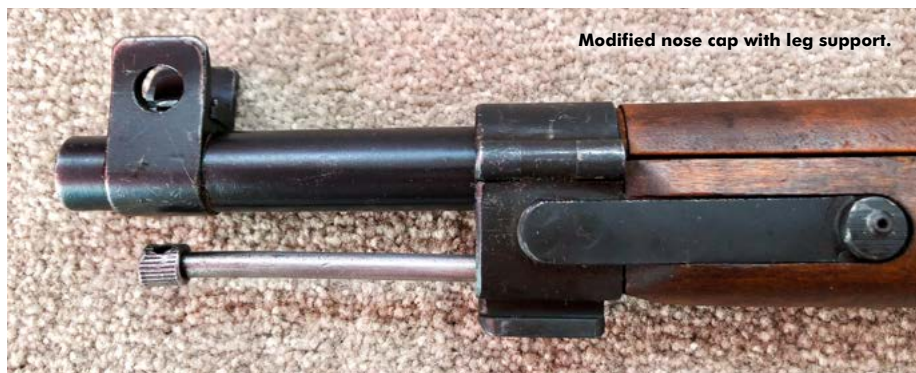
a capital 'D', the latter meaning the rifle's chamber had been modified to accept the Finnish D-166 heavy ball bullet as well as some captured Soviet ammo.

As soon as the Army began to receive and distribute enough M27s it was discovered during field exercises and live-fire training that a serious deficiency was inherent in the model. The new front nose cap/bayonet lug assembly was found to twist during bayonet fighting drills and cause the stock to split in that area, the reason being the use of cut-down M91 stocks which had the barrel channels enlarged, making for a thinner stock in that area.

In 1935 a modification to the existing nose cap with large steel support legs solved the problem and it was ordered at this time that all existing stocks would be adapted to accept the new nose cap. Additionally, it was decided the use of older M91 amended stocks be suspended and a new thicker fingered splice joint stock be introduced (it should be noted there are no fewer than six distinct stock variations in M27 rifle production).

During the closing days of the Winter War, it was essential that rifles were returned to the front as quickly as possible. Many were being sent back from the depots in a mix-match of parts with these depots apparently using what stocks they had on hand to repair damaged M27s. The rifle was produced until 1940 and was the main one used by the Finnish Army during the Winter War. Around 69,000 were made with only 26,700 recorded in the Finnish Army inventory of 1951, following a large attrition rate in both the Winter and Continuation Wars against the USSR. They were held in reserve until 1986 at which point they became surplus to requirements.

The M27 featured in this article was produced in 1932 with a Tikka-made barrel and has the post-1935 modified nose cap with leg support, a later replacement spliced stock and features the early bolt with wing guides. The Finns didn't manufacture receivers and bolts and almost exclusively recycled them from imperial Russian M91s. The featured example is no exception, being built on a 1905-made Tula M91 receiver with the tang 905r date and hammer logo for Tula. ●



Modified nose cap with leg support.

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# Outfoxed!

Leon Wright draws on years of experience to down wily predators

**A**s the old 4x4 ute trundled through the thick stubble paddock, covey after covey of quail exploded from almost beneath the front wheels, a pleasing sight not just to us but to Missy, my Curly-coated Retriever, who was almost beside herself on the back seat. As the arc of the spotlight swept over the far corner of the paddock the beam picked up the eyes of a fox, then it was gone. Dismissing it as 'that one we've been trying to get for ages' we continued searching for a more co-operative target.

By the time summer's over we've taken care of most of the foxes but in practically every big paddock we operate in there's normally at least one survivor. It's usually an old fox that's been through it all before, one who knows all the tricks, but there's another

trick we had up our sleeve and I was going to revert to it the following morning.

There's a small window of opportunity to outwit these cunning creatures and that's the couple of hours just on first light when you can catch them sneaking home across a paddock, though it wasn't all easy going. A flat-shooting rifle was definitely the firearm of choice, as sometimes the ranges can stretch out to around 300m so good gear is essential.

For this type of hunting I favour the .22-250 and have complete faith in the cartridge. My present rifle is a Tikka T3 and to bring out the full potential a good scope is necessary. I have a Leupold 4-12-50 variable fitted and am confident this combination will drop any fox out to 300m, preferably closer, but you never know when

hunting over stubble paddocks. I also wear complete camo gear down to gloves and mask and find that when wearing this a fox may see you, but if you keep movement to a minimum they have trouble working out what you are.

One cunning fox operates around a dam with a wildlife corridor full of kangaroo grass running around it. A number of times we'd put it up but it always managed to give us the slip, so I decided to do something about it. Early morning found me sitting by the fence on top of a small hillock with a splendid view across the stubble to the bordering wildlife corridor.

I sat and watched the day emerge from the dawn, keeping an eye out for the fox sneaking home, but after half-an-hour thought I'd give the predator call a try.



Flat-shooting rifles and a good pair of binoculars are crucial when hunting foxes over wide areas.



Sometimes it takes a pre-dawn start and being completely camouflaged to snare the cunning ones.



With no cover available I sat down in the stubble, rested the .22-250 on my shooting sticks and went to work with the call. Surprise, surprise the fox popped out of the wildlife corridor and was on to me straight away. Thanks to the camo gear it couldn't make me out and with the predator call behind my raised knees I let out a couple of low pleading wails, which did the trick. The fox started approaching cautiously then thought better of the situation and propped, trying to work out what was going on.

By now it was well within range of the .22-250 and after slowly sliding the rifle on to the shooting sticks, I touched the shot off. Hit square in the chest the fox collapsed and on examining it I quickly realised the .22-250 is not the calibre to use if you're after pelts. This was definitely the one I'd been after and that gave me a pleasing sense of achievement.

A couple of mornings later I was out after another old fox which had also been giving us the run-around. It was a somewhat similar scenario, a stubble paddock running down to a dam and wildlife corridor but this time I had a tree to sit in front of. The first wails of the predator call produced instant results, not from a fox but a hare which bolted straight in. At about 20m it propped,

gave me a good hard look then headed back into the scrub.

All in all that inquisitive hare came hopping around five times in answer to my predator call. I'd have tipped it over and taken it home to feed the dogs but was keen to collar the old fox I knew worked this

area. Then with the hare almost running over the top of it the fox appeared, giving me the chance to send off a steadied shot which bowled the redcoat over.

A week or so later with my son-in-law Robert, we were off to an early start after yet another fox which had eluded all our



**When ranges start to get out a fair way, good accurate equipment is vital. The rifle is a Tikka T3 in .22-250 topped with a Leupold 4-12-50 variable scope.**



**Bamboo shooting sticks come in handy when long shots are the norm over large paddocks.**

## Outfoxed!

spotlighting efforts. Wildlife corridors are havens for ferals and while I knew of this one's general routine, I also realised we'd only have one crack at it.

