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AUSTRALIAN

September 2023
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Shooter

THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS



**Among
the Elite**
Springfield
Armory's new
9mm

REVIEWS

- Frontier scopes • Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX boots
- Work Sharp field sharpener
- Upfitter Tuff Cargo security lock box



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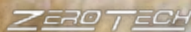
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The ever-growing popularity of long-range shooting disciplines has brought with it a greater array and availability of rifle optics and we've laid our hands on a superb top-end example in the Zeiss LRP S5, with reviewer Daniel O'Dea reporting: "This would be an ideal choice for those in the target market if the budget extends."

How light can a hunting rifle realistically be? Well, John Rutkay has taken a deep dive into that very subject and researched it from top to bottom. Next month he'll outline what he found, highlighting the pros and cons and reveal which rifle best suited the criteria and how it performed in the field.

To anyone who reloads their own ammunition, a chronograph is an essential piece of kit for precise load development and one of the latest options to hit the market is the Speedtracker Mach 4. Senior correspondent Geoff Smith has put it to the test and reckons it "...is a very well-designed, convenient and easy-to-use device."



Our September cover - see page 38



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National News

AUSTRALIAN Shooter

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The *Australian Shooter* will be made available as both a digital and print publication from October, allowing SSAA's state and territory members to choose how they engage with the Association.

All members will receive the *Australian Shooter* in the new digital format, but those wishing to maintain their print copy of the magazine will need to pay an additional \$15 fee. This fee directly covers postage and printing costs that have increased significantly in the past three years and are forecast to continue this trend.

In deciding to make this change, the SSAA National Committee of Management was examining how members choose to interact with the Association and noted more people than ever before have been engaging with the SSAA via the website, e-newsletters, social media and YouTube. Expanding our digital offering allows us to cater to those who prefer to get their news and entertainment online via their computer, tablet or mobile device.

A basic, static online version of the *Australian Shooter* has been available for the

best part of 10 years via the SSAA National website; however, a new advanced and interactive digital *Australian Shooter* will offer readers and advertisers additional benefits, connectivity and the flexibility that comes with accessing and receiving publications electronically.

It is a priority of Association, however, that we maintain the traditional hard copy of the *Australian Shooter* that so many of us enjoy and have done so for many decades.

Some membership types will incur a small fee increase from October that will progressively apply as membership renewals come due.

Junior memberships will remain the same at \$27, with a digital and printed *Australian Shooter* included. Juniors are imperative to the SSAA and will receive both magazine formats. Adult memberships will increase from \$95 to \$100, with a digital *Australian Shooter* and a further \$15 fee will apply to receive the print edition. Pensioner memberships will incur a \$3 increase to \$75, which includes a digital *Australian Shooter* and will cost \$90 with a printed *Australian Shooter* option.



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Relics from a bygone age

I READ WITH interest Joe Norris' article on his 577/450 Martini-Henry (*Shooter*, February 2023). In the 1960s I heard one of the stories my father told of his time shooting in the Parramatta area between 1918 and 1923. He spoke of a range up Pennant Hills Road on the James Burns property (now The King's School) and my father had shot at this range just after World War One using 577/450s and later 303s.

I visited the area with a friend and found evidence of a shooting mound on one side of the creek. On ferreting around we discovered some rolled brass cartridges while across the creek was a large sandstone outcrop with a flat surface showing evidence of hits from projectiles. After digging around the base of this rock we unearthed a few of those projectiles, a photo of which I've enclosed for anyone interested.

Simon Manchee, via email

A new lease of Life

I'M NOT ALONE in saying the monthly Jumbunna column is missed and John Dunn's are big boots to fill, but I'm already loving 'An Outdoor Life' in its place. I'm happy to say the back page is still the first one I turn to when *Australian Shooter* arrives so congratulations and welcome Mark van den Boogaart and his size 13s!

Dan Gardner, Vic.

Reloading not an option

I READ BARRY Wilmot's reloading article with interest (*Shooter*, March 2023) and while agreeing with most of his points, I feel I do need to offer a different perspective. It's obvious to anyone in the shooting community that factory ammunition has increased in price while becoming harder to source in some localities and calibres.

It's also well known from a reloader's perspective that supplies of powder and primers have been largely unavailable for two years, especially with regard to pistol calibres. Rifle primers have been out of stock across the Hunter Valley and most Sydney gunshops for more than 12 months. This means that for many shooters, reloading is unavailable and the only option they have to meet the legally required levels of shooting attendances is to resort to using factory ammunition.