Robert would be doing the shooting and after we'd quietly slipped into the paddock I had a look around with the binoculars. Although it was still early morning and a little dark, we decided to head for a tree halfway out in the stubble and spotted movement further out. It was the fox heading home.

We squatted down and while Robert slipped a round into the action of the .22-250 and settled in behind the shooting sticks, I started working the predator call. As expected the fox gave me nothing more than a cursory glance and continued on its way. Then as if on cue it couldn't resist stopping for a listen and that was all Robert needed with the resulting shot flattening the predator. Robert was pleased and rightly so as he'd pulled off a difficult shot.

A short time earlier I'd been talking to the property owner who mentioned seeing three foxes in a paddock south-west of the house. The area had a dam surrounded by wildlife corridors, but this one also had two dry creek beds full of kangaroo grass branching off, the perfect spot to ambush a redcoat.

A tree 100m from the dam was where I was heading so I settled in and reached for the predator call. Ten minutes later I was still working the call with no response so I moved a bit closer to the stand of trees beside the dam. After another session with the call I decided to climb the dam bank and try from there. No sooner had I done so when I flushed a fox from almost under my feet, though it caught my scent from the crosswind and I mentally kicked myself for making such an amateur mistake.

Dismissing it as one of those things which come your way occasionally, I sat in the shade on top of the dam bank and stated working the call. Instantly a fox trotted out of the kangaroo grass opposite the dam, looked in my direction and continued until I stopped it with a "hey". Standing stock still it presented an easy shot for the .22-250 and surprisingly this was a young one, but the fewer foxes the better as far as the property owner was concerned.

With temperatures tipped to reach 39C I'd no intention of being out too late, so cut across the fence line back to my ute. Wandering along I was taken aback when I spotted a fox making its way through sheep in the neighbouring paddock. If it stuck to its present course it would cross my path 100m out, so I hunkered down and waited.



It may just be one fox but Leon had been chasing it for a couple of years and was chuffed to finally collar it.

I had the .22-250 resting on the shooting sticks with the cross-hairs of the scope firmly fixed, a sharp whistle stopping it in its tracks and the .22-250 doing the rest.

There's a big difference between a young, inexperienced hungry fox and an old specimen that's survived a few seasons of pursuit and I love hunting the cunning ones, beating them at their own game. I guess that's just the hunter in me. ●

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# Go nuts!

Benelli's Lupo Walnut a hunter's dream, says **Con Kapralos**



Since its inception several years ago Benelli's Lupo sporting rifle has certainly given pundits something to think about. Having gleaned the best concepts from their shotgun expertise and applied them to a blank canvas when designing the Lupo, a modern classic was born.

While the original Lupo sported a black glass-filled polymer buttstock and fore-end mated to the aluminium 'mini-chassis', the new models embrace hydro-dipped camouflage patterns applied to the buttstock, fore-end and chassis frame for more visual appeal together with matte-finished barrelled actions.

Yet Benelli also realised rifle purists would have to be catered to with a walnut-stocked version and the result is in the spotlight here - the Lupo Walnut - the rifle a superb example in aesthetics, form and function. Beretta Australia supplied one in the booming .300 Winchester Magnum calibre, the rifle fitted with a Steiner Ranger optic along with ammunition from Sako and Sellier & Bellot for testing.

## At a glance

The impressive shipping carton contains a comprehensive user manual, itemised contents list, Benelli Surface Treatment (B.E.S.T.) technical brief and test target. The bare rifle weighs 3.27kg and measures 1125mm with the 30mm recoil pad and spacers fitted.

## Chassis, buttstock and fore-end

An aluminium chassis is milled using state-of-the-art CNC machining lathes, producing a single entity with precise tolerances. The chassis provides a solid platform for the barrelled action to mate up to, with one action screw in the rear of the chassis through the top of bolt raceway and another anchored into the underside of the front receiver ring just forward of the recoil lug. The recoil lug is affixed into the chassis



Layout of the action with high gloss B.E.S.T. metal treatment and one-piece Picatinny rail as standard.

body and mates with a machined slot in the underside of the receiver. The chassis also serves as the magazine well which accepts the polymer detachable box magazine and additionally has the bolt notch and trigger-guard in its design.

The individual walnut buttstock and fore-end pieces attach to the chassis via through-bolts, one at the front end (for the fore-end) and one through the buttstock proper anchoring into the rear of the chassis. The aluminium chassis is anodised in a matte dark-grey finish with the 'Lupo' name inscribed in gold just under the front receiver ring.

The satin-finished AA-grade walnut buttstock and fore-end is nicely profiled with a pleasant ambidextrous cheekpiece and raised Monte Carlo comb allowing excellent cheek-weld when using an optic. Chequered panels adorn the pistol grip and fore-end and are perfect in their positioning and execution. There's also provision for fitting sling swivel studs to the buttstock and fore-end and studs are supplied with the rifle, rubber plugs covering the points where these can be fitted.



The walnut buttstock is well profiled with ambidextrous cheekpiece and Monte Carlo comb for positive cheek-weld.

One main feature is the ability to adjust length-of-pull and cast of the stock to suit requirements. Benelli offer different shims to adjust cast and stock height/drop, the full set supplied with the rifle and each marked according to its purpose. Benelli also fit their superb Precision Comfort recoil pad.

## Barrelled action

This comprises the receiver made of mild steel mated to the patented cryogenically treated barrel (CRIO) using a locking nut to precisely adjust headspace. The receiver has a rounded profile with the exception of the top which is flat and additionally drilled and tapped to take scope-mounting hardware, the rifle fitted with a one-piece Picatinny rail as standard.

To the rear left of the receiver is a spring-loaded toggle bolt release button, with a small gas port located in the front left receiver ring to divert ignition gases away from the shooter's face. The ejection port on the right is designed for unhindered case ejection and also enables the magazine to be top-loaded by hand, something appreciated by hunters.

The 610mm barrel is in .300 Winchester Magnum calibre and of a sporter profile, having a twist rate of one-in-11" which will handle most popular .30-calibre bullet weights. The chamber and rifling are match grade and the muzzle finished with a target-grade crown as well as being threaded M14x1 for use with accessories and covered with a cap.

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## Go nuts!

The barrelled action is given a glossy finish which looks like a deep blue/black, reminiscent of rifles of yesteryear. The BE.S.T. results in a high surface hardness and low friction coefficient, an indestructible barrier that's impervious to anything the elements or user can subject the metalwork to.

### Bolt, safety and trigger

The bolt incorporates three locking lugs with a 60-degree lift and is a single piece of steel with a scalloped section in the middle which permits cartridges loaded in the magazine to sit slightly higher, achieving better feeding in the process. The bolt head is a separate piece attached to the body with a pin, case extraction and ejection via a plunger through the face and claw extractor recessed into the locking lug rim. To the rear an aluminium bolt shroud keeps everything intact and there's also a provision for field stripping the bolt by pressing a small tab and removing the bolt shroud, firing pin and spring.

The bolt handle is functional as well as aesthetic. The main shaft lies at an angle to the side of the rifle in the bolt-notch but the handle then kicks out at an angle, terminating with an oval knob. It comes to the hand nicely, allowing for positive grip and fast cycling of the action and the bolt also has the BE.S.T. finish which complements the rest of the metalwork.

The safety mechanism is a two-position affair on a tang behind the bolt shroud, inletted into the head of the buttstock. Its linear movement is simple to use and benefits from a small safety over-ride button behind the bolt notch. When the safety is 'on' the bolt handle is locked down and firing pin blocked but on pressing the over-ride button, the action can be cycled and chamber cleared of loaded rounds. The trigger unit is attached to the underside of the receiver and is of a traditional single stage design with a crisp break and no evidence of creep. The trigger is adjustable from 1-2kg and was set at 1.4kg from the factory, fine for testing.

### Magazine

This is designed to match the contours of the aluminium chassis and is of a four-shot capacity made of polymer. Loaded rounds

sit in a twin-stack configuration and are held securely with design elements built into the follower and magazine body. The magazine clips into place securely and sits flush with the base of the chassis, removal done by pressing a clip release on the front edge. One pleasing feature is it can be top-loaded through the ejection port.

### Range testing

With the Lupo Walnut in .300 Winchester Magnum, I decided to revert to three-shot groups purely for shooting comfort. Beretta Australia supplied two factory loads from Sako and Sellier & Bellot and I added another factory load in Federal's Power-Shok.

What was immediately evident was recoil control. With the superb Progressive Comfort management system, shooting the Lupo Walnut was acceptable though you still knew it was a Magnum and opting for three-shot groups instead of five was a smart move. What did help in reducing felt recoil was the overall weight of 4.08kg with the Steiner Ranger optic fitted and shooters could also use a muzzle brake to help reduce muzzle flip.

The rifle cycled all ammunition without issue and likewise extracted fired cases. Accuracy was acceptable for a calibre suited to large game species, with average groups all coming in at around 1.5 MOA (~42mm) or less. The Sako Super Hammerhead load was the stand-out and would be my choice for a hunting load.

### Overview

Of all the current Benelli Lupo models the Walnut is cream of the crop. It looks beautiful with its glossy BE.S.T. barrelled action and AA-grade walnut with subdued satin finish. The rifle's inherent design features give it the utmost in form, fit and function for the discerning hunter. While the big .300 Winchester Magnum was a handful, calibre-wise a Lupo Walnut in any of the standard calibres fitted with a compact 3-9x or 2-10x hunting optic would make a sweet stalking/hunting rifle. All Benelli Lupo models retail around the \$2899 mark. More at [berettaaustralia.com.au](http://berettaaustralia.com.au) ●

The four-shot magazine holds rounds in a double-stack fashion and clips smoothly into the chassis body.



The Benelli Lupo Walnut preferred Sako Super Hammerhead 180-grain loads when tested over the bench.

## Specifications

- Model:** Lupo Walnut
- Manufacturer:** Benelli Arms, Italy
- Distributor:** Beretta Australia
- Calibres:** .300 Win Mag (tested) also available in .243 Win, 6.5 CM, .270 Win, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg
- Chassis:** Aluminium alloy
- Action:** Steel with BE.S.T. treatment.
- Bolt:** Three locking lugs, fluted, BE.S.T. gloss finish
- Trigger:** Adjustable for reach (+/-2mm) using spacer (1mm) and shim (1mm), trigger pull adjustable
- Safety:** Tang-mounted two-position with bolt locking lever
- Barrel:** Sporter weight: 560mm on standard calibres, 610mm on 6.5 Creed and .300 Win Mag
- Magazine:** Double stack detachable, five rounds in standard calibres, four in .300 Win Mag
- Stock:** AA-grade walnut buttstock and fore-end, Monte Carlo profile
- Length:** 1082mm (.243 Win, .270 Win, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg) | 125mm (6.5 Creed, .300 Win Mag)
- Weight:** 3.27kg (review rifle)
- RRP:** Around \$2899

Two-position safety is just behind the rear tang.



Benelli Lupo Walnut in .300 Win Mag: Accuracy Testing at 100m

Ammunition	Best group (mm)	Worst group (mm)	Average group size (mm)*
Sako Super Hammerhead 180gr Bonded Soft Point	17	46	28
Sellier & Bellot 180gr SPCE	29	42	37
Federal Power-Shok 180gr Soft-Point	34	49	41

\* Average group from five 3-shot groups at 100m using front benchrest and rear bag

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20166492	6.5 Creedmoor	140gr	0.373	2657 fps	\$50
20166592	6.5 PRC	140gr	0.373	2887 fps	\$79
20169562	270 Win.	130gr	0.359	3051 fps	\$63
20171502	7mm-08 Rem.	150gr	0.341	2756 fps	\$62
20171512	7mm Rem. Mag.	150gr	0.341	3018 fps	\$82
20177382	308 Win.	150gr	0.274	2822 fps	\$50
20177392	30-06 SPRG	150gr	0.274	2887 fps	\$62
20177412	300 Win. Mag.	150gr	0.274	3248 fps	\$89

Norma's Whitetail line of ammunition is loaded in Åmotfors Sweden with the same consistency and care as all Norma Ammunition. Norma Whitetail features the highest quality brass that meets and exceeds the standard set forth by reloaders. Norma's proven soft-point bullet features a flat-based bullet that offers consistent accuracy every time.

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# Two more enter Benchrest Hall of Fame

This New South Wales quartet lifted the State of Origin Trophy.

Allan Blane

The 2023 SSAA Benchrest National Championships took place during the Easter weekend at Dairyville Range near Coffs Harbour with four days of excellent shooting producing a different winner each time. The Unlimited class was first to be contested, this one requiring 10-shot groups at each yardage. Remarkably, of the smallest groups for the five targets only one exceeded two-tenths of an inch, the best of them being a .143 shot by Milan Morrell which helped him win the aggregate with .2284.