Simon Errock, via email

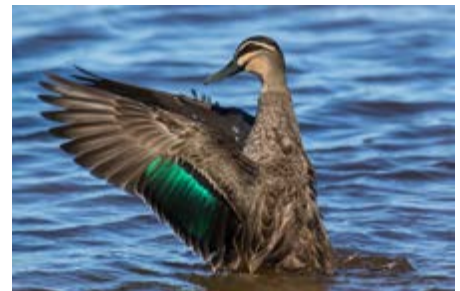
Rights are now privileges

I READ WITH great interest Matthew Godson's 'Open Season' column on the confusion surrounding duck season in South Australia and Victoria (*Shooter*, March 2023). This happened in Queensland many years ago when it became more and more difficult to obtain a licence, from a time when you didn't need one.

I saw this 'progression' as an erosion of our rights as shooters as governments of all persuasions have raised to an art form the removing of your rights then selling them back to you as a privilege. As a result we're no longer able to shoot ducks or quail here in Queensland.

I often find it fascinating to see in the Sunday papers, photos of people proudly displaying a fish they've killed though never a photo of a dead deer or a duck (imagine the hue and cry). I've often mused that if Jesus Christ had been a duck hunter and not a fisherman, things would be a whole lot different today.

Colin Howkins, Qld



Insurance Q&A

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Send questions to: insurance@ssaains.com.au



Q I'm a firearms collector and want to organise cover for my items beyond the standard \$25,000 SSAA Members' Firearms Protection. How do I arrange this?

A SSAA members can include cover for their registered firearms and fixed accessories to the value of \$25,000 through the SSAA Mutual Members' Firearms Protection, though there are options to top

this up by a further \$50,000 or \$100,000. To obtain the new Top-Up cover for high-value firearms and collections, firstly ensure you have the \$25,000 SSAA Mutual Members' Firearms Protection, available for \$35.

You can then contact SSAIB direct and opt to increase your coverage by a further \$50,000 or \$100,000. The annual premium for this is around \$250 per \$50,000 of additional cover, however this premium will

vary slightly depending on which state or territory you live in. For more information and to help you through the process, contact SSAA Insurance Brokers on 1800 808 608 or visit ssaib.com.au



A tangled Human-animal food web

An article in *The Conversation* by wildlife ecologist Benjamin Allen explores the 10 reasons why humans kill animals and why we cannot avoid it. It is a summary of a larger body of work published in a journal. Although some types of animal killings are questionable, many forms are inescapable because they are a necessary part of life of what Dr Allen describes as humanity's involvement in a single, functioning, finite global food web.

There are 10 main reasons humans kill animals. These are:

1. **Wild harvest or food acquisition** - killing wild animals for meat.
2. **Human health and safety** - reactively killing an animal when it attacks.
3. **Agriculture and aquaculture** - killing that occurs in the global meat industries or killing required to produce crops.
4. **Urbanisation and industrialisation** - clearing bushland to build homes.
5. **Wildlife control** - killing introduced animals.
6. **Threatened species conservation** - unintentionally killing animals when relocating them.
7. **Recreation, sport or entertainment** - trophy hunting or bull fighting, and animal killing required to feed domestic pets.
8. **Mercy or compassion** - euthanising an animal hit by a car.
9. **Cultural and religious practice** - animal sacrifice during the religious celebration.

10. **Research, education and testing** - laboratory use of rodents or primates.

As we know, there are people out there that are critical of animal use and killing. We regularly hear from those who want hunting banned. Some are opposed on moral grounds; some claim animals should have equal rights to humans and others just simply view any animal killing as cruel. These views are somewhat valid, but the fact is in most cases killing is unavoidable in an ecological sense. Killing is a behaviour that is consistent with the human predatory and competitive roles that we play in the global food web. Most of the reasons we kill animals are behaviours intended to improve our prospects for acquiring food or to enhance our lives. These objectives are the same for any sentient animal.

Dr Allen suggests that a no-killing lifestyle is a physical and ecological impossibility - even when people who deem it unacceptable to kill animals argue that you can eliminate or greatly reduce this through lifestyle and diet changes. The futility of these choices and the situation is that most plant foods and crops are from lands where animals have been displaced or killed.