The longer yardage also saw some amazing groups, the smallest of them a .300 by Paul Sullivan while the longer aggregate produced a clear win for Les Fraser on .2645. It's of note that no fewer than 17 'Screamer' award patches (for very small groups) were won on the day, surely a record. The Unlimited grand aggregate went to Fraser on .2560 from Sullivan (.2588) and John Gnech (.2945).

Saturday was Light Rifle day and again those tiny groups came thick and fast with the best of them a .114 by Gavin Marshall, though the aggregate award went to Mark Taller on .2058. At 200 yards it was the same story with tiny groups and excellent aggregates, the best of them a .240 by Keith Sewell which saw him win the aggregate with .2327. The Light Benchrest grand aggregate title also went to Sewell on .2313 from Marshall (.2715) and Sullivan (.2811).

Sunday brought Heavy Benchrest and shooters were now coming to grips with the vagaries of the Dairyville range. At 100 yards the smallest target went to Ron Sinclair with a tidy .111 group, the winning 100-yard aggregate an excellent .1722 shot by Mitchell Taller. At 200 yards, newly-elected National Benchrest Chairman Dave McKillop produced the best group with a .234, the aggregate won by Darren Parsons who put together a nice .1850. The Heavy Benchrest grand aggregate also went to Parsons on .1888 from Mitchell Taller (.2215) and Sullivan (.2225).

The last event was for the Sporter Benchrest class which has a weight limit of 9lbs and is considered by some the most difficult class to master. The smallest group at 100 yards was shot by Brendan Atkinson with a .114 while the aggregate saw Marshall put together an excellent .2006 for the win. The 200 yards proved challenging



Gavin Marshall (left) receives the Sporter class trophy from Rod Madeley.



Heavy Benchrest champion Darren Parsons (left) is congratulated by Coffs Harbour club president Rod Madeley.

and John Babic took the small group prize with a .331 while Michael Thompson took out the aggregate with .2605. Winner of the Sporter class was Marshall on .2673 from Sewell (.2753) and McKillop (.2761).

• Other results: Four-Gun Champion Trophy: Sullivan (.2668), Parsons (.2712), Fraser (.2795). Three-Gun (SR, LB, HB): Parsons (.2594), Sewell (.2540), Sullivan (.2694). Two-Gun (LB, HB): Parsons (.2369), Sullivan (.2518), Mitchell Taller (.2535). State of Origin Trophy: New South Wales (Parsons, Ray Beavis, Mitchell Taller, Thompson). Top Junior: Josh Russell. Hall of Fame: Two more shooters scored enough points to enter the prestigious Benchrest Hall of Fame so well done Gavin Marshall and Darren Parsons. ●



Four-gun champion Paul Sullivan flanked by runner-up Darren Parsons (right) and Les Fraser.



Rod Madeley congratulates leading junior Josh Russell.



Three-gun winner Darren Parsons.





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<b>C635(F)</b>	640x512 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>6.5h	35mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1800m
<b>C450(F)</b>	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	50mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	2600m
<b>C435(F)</b>	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	35mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1800m
<b>C425(F)</b>	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	25mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1300m



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# Up close *and* personal

Daniel O'Dea was blown away by the latest Zeiss binoculars

Front rubber lens covers stay attached but fold out when viewing.

I've been in this shooting and hunting game for quite a few decades now and have to say one of the first things I worked out was that rifle and scope aside, there were two items I considered essential - quality binoculars and boots. Binos to find the quarry, boots to reach them. I vividly recall more than 20 years ago when, with great hesitance, I laid out the best part of a couple of thousand dollars, a king's ransom back then, for a pair of high-grade European binoculars but I've never looked back (pardon the pun).

The difference was amazing. Optics in general have advanced greatly but back then it was literally the difference between looking at foliage and individual leaves on trees. When scanning for prey the depth of perception allowed me to look into the tree line at distance to identify game which might remain invisible when viewed through lesser optics. Over that time I've also learned the good thing about buying such quality optics is they do last, in my case 20 years. Mine are

still going strong and when you break down the cost, at \$100 a year they haven't been a bad investment at all.

As a big fan of Euro optics I'm always pleased when a product arrives on my bench for review and Zeiss will always be a favoured option for many. In this case Outdoor Sporting Agencies supplied a pair from Zeiss in their SFL 40 compact binoculars, the latest in the Zeiss SF (Smart Focus) line, the L stands for lightweight. The theory is pretty simple - Zeiss have set out to provide the usual exceptional optical performance in a lighter and more compact form.

The eternal compromise for just about all hunting kits is weight over performance, the most obvious example being a heavier rifle perhaps offers more accuracy though you have to carry it. Same deal with binoculars - larger ones might be more powerful, have better light transition and be more durable but when they're hanging round your neck all day, you may have second thoughts about carrying them.

Up-close focus can be achieved as near as 1.5m

In order to shed weight without adversely affecting performance, Zeiss has reduced the lens diameter by just 2mm which allows the use of thinner lens elements at closer spacing than usual. The result provides a 20 per cent saving in weight and 13 per cent reduction in volume compared to the normal Zeiss SF range. The company claims their SFLs are up to 30 per cent lighter than comparable competitor products.

The SFL category enjoys other stand-out Zeiss features such as the Smart Focus mentioned earlier, a concept which provides a larger and perfectly positioned focus wheel for both ease and speed of adjustment. Special new UHD (Ultra High Definition) coatings offer even higher levels of colour reproduction and natural fidelity. In wet weather, LotuTec coatings have rain drop beads to keep your view clear while T\* multi-coating provides a high degree of light transmission in lowlight conditions.

As with most optics brands these days it's always a bit of a challenge wrapping your head around all the 'factory speak', trademarks and unique selling feature acronyms, yet with Zeiss it all makes sense when you pick up these glasses and have a look through them. The SFL 40s come professionally presented in their



Matching sling loops on the body and lens cover retains the cover to avoid loss.



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## Up close and personal

blue-logoed white box containing the binoculars cocooned within a well-padded black Cordura soft case. Other kit includes rubberised front individual lens covers, a rear lens cover with carry strap eyes, the usual quality check ticket and product manuals plus two carry straps, one each for the binos and case.

The compact nature of these binoculars is self-evident and being 144mm long x 114mm wide they weigh just 640 grams. For glasses offering these features and performance, to me they present as about three-quarter size to what you might expect. The sizing is a welcome compromise as I find a lot of binos with the 'compact' tag tend to be a bit small in hand and not easy to hold and operate. In the field you want them heavy enough to sit steady when glassing over extended periods but not so weighty as to cause fatigue when doing this. The Zeiss SFL 8x40s are about perfect in this respect.