While these people may temporarily reduce the number of animals killed through their animal-free diet, human population growth will continue to expand. With that growth, more land will be required to meet food requirements. At this point humans will directly and indirectly kill animals again or run the risk of dying themselves. The need for space for a growing

population to live will result in habitat loss that also kills animals.

Even if a human tried to opt for a no-killing existence by living in a cave in the forest and just eating wild berries and mushrooms, they still live inside a food web. That means they are still competing with other animals for finite resources. The result is that other animals may suffer and die because of the human's use of food and space.

Dr Allen maintains that the overall necessity of animal killing is an unavoidable reality for the whole of humanity. Both direct and indirect forms of animal killing will remain. Everyone needs to accept that human existence on Earth is dependent on animal killing and the focus should be on not whether an animal is killed but animal welfare and sustainability.

Humans are the only animals that have an ethical and moral conscience. We have a responsibility to assume a stewardship role over animals to ensure that we deliver good welfare outcomes. Attention should be focused on improving the lives of animals to a greater extent than trying to prevent humans from killing them altogether. As hunters, we should understand the complexity of this situation. That is why we want to protect habitats, maintain sustainable populations, and take responsibility of harvesting our own food.

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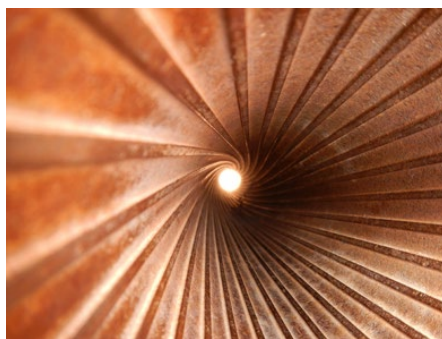


Putting the spin in modern firearms

Rifling is a crucial component of modern firearm design serving to enhance accuracy, range and overall performance. It refers to those spiral grooves cut into the interior of a barrel, imparting spin to the projectile as it's fired. This spinning motion stabilises the bullet's trajectory, increasing accuracy and allowing it to maintain stability over longer distances. Rifling has revolutionised the effectiveness of firearms and is widely used in numerous types of guns today.

The concept of rifling dates back hundreds of years with early experiments and developments recorded in the 15th century, though it wasn't until the mid-19th century it became more standardised and widely adopted. The advent of rifling coincided with the development of more accurate and powerful ammunition, resulting in significant advancements in firearm technology. The rifling process involves cutting spiral grooves into the bore of the barrel, these grooves forming a series of raised ridges (lands) which alternate with the grooves, the number, depth and width of these varying depending on specific firearm design and calibre.

The primary purpose of rifling is to induce spin on the projectile or bullet. As the bullet travels down the barrel it engages with the rifling, causing it to rotate, this action creating gyroscopic stability which prevents the bullet from tumbling or veering off its intended path. Without rifling the bullet would be subject to unpredict-



The invention of rifling has made firearms more accurate.

able and unstable flight, severely affecting accuracy.

There are different types of rifling used in firearms, including the most common types of cut rifling and button rifling. The former involves cutting grooves into the barrel using a broach, while the latter uses a button with a reverse image of the rifling pattern that's pushed through the barrel, imprinting the grooves. Both methods are effective and widely employed in firearm manufacturing.

The choice of twist rate is another important consideration, this referring to the distance a bullet must travel to complete one full revolution. It's usually expressed as a ratio such as 1:10 or 1:7, indicating that the bullet completes one rotation every 10 or seven inches in the barrel. The twist rate is determined by factors like bullet weight, calibre and intended use of the firearm, eg longer, heavier bullets generally require a

faster twist to stabilise properly.

The advantages of rifling are numerous with the primary benefit being improved accuracy, as the spinning motion reduces the effects of environmental factors such as wind drift, helping maintain a more predictable trajectory. Rifling also enhances the range of a firearm by ensuring the bullet retains its stability and velocity over longer distances. Additionally, it allows for the effective use of certain types of ammunition such as hollow-point or armour-piercing rounds. These specialised projectiles rely on the stability provided by rifling to perform optimally, ensuring reliable expansion or penetration on impact.

In conclusion, rifling plays a vital role in firearm technology as by imparting a rotational spin on the projectile, it stabilises its flight and so greatly improves accuracy and range. Rifling has become a standard feature on modern firearms, revolutionising their effectiveness and expanding their potential applications. Whether it's for sporting use, police or military, the implementation of rifling has had a profound impact on the performance and capabilities of firearms through the ages.



What's in Issue20

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER

Advantages for women shooters

We cover the advantages women have as competitive shooters and how to capitalise on them



Connecting with culture

Mother and daughter continue a strong family legacy of hunting and shooting

Jewel of the wild

Move from meek diet back to meat suits chef Shauna

Bergara BA13TD rifle review

Montse Jaime turns to her BA13TD rifle in .308 for hunting medium-sized game

Issue 20 inside members' Australian Shooter this month and online at ssaa.org.au/women



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Q I need some guidance for my youngest son who's been bitten by the clay target bug and loves Sporting Clays and Skeet. I've always been a field shooter but recently took the kids on holiday to Melbourne where my son had a shot at a registered range in both disciplines and wants to continue this at home. I'm happy to join him up at a serious club where he can compete regularly but is there an ideal way to practise any of the clay disciplines, as they all seem so different?

Alan Kohler, Qld.

A The short answer, Alan, is no, there isn't a 'one size fits all' way to set up a training schedule for everyone. I'm assuming from the above that your boy is fairly new at this, so the one thing I would ask you to do is ensure he has the basic fundamentals right. I'm talking about stance, head positioning on the stock and shoulder, keeping his eyes parallel when his head is on the comb of the gun and, of course, make sure the shotgun fits him, particularly in its stock length and height. Use a pattern board to confirm it shoots straight, as the number of people with no real idea where their shotgun actually shoots never fails to amaze me.

Once you have these fundamentals under control you can start to tailor a training plan. Regardless of whether it's Sporting Clays or Skeet, start recording his practice rounds and take note of any targets he

seems to have a weakness in. If he continues to miss a 'springing teal' or 'high four' then try to arrange access to a range where he can practise these specifically until he can build some confidence.

Once he feels he can competently hit most targets then lay down some practice goals for him. Set a score in each round he'll have to work hard to achieve, bearing in mind it's pointless saying he needs to hit 24 or 25 when the best he's ever done is 18. Set realistic benchmarks and when he conquers them raise the bar slightly.

If you can, a great training drill is making him repeat any missed target three times in succession before he's allowed to continue the round. Drills like this can be hard to implement if you just practise shooting round after round with a squad of guys who simply want to have fun and get to the bar as soon as possible, so you may have to ask for some favours from club management. Too many times I see young shooters blowing away countless rounds just for the sake of shooting clays. It's an expensive enough sport as it is without going to the range to simply practise your mistakes.

You have to be a little careful setting drills and goals on every round as it's important your boy enjoys the sport, which is why I like to vary my drills so I have some pressure mixed with the fun aspect. Shoot some stressful 'miss and out' simulations with him, as sooner or later he'll be faced with this scenario in competition to

take home the prize, so it makes sense to prepare him for that reality. Give him a chance to shoot a round without any 'hands-on' coaching too, as it's just as important he learns to try new things for himself as he won't always have you to fall back on.

Teaching your children to shoot correctly is one of the great pleasures in life. I can honestly say I've had more fun watching my children battle each other when they go to the range or at my property on the banks of the Darling River. Neither have aspirations to compete at the Olympics, though both have a huge competitive streak and I admit one of the best experiences I've had was when they both actually beat me one day (I learned then they didn't inherit my humility!). Good luck with it, I know you'll both enjoy the journey.



Questions to:
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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS?

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

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Q I'm new to shooting and recently bought a Brno .22 which I intend to use mostly for rabbit shooting. I've had lots of advice from different people about what sort of scope I should fit to the rifle, at what range I should sight it in and the best ammunition to use. As a result I'm a little confused about which way to go and would appreciate some clear direction on how to achieve the best results from my rifle.

Justin Morris, via email

A Justin, there are no hard-and-fast rules to be followed when it comes to setting up a rimfire rabbit rifle because, as you've found out, everyone has their own ideas. One way or another they're probably all right, it's just that what suits one person and where they shoot might not be what someone else needs in another place.

My rabbit rifle has worn a vintage 6x Pecar Champion scope for many years and has never let me down. If you're spotlighting you may need something with a large objective lens which provides a higher level of light transmission but don't go overboard in terms of magnification. Whatever scope you choose it must be set up solidly on the rifle, so good mounts are essential. I have the Pecar set up in Warne steel mounts but there are many other brands which are just as reliable.