The 8x magnification behind a 40mm objective lens size provides an exit pupil diameter of 5mm and eye relief of 18mm. Light transmission is listed at 90 per cent with a twilight factor of 17.9. Adjustment allows for a pupil distance of between 52-74mm, so with the average human pupillary distance (distance between your eyeballs) being 63mm, that means almost everyone on the planet should be able to find a comfortable setting within this adjustment scale.

In use, the large centrally located Smart Focus ring is found intuitively when a grip is taken and the binoculars brought to your eyes. This adjustment ring provides

adequate resistance to allow for precise focus tweaks while the oversized nature of the ring itself equally provides sufficient mechanical advantage to obtain such fine alterations with ease. And still on focus adjustment it's worth noting a smaller rubber ring the full diameter of the right-hand side ocular housing provides +/- 4 diopter modification so you can balance out any difference in focus between both eyes.

For those unaccustomed to the process and similar to most binos offering diopter adjustment, to alter in this case you'd close your right eye and focus the binoculars to be perfect for your open left eye. Closing the left eye and maintaining the current tuning point on the main focus ring you then use the diopter adjustment to fine focus the right eye, balancing any difference between the two. With the diopter difference now set, focusing using the main focus ring for varying distances should remain in balance for both eyes.

A generous field of view of 140m at 1000m has a lot of ground covered when glassing far afield but up-close focus can be achieved as near as 1.5m. It's great for birdwatching or close observation from a stand and could also be handy for finding lost brass. Of course the binoculars are nitrogen filled and in this case water resistant to a pressure of 400 mbar, research telling me this is equal to roughly the pressure encountered when submerged in a little over 4m of water. So in general use, inclement conditions, hosing mud off or falling into a creek with them isn't going to pose a problem.

I strapped the Zeiss SFL 40s on to carry afield several times and they were a joy to



use. With such quality optics it's almost that feeling you have standing in an electronics store in front of the latest hi-tech TV when the picture on screen looks better and sharper than real life. In the case of the SFL 40s it's real life only clearer. At dusk and at night they were equally impressive and last November proved popular when the kids and I stood in the dark to watch the lunar eclipse. We could just about make out the US flag Neil Armstrong left up there!

A quality set of binoculars are a must for anyone in the shooting sports and once owned you'd be surprised just how many times you might also use them outside those endeavours. The SFL 8x40s are one option in a fine selection of Zeiss binoculars with just about something for every application. The SFL 40s retail for around \$2500 but you'll still have change out of that if you shop around. It may sound a lot but it's a quality that'll last a lifetime. ●

The main carry strap is well padded and adequately distributes weight.



## Specifications

<b>Model:</b> Zeiss SFL 40
<b>Transmission:</b> 90%
<b>Magnification:</b> 8x40: 8x, 10x40: 10x
<b>Effective lens diameter:</b> 40mm
<b>Exit pupil diameter:</b> 8x40: 5mm, 10x40: 4mm
<b>Twilight factor:</b> 8x40: 17.9, 10x40: 20
<b>Field of view (m/1000m   ft/1000yds):</b> 8x40: 140m   420ft, 10x40: 115m   345ft
<b>Subjective viewing angle:</b> 60°
<b>Close focusing distance:</b> 1.5m   4.9ft
<b>Diopter adjustment range:</b> + -4
<b>Exit pupil distance:</b> 18mm
<b>Interpupillary distance (IPD):</b> 52-74mm
<b>Prism system:</b> Schmidt-Pechan
<b>Coating:</b> T*
<b>Nitrogen Filling:</b> Yes
<b>Water resistance:</b> 400mbar
<b>Operating temperature:</b> -20/+55°C   -4/+131°F
<b>Length:</b> 144mm   5.7in
<b>Width at an interpupillary distance of 65mm:</b> 114mm   4.5in
<b>Weight:</b> 640g   22.6oz



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### SSAA Hoodie

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The SSAA Navy Hoodie is a Gildan heavy blend top made from 50% cotton and 50% polyester preshrunk yarn.

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### SSAA Range Mat and Rifle Carry Case

The SSAA Range Mat and Rifle Carry Case offers two fantastic products in the one item. It is a safe and protective way to transport your firearms and then, once you have reached your destination, you can use it as a comfortable shooting mat. Simply unzip, unfold and focus on your target.



Please visit our website for more details.

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### Snake Bite Kit

In the SSAA Snake Bite Kit are two snake bite indicator bandages and an easy to follow first-aid guide specific to snake bites. Along with other necessary bandages, the kit is compact and packaged in a durable, soft canvass bag that can be worn on a belt, making it easy to take it with you wherever you go.

**\$34.95**



### SSAA turns 75 this year!

To celebrate the SSAA's 75th anniversary we have a special production run of 75-year anniversary pins and cloth badges.

The 75-year anniversary pins are uniquely numbered and measure 25mm x 30mm (approximately). The 75-year cloth badges measure 75mm x 60mm (approximately).



Pin **\$29.95**



Cloth badge **\$19.95**



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Welcome to our latest showcase of Australia's diverse, sustainable and environmentally friendly offerings in Field to Fork – Second Helpings.

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### SSAA Schrade Multi Tool Silver

This handy tool can be stowed safely in its sturdy, fold flap pouch and securely closed with a tough Velcro patch. The belt/loop system helps you keep track of your multi tool so you can cut, file, pry and pinch your way through any job.

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### SSAA Sports Umbrella

The automatic opening SSAA Sports Umbrella has eight strong 190T showerproof polyester panels and eight windproof 76cm ribs. It has a fibreglass shaft with a soft EVA hand grip.

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### SSAA Beanies

Keep your head and ears warm with SSAA Beanies!  
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### SSAA Traditional Logo Belt Buckle

The SSAA Traditional Logo Pewter Belt Buckle measures approximately 8cm x 6cm, comes with protective pouch and care instructions – just add your favourite belt!

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## National

### Combined Services National Postal Shoot

May 1-September 4, 2023  
All clubs and branches  
Program: Full details on National website. Contact:  
Steve Knight 0428 876 991.

### Rifle Metallic Silhouette National Rimfire Postal Shoot

June 1-November 30, 2023  
All SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette clubs  
Program: 40-shot match in accordance with SSAA Rifle  
Metallic Silhouette rule book. Contact: Kathy Tobler  
email toblerkathy@gmail.com

### International MLAIC 2023 Pacific Zone Postal Shoot

July 1-September 30, 2023  
Between July and September 2023, we will be holding  
the MLAIC Postal Shoot. This is an international postal  
shoot with New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Canada,  
Japan, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina and Australia. Events  
for O- Original and R- Reproduction Firearms (Rifle,  
Pistol, Shotgun and Musket). A mixture of new rifle and  
pistol events are included. A full event list is available  
on the SSA National website along with entry forms.  
Nominations capped at 16 entries/country per event.  
Nominations: \$15-\$20/event, depending on the  
number of entries and exchange rates. Rules: MLAIC  
Rule Book 2022. Prizes: Medals awarded for 1st, 2nd  
and 3rd. Certificates for 4th, 5th and 6th. Contact:  
Michael Nicholas, secretary@ssaapara.org.au or 0467  
763 716.