My rifle is sighted in at 50 metres as that's the distance I've found to be best suited to the gully country I usually hunt where a 'long' shot is 70 metres. In more open coun-

try you may need to push the sighting distance a little further out but that's something you'll have to learn as you go.

When it comes to ammunition every rimfire is a law unto itself and the only way to find out which ammo shoots best in your rifle is to try it all. I've long used Winchester Subsonic hollow-points in my rifle for two reasons. In the first place it's accurate and off the bench will routinely shoot 10-12mm groups at 50 metres, which is about as well as I can hold anyway. It's also quieter than high velocity ammunition and won't disturb other animals, often allowing several shots to be taken around a burrow or feeding area before the bunnies wake up to the fact all is not well.

There's nothing mystical about setting up your Brno. Just use common-sense and enjoy the experience to have the rifle shooting the way *you* want it to, not what your mates reckon. And if you need to change things around later then at least you've learned something.

John Dunn

Q Thanks to Paul Miller for answering my question on Vectan 206-V shotgun powder last month. Now I have another couple of questions, if that's okay. I have a lot of lead shot to use up which Dad and I have had since the 1970s in 6, 4, 7½ and SGs. Could I use this for 1½oz loads also? I'm thinking eight pellets of SG in a 1oz load would be fine.

Fred Payne, via email

A That's a nice position to find yourself in. Your dad obviously loved shooting and that's a stash of very useful lead shot - I'm a bit jealous. Vectan 206-V is a fast powder so I'd be inclined to err on the side of safety and stick with 1oz. From my experience at the pattern plate, the 28-gram (1oz) loads often pattern better than the 1oz anyway and this is certainly the case for me and my competition guns and clay target loads using 7½s and 8s.

I think the same would hold true with bigger pellets. It's hard to explain exactly why this phenomenon can occur, except to say the lighter loads with a few less shot pellets are a little more square to the 12-gauge bore and the shot is probably not jostled around and therefore deformed as much in the lighter load on the way up the barrel. A 1oz load with any of these shot sizes and intelligent use of choke will do the business where the particular shot size and game are appropriately matched. I wouldn't want to be a close-range pig on the receiving end of eight SGs through a tightish choke!

As you doubtless know the 6s and 4s are great first and second barrel loads for rabbits and I've found 1oz loads with these shot sizes work just fine, while 1oz of 4s from a tight choke will flatten foxes at reasonable ranges if you do your bit, perfect for whistling up those otherwise crafty red devils. Get into your loading, have some fun and see if the above theories work for you too.

Paul Miller

Q I enjoy your column and insightful answers and the whole magazine in total, but I ask your help in settling a question. I have had a discussion with a friend based on what I thought I read in a Barry Wilmot column regarding the relationship between .30-06 and .223 development. I thought I read that the .223 was a scaled down version of .30-06 and would appreciate a definitive answer to settle this quandary. Thank you.

Dale Stephan



Everyone has their own ideas about the best set-up for a rabbit rifle.

A Hi Dale. In the late 1950s, the United States military wanted to replace its .30-06 Springfield cartridge with a lighter, high-velocity cartridge for its small arms. In response, Remington Arms and Fairchild Industries began experimenting with various designs. They drew inspiration from the popular .222 Remington round that was virtually a scaled down version of the .30-06 cartridge, which was supremely accurate and already in production. To achieve the required specifications to give a 55gr projectile a terminal velocity of 1080fps at 500 yards, the .222 Remington case had to be modified and lengthened to accommodate more powder. This was done in 1964, so the .223 Remington, as it was called, was officially introduced in that year, 1964.

Barry Wilmot

Q I have a Remington 700 in .222 calibre. Factory-loaded ammunition is becoming increasingly harder to find in .222 and these days I don't do enough shooting to justify handloading. One brand of factory ammo which seems to be more readily available in .222 is PPU (Prvi Partizan) and it's also reasonably priced. My question is: How good is this ammunition? I've read mixed reviews with some people saying it's 'dirty and smokey' and has questionable accuracy.

Bruce Milligan, via email

A There are still a number of manufacturers producing .222 Remington ammunition however, as you and everyone else has been experiencing, availability has been a problem for near on five years as importers have been suffering supply chain issues. Under normal circumstances we're blessed with a wide range of ammunition products and most importers still list the popular .222 Remington in their catalogues. Names like Hornady, Remington, Norma, Winchester, Focchi and PPU as you mention are all listed but not all necessarily in stock.

A friend uses PPU ammo with a 50gr

pointed soft point projectile in his .222 and swears by it in terms of performance and, as a bonus, his local gunshop has some in stock. My friend didn't say PPU was particularly dirty or smokey, though you mention you've read mixed reviews and this is only natural, as no two rifles will necessarily perform the same way with the same ammo.

What I suggest is you bite the bullet (pardon the pun) and buy a packet of PPU and any other brand you can lay your hands on, the more the better, and try them out for yourself. I know it's not answering your question directly, Bruce, but as you're no longer handloading you'll have to find a brand, bullet-type and weight which suits your purposes.

Rod Pascoe

Q I have a question about my family shotgun, a J.W. Tolley complete with two sets of barrels and fowling case which my great, great-grandfather brought to Australia when he migrated here from England. I can't find much info on the manufacturer and I'd love some details, though I'm hesitant to fire the gun with modern shells as the barrels are Damascus. The stock was shortened slightly as my grandfather wasn't overly tall. I've included some photos and the monogram initials were for Charles Stephen Meacham.

Damian Allen, via email



A Your family heirloom is certainly a terrific keepsake, Damian. Brothers James and William Tolley were gunmakers based in Birmingham, starting in 1859 at 22 St Mary's Row then moving to Loveday Street from 1878-1910. The company was bought out by Holloway & Naughton in 1911 and operated until 1956, apparently still making guns under the name of J.W. Tolley (the brothers had previously opened a London outlet in 1882 in Conduit St, just off Regent St).

Your gun with its two barrels has been proofed for black powder only and the proof marks reveal it was made between 1887 and 1896. The action uses Anson & Deeley's patented boxlock design and Deeley's patented ejectors, as well as a heavy duty top locking system which I believe was patented by the Tolley family. At the time of manufacture this gun would've been as up-to-date as you could get! However, please don't try to fire it with modern cartridges as it does have Damascus barrels and hasn't been proofed for smokeless propellant.

Geoff Smith





Finished wall complete with trophies.



The Moluccan monarch

Wrapping up our series, Chris Redlich recalls a mancave in the making and the trophy of a lifetime

Generally a mancave is a highly individual space where a bloke (hence the prefix 'man') can feel at home, surrounded by things of interest whether they be football, fishing, motor sports or hunting. In some cases it can be a separate part of the house or a shed, removed from others usually due to lack of mutual interest or simply a setting of deliberate solitude. I have a shed which contains many diversions and apart from a few trophies awaiting purpose in the after-life, it's more a place of organised chaos with a collection of 'stuff' including tools (work reminders), a workbench and car bits which offer no room for solitude or comfort.

Thankfully my family and I share a common bond for hunting and shooting in general so when we embarked on a new house build a few years ago, there were some important considerations made during

the design process for an all-inclusive trophy-style lounge room. I've numerous trophies which now call our walls home with a few that come with fascinating back-grounds and some which have exceeded all expectations of adventure. Many have already been the subject of published contributions but one in particular has escaped . . . until now.

But before I tell his story I'd like to pass on my knowledge of how he and the others came to reside on our walls today. Our goal was to create a comfortable living/trophy room where, when enjoying some downtime in front of the modern-day campfire (TV), we could be surrounded by memories of our hunting adventures without them staring us in the face.

About 90 per cent of modern homes would have 2.4m ceilings (roughly 8ft) and at this height a large-antlered red stag, or

in my case rusa stag, would be positioned level or at best just above eye height. This for us wasn't ideal as we wanted vacant and clean 'eye height' wall space without having to duck or walk around the trophies.

Originally we designed a full-height raking ceiling but with a 25-degree roof pitch we'd have ended up with a void reaching almost 7m which would've been the perfect environment for spiders and insects to call home and way out of cleaning reach. So the decision was made to drop half the rake and flatten the ceiling to 4.2m, allowing trophies to be tastefully displayed above us and easily within reach to clean and remove from the wall.

Considerations

For trophies to be mounted securely to the wall they must be fastened to some kind of timber such as studs and noggings.



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Hunter's mancave



The rusa stands tall against another monarch.



Chamois and fallow deer over the kitchen and dining area.

Standard stud spacings are at 450mm centres and depending on the height of your wall, noggings are placed halfway. For non-builders, a wall stud is the vertical support that sheeting is fastened to and noggings are horizontal pieces to help stiffen the studs which are fixed to horizontal timbers called wall plates.