### National Muzzle Loading Postal Shooter

July 1-December 31, 2023  
Program: 1 X Military 50m offhand Class 1; 1 X  
Traditional 50m offhand Class 2; 1 X Flintlock 50m  
offhand; 1 X 100m bench rest Class 1 & 2; 1 X 100m  
bench rest Class 3; 1 X 25m Precision revolver Class  
1 & 3; 1 X 25m Precision pistol Class 2; 1 X 25m  
Snap pistol Class 1 & 2; 1 X Percussion shotgun; 1 X  
100m bench rest BP Cartridge. Matches to be shot  
during programmed matches at your range and scores  
witnessed by range officer. Rule Book Number 8  
applies. All scores to the Muzzle Loading Chairman by  
end of December; results announced January. Medals  
sent by end of February. All targets signed by Range  
Officer; include name/address of competitors and the  
event entering. Send scores to Steve Nicholas National  
Discipline Chairman; GPO Box 2013, Adelaide South  
Australia 5001 or muzzleloading@disciplines.ssaa.org.  
au, secretary@ssaapara.org.au

### International Handgun Metallic Silhouette National Championships

September 28-October 6, 2023  
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA  
Program: September 28-October 1: Small Bore,  
Field Pistol. October 2-6: Big Bore. See National  
website for full line-up. Facilities: Camping available,  
canteen. Contact: Russell Mowles via email at  
handgunsilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

### SSAA Combined Services National Championships

September 29-October 1, 2023  
Eagle Park Range, Little River, Vic.  
Program: See National website for full details. Facilities:  
Camping at range with showers and toilets, powered  
sites, canteen on range open for breakfast and lunch,  
dinner on Saturday at 6pm. Contact: Jim Oden  
secretary@vmrc.com

### Air Rifle Field Target National Championships

September 29-October 1, 2023  
SSAA Range, Majura, ACT  
Program: September 29: Practice. September 30:  
Open Air Rifle FT. October 1: Open Springer Air Rifle  
FT. Facilities: On-site camping \$10 daily per adult,  
juniors \$5. No fires. Catering and supermarkets nearby.  
Contact: Chris Dale 0418 255 874 or Darius Krivanek  
0418 103 360.

### BPCR Silhouette Nationals

September 29-October 1, 2023  
Rankins Springs Target Shooting Complex, Lake  
Cargelligo Rd, Rankin Springs, NSW  
Rifle Metallic Silhouette Program: Fri 29 Sept Range  
set up/practice. Sat AM .22BPCR 40-Shot Match  
followed by 40-Shot BPCR 'Any Sight'. Sun AM 40-  
Shot .22BPCR Match followed by 40-Shot BPCR  
National Championship. Nomination fee \$20/event  
or \$70/four events. Pre-nominations essential. Email  
nominations to: danmac4070@gmail.com Rules: SSAA  
RMS Rulebook. Prizes: National medals and prize table.  
Facilities: Canteen for breakfast and lunch. Pub in town.  
Caravan park and camping in town. Primitive camping  
on the range. Contact: Dan Mac 0408 480 105,  
danmac4070@gmail.com

### National Lever Action Championships

Dates: September 30 - October 2, 2023  
Host Branch/Club: Alice Springs SSAA  
Rules: As per National Lever Action Rule Book  
Facilities: See information nomination form online..  
Contact: Jim Ellis 0418 675 526 or leveraction@  
disciplines.ssaa.org.au

### Australian Single Action Shooting National Championships 2023

October 16-22, 2023  
Frontier Shooting Club, State Shooting Park, Virginia,  
South Australia.  
Program: Monday 16th gates open; Tuesday 17th Long  
Range Rifle & Side Events; Wednesday 18th Mexican  
Standoff & Warm up Stages; Thursday 19th 4 Main  
Stages & Side Events; Friday 20th 4 Stages and Side  
Events; Saturday 21st 4 Main Stages & Side Events, Main  
Dinner; Sunday 22nd Master Gunfighter & Awards  
Presentation. Nominations Close October 1, 2023.  
SASS rules apply. Shooters must be SSAA members.  
Facilities: Camping with showers and toilets; no power  
available. Contact: Violet Rose 0407 182 249.

### Long Range Precision National Match

October 20-22, 2023  
T42 SSAA Tasmania State Range, 770 Wooddale Rd,  
Runmede, TAS 7190  
Program: Friday 20th 2pm range open for zero  
checking; Saturday 21st 8am sign-on and scrutineering,  
9am start with Match 1: 500m and Match 2: 600m.  
Sunday 22nd 8am sign-on,  
9am start with Match 3: 700m and Match 4: 800m.  
Nominations close September 30, 2023. Nomination  
form can be found on SSAA National website. Send to:  
secretary@ssaatas.com.au; Rules: SSAA Long Range  
Precision Shooting Official Rule Book No. 1. Prizes  
TBA. Facilities: Camping available at the state range  
(toilets, fire places and limited water).

## NSW

### SSAA NSW Muzzleloading Rifle & Pistol Championships

October 21-22, 2023  
Mid-Western Pistol Club Inc.; Windamere Regional  
Shooting Complex, 8863 Castlereagh Hwy,  
Cudgegong NSW 2850. Program: 20 Friday - Noon  
to 5pm Practice; 21 Saturday - 8am registration/bench  
allocation. 9am start. 22 Sunday - 8am start. See  
SSAA National website for full program. Nominations:

See National website. Rule Book 8 to apply, available  
to download from National ML website. Prizes:  
Medal presentation on Sunday afternoon. Facilities:  
Free camping for tents/caravans, with toilets and hot  
showers. BBQ lunches and cold drinks for purchase  
Sat/Sun. Range dinner for purchase Saturday night  
(nominate beforehand). Contact: Shayne Bamsley  
on 0418 302 062 or darth\_royce@hotmail.com;  
Alison Hughes on 0407 853 393 or secretary@mid-  
westpistolclub.org.au

## Tas

### SSAA Tasmania 5-Stand State Championships

November 10-12, 2023  
State Complex, Woodsdale, Tas.  
Program: Friday: Side x Side 50 targets HCP; Sub-gauge  
50 targets HCP. Saturday: 100 targets 5-Stand; Sunday:  
100 targets 5-Stand. Facilities: Camping on-site, limited  
facilities, full canteen Saturday and Sunday. Contact:  
Dale Foggo 0408 361 638 or dalepest@msn.com

### SSAA (Tas) Single Action State Championships

November 25-26, 2023  
Glenorchy Mitchell Range, Tas  
Program: Saturday: 8.30 briefing, 6+ stages. Sunday:  
9.30 briefing, 4+ stages, Master Gunfighter stage and  
presentation. Contact: Ray Vallerine 0487 334 714.

## Qld

### Queensland NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoots

All (SSAA) Qld branches with approval to shoot Postal  
Metallic Silhouette Program: Shoot 1: February 1-May  
31; Shoot 2: April 1-July 31; Shoot 3: May 1-August  
31; Shoot 4: August 1-November 30. See National  
website for full event details. Contact: Hazel Bozic  
(07)4128 0467 or pms@ssaaqld.org.au

### SSAA (Qld) Field Rifle, NRA 3P and 4P State Championships

August 18-20, 2023  
SSAA Townsville, Hervey Range  
Program: August 18: Practice. 19: Rimfire Field Rifle  
(42 shots), Centrefire Field Rifle (42 shots). 20: Rimfire  
NRA 3P (60 shots), Centrefire 4P (40 shots). Facilities:  
Free camping at range with toilets and showers (limited  
powered sites), kitchen on site. Contact: Tony Hilleard  
0428 516 125 or Jennifer Ingram 0418 259 269.

### SSAA (Qld) Lever Action State Championships

September 2-3, 2023  
SSAA Townsville branch  
Program: September 1: Practice. 2: Open match.  
3: Classic Calibre match. Facilities: No catering but  
barbecue available, camping at range with power;  
toilets, showers. Contact: Kerry Guinea leveraction@  
ssaaqld.org.au or 0409 262 966.

## SA

### SSAA SA Lever Action Silhouette State Titles

August 5-6, 2023  
SSAA SA Para Range, Rifle Range Road, Greenwith,  
SA 5125  
Rifle Metallic Silhouette Program: Fri 4 range open for  
practice 10am-4pm; Sat - 5 August 10am - Practice/  
Sighting: 10:30am - LAS Rifle Calibre (40-shot match);  
1pm - Lunch; 5pm - Finish. 6pm - BBQ dinner and  
presentations. Sunday - 6 August 10am - Practice/  
Sighting: 10:30 - LAS Pistol Calibre (40-shot match);  
1:30pm - Practice/Sighting (Lunch); 2pm - LAS  
Smallbore/Rimfire (40-shot match); 4:30 - Finish/

pack up; 5pm – Presentations. Nomination fee: \$20/ match or \$50 for three matches. Juniors free. Rules: All matches shot in accordance with the current SSAA national rulebook. See [ssaa.org.au](http://ssaa.org.au) for Rule Book Revised No. 9. Facilities: Camping, hot showers and toilets. Motels nearby. Canteen open for lunch, drinks and snacks each day. Saturday night BBQ provided. Contact: Russell Asser [cabsauv@gmail.com](mailto:cabsauv@gmail.com) or 0412 906 066.

### SSAA (SA) Gallery Rifle State Championships

September 23-24, 2023  
SSAA Para Range, SA  
Program: Saturday: Multi Target (24 shots) any sight, T&P 1 (30 shots) any sight, 1500 Match (150 shots) any sight. Sunday: 50m Precision (30 shots + unlimited sightings) any sight, Classic Multi Target (24 shots), Classic 1020 Match (102 shots). Contact: Dave McCarthy [atm3855@yahoo.com.au](mailto:atm3855@yahoo.com.au). Let him know if you're coming for catering purposes.

### SA Rifle Metallic Silhouette - Centrefire

September 23-24, 2023  
Para Branch, Rifle Range Rd, Greenwith, SA 5125  
Program: Saturday: Air rifle 80-shot match; Practice 9am, 10am start. Saturday arvo: Hunter Rimfire 40-shot match. Sunday: Heavy Rimfire 80-shot match; weigh in, practice 10am, 10.30 start. Presentation/prize table after Sunday match. Nominations: \$10/match or \$25 for three shoots. Juniors half price. Rules: SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rule Book No. 8 Revised 2019. Facilities: Canteen will be open for lunch, drinks, and snacks. Camping facilities with showers and toilets. Contact: Mark West on [markwest@kentcivil.com.au](mailto:markwest@kentcivil.com.au) or 0421 775 101

## Vic

### SSAA (Vic) Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

September 23-24, 2023  
Eagle Park Range, Vic  
Program: Saturday 80 rifle calibre; Sunday 80 shots pistol calibre then 80 shots smallbore rifle. Contact: Mark Butler 0409 135 740.

### SSAA (Vic) Field Rifle, 3P, Scoped Air Rifle and NRA State Championships

October 22, 2023  
Eagle Park Range, Vic  
Program: Centrefire competition followed by Rimfire. Contact: Mark Butler 0409 135 740.

### Victorian Muzzle Loading Club State Championships

November 18-19, 2023  
Victorian Muzzle Loading Club, SSAA Eagle Park Range, Gifkins Road, Little River, VIC  
Program: See website for full program. Rules: Firearm and competition information from the VMLC Member Book 2021. Prizes: Trophy for first, second and third. Facilities: on-site camping (fees may apply) and café. Fire Ban for the Central Area will result in cancellation of black powder competitions for that day. Free BBQ lunch on Saturday. Possible free BBQ breakfast on Saturday and Sunday and free lunch BBQ on Sunday (subject to availability). Contact: Craig Kinder on [craigk@jeatech.com.au](mailto:craigk@jeatech.com.au) or 0409 707 157.

## WA

### SSAA (WA) Shotgun Tower State Championships

September 17, 2023  
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA  
Program: 15 Target DB, 15 Target SB, 15 Target Points score and 15 Pairs (total 75 targets). Facilities:

Hot food, cool drinks available to buy, free tea, coffee and biscuits. Contact: Neil Cobb 0404 040 357 or [neilcobb@bigpond.com](mailto:neilcobb@bigpond.com).

### SSAA National Event Cancellation/Postponement Policy

An event may be postponed or cancelled at any time by SSAA National, SSAA State Office or club directive. SSAA National will not be liable for reimbursement to competitors for any costs associated with a postponed or cancelled SSAA National championship event for any reason. Competitors planning to attend an event should consider options for free cancellation or refund of travel and accommodation costs where available.

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### SSAA Member Alert

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.

# SSAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ABN 95 050 209 688



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

Membership No.

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

Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Miss Ms Mrs Other ..... Preferred SSAA Branch \_\_\_\_\_

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Middle name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Residential address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/suburb \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/suburb \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

Phone (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Male  Female  Other

Member referral number if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### Add four issues of the Hunter magazine per year



- \$95      \$129
- \$130      \$164
- \$72      \$106
- \$107      \$141
- \$72      \$106
- \$107      \$141
- \$475
- \$1900
- \$180      \$244
- \$27      \$61

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Includes \$35 for SSAA MUTUAL Member Firearms Protection for 12 months, or until next membership renewal.

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#### Member for Life Contact SSAA for SSAA MUTUAL firearms protection information.

#### Overseas Available to members living overseas.

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

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Supporting Adult member No.

#### SIGN UP ONLINE



ssaa.org.au

## PLEASE READ AND SIGN

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

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

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

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

## ATTENTION NSW & ACT MEMBERS

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

- TARGET SHOOTING (longarms only)
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- COLLECTING
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Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

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Card number

Expiry date     Signature.....

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I also wish to donate the following amount to the SSAA \$.....



# Enter to win

Simply write your full name, address and contact number on a piece of paper and place it inside an envelope and send to:

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

Competitions close August 31, 2023



Or enter online  
at [ssaa.org.au](http://ssaa.org.au)

## Traser P66 Green Spirit Watch



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## Juniors

## Mitchell Expedition Single Swag



RRP \$319.99

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# Winners!

### Australian Shooter June, 2023

- Winchester Prize Pack**  
Aaron Elliott, Vic
- Adult SSAA range mat & case**  
Stephanie Grace Payne, Qld
- Juniors - Beretta Prize Pack**  
Kade Murray, SA
- Top Shots Mug**  
Abbey Hurworth, Qld

### Australian Women's Shooter Issue 19

- Manfred+Cracco Vega Watch**  
Debra Bielawski, WA

### 75th Anniversary Giveaway

- Prize 1 – SSAA Hoodie**  
Stephen Burnet, NSW
- Prize 2 – SSAA Cooler Bag – Tote + SSAA 75th Anniversary Cloth Badge**  
Eric Rettke, NSW
- Prize 3 – SSAA Renegade Jacket**  
Jeremy Cusack, NSW
- Prize 4 - Pewter Belt Buckle – Deer Hunter + SSAA Brooch**  
Frank Turner, NSW
- Prize 5 - SSAA Shotgun Vest + Great Australian Outdoors Issue 4**  
Christopher Donnantuon, NSW
- Prize 6 - Field to Fork – Second Helpings + Ceramic Kitchen Knife Set**  
John Priest, WA
- Prize 7 - SSAA Range Mat and Rifle Carry Case**  
Peter Scanlan, NSW
- Prize 8 - SSAA Magnum Shooting Glasses + SSAA Cap – Royal Blue**  
Adam Kidd, Vic
- Prize 9 - SSAA Softshell Vest + SSAA 75th Anniversary Numbered Pin**  
Raymond Eckhardt, NSW
- Prize 10 - SSAA Sports Umbrella + SSAA 75th Anniversary Numbered Pin**  
Glen Chrystal, NSW
- Prize 11 - SSAA Best Shots Mug x 2 + Guide to FREE Campsites Gift Pack**  
Matt Dunne, WA
- Prize 12 - Australian Hunter Magazine subscription + SSAA Camp Cap**  
Emile Hazelwood, ACT

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTER is published monthly and is printed by IVE, 83 Derby St, Silverwater, NSW 2128.

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## Rose-coloured glasses wouldn't change a thing

A wholly unexpected family event has me thinking about death . . . and what comes after. I don't mean the spiritual or metaphysical, rather the many things which inevitably follow, some of them ordinary if not commonplace. Arrangements must be made, documents signed, emails fly back and forth across time and space in the hope of aligning calendars of the many members of a geographically dispersed family.

Others are essentially hidden from us until we find ourselves in this place. Interactions with various mechanisms of State, official sanction of the otherwise obvious, the formal process of recognition and even the purchases of land measured in centimetres. Swirling around it all is knowing how to support a wife who's lost a husband, a daughter her father and young children a treasured family elder.

These things cannot be avoided. We know this as we also know they'll roll on without us. Our job is to take steerage, act accordingly, bring one point to a close and open the way for another. The clock doesn't stop ticking as life, along with death, happens. As a society we've removed ourselves from these hard truths though there are exceptions, but here in the Great Southern Land it's something we turn away from for the most part. This approach to the inevitable extends well beyond the trauma we experience when we lose those close to us.

As I write this, duck season has opened in Victoria and the media is awash with the venom and vitriol of those opposed to it. You know what I mean, those uneducated thought bubbles of the pleading and bleeding ignorant who dominate the news and entertainment cycle. What's strange to me among all the shrieking is that somehow we've forgotten that within the lives of both city and country people, actively sourcing food was until recently the norm. Harvesting ducks, rabbits, hares and other game wasn't wrong and no-one thought we'd moved beyond that. It wasn't murder.



We understood that food production was Newtonian - for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction. Avert your gentle gaze if you must but death was a literal truth in sustaining life. Today, all around us are examples of an intentional ignorance towards this truth. It's not master hunter, productive farmer or knowledgeable gatherer that entertains us, it's the elevation of 'celebrity' chefs who create culinary wonders with ingredients which magically appear on a studio set.

Unless it's part of your job there are very few pursuits like hunting which require you to peek behind the curtain and acknowledge there's no wizard who makes the bad things go away. Further, as hunters we've placed ourselves in a situation where there's no escaping what will follow once a shot is taken, an arrow let fly or the knife drawn. This willingness on our part is because we know death is not optional, the production of life is. And rather than being a slur on our individual and collective integrity, understanding this truth is a demonstration of our moral strength and character.

We also willingly accept that through our actions we intentionally put in play a whole new reality. Things will happen and outside

my own small orbit, in the natural world it's the same. For every game animal we take we feed others and not just those around us. No matter how good we are with a knife we create a new food source for a multitude of organisms from the micro to macro.

We also change ever so slightly the course of genetics and bloodlines. A stag or buck taken during the rut may have bred before its death but certainly won't continue to do so. Conversely for those stags that run while others fall, its own bloodline may now have a greater chance of becoming dominant. For the farmer the destruction of feral pigs might just mean a crop makes it to market. For the station owner, lambs may grow to produce wool or meat for the table with the demise of a wild dog. Similarly the extinction of a native species may have been postponed for another day through the skilled use of whistle and shotgun.

Among all this I struck upon an idea which I hope might summarise my life as a hunter. Participation in such a real life is a privilege, the cost of this privilege paid through responsibility and the currency in which I pay is through my actions as an ethical hunter.



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