The plates on standard ceilings won't concern a trophy installer but our 4.2m height needed two frames which meant we had a row of plates at 2.7m. If you have access to the design process on a new-build, it's good to have input into where extra timber can be placed for trophy fastening and to ensure measurements of stud spacing are recorded prior to sheeting.

My wife drew a map of the room and we measured the centres of studs that would likely be used for mounting and recorded what direction we measured from.

For heavy trophies I use a large batten screw for strength and pre-drill a hole into the wall/stud prior to screwing. For lighter trophies usually a heavy gauge 3" nail will suffice and in steel-framed homes a fine thread screw suitable for steel and not timber is needed. Importantly, on homes built before 1990, identify the wall sheeting before drilling as there may be asbestos present which requires expert advice on safe handling.

For ceilings around 2.4m the height of a deer's antlers will determine how high it

will need to be though generally the higher the better. If you want the antlers as close as possible to the ceiling, remember to consider the amount of space required to lift the trophy before fixing to the wall screw or you'll end up with holes in the ceiling.

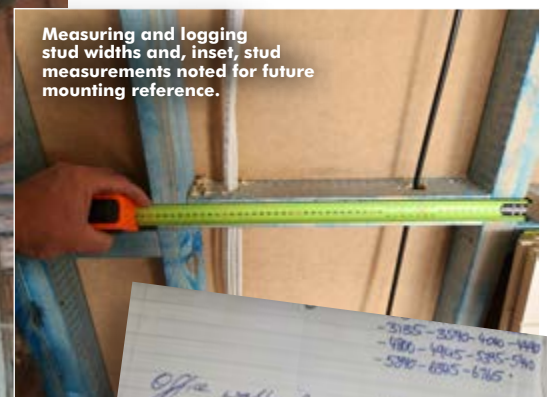
If wall space is at a premium, position trophies in such a way they don't look cluttered, taking care with head directions and conflicting antlers. Our lounge has plenty of room so we were able to spread the trophies out and while I don't think I'll ever use all the wall space in my lifetime, I'm looking forward to trying!

A trophy's story

One stag which proudly sits high on the



Note the wall studs, horizontal top and bottom plates and 4.2m ceiling.



Measuring and logging stud widths and, inset, stud measurements noted for future mounting reference.

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Hunter's mancave

wall is my rusa, whose story until now has largely gone unnoticed. It's hard to believe he was taken 16 years ago but I remember the hunt as if it was yesterday. "Please turn that thing off," I said to the guide politely as the beep from his video camera almost spooked the deer. We'd successfully closed a 400m gap undetected from first sighting on a bachelor mob of Moluccan rusa stags, to within critical shooting distance of 100m and stealth was now paramount. Any movement or noise was a concern and my guide expressed his disappointment when I told him I'd prefer to shoot a stag than have footage of their fleeing rear ends.

The stags milled around, chewing the cud on a patch of winter grass while others rested and thankfully didn't stray. This turned out to be a dream situation though they remained alert and while we stayed undetected, they peered intently in our direction with antlers like I'd never seen before bobbing up and down. The deer appeared suspicious but not alarmed and

after lying prone glassing through my new Leupold Golden Ring binoculars, our necks were crying out for relief. The guide assured me I'd more patience than others as I turned to him with a grin: "Check out the big fella on the right."

Still enjoying a favourable wind in our faces, a stag came into view on its own and I knew he was the one. This monarch was even and typical of a rusa's six points but he had bonus basal snags, strips of dried velvet and noticeable pearling on the main beams. On closer inspection as the antlers flashed above the grass-line I noticed a hollow tip on the right antler. Appearing larger than the others by comparison, I wasn't going to let the hollow tip deter me and decided it added character. My focus remained on the big rusa and all I needed was for him to stand up and offer a clear shot.

Two hours of pain changed in an instant when we felt the breeze on our backs as the tips of the grass bent towards the deer along with our unwelcome scent. With

suspicious confirmed the deer propped, looked directly at us and turned for a hasty retreat. My sights were on the big stag as his shoulder presented and he was the last to bolt. I beat him to the draw as I ignored the pins and needles in my arm and fired the 7mm-08. He disappeared on death legs momentarily until we found him in the next gully and anchored him for keeps.

What lay before us didn't suffer ground shrinkage, a genuine 'cracker' of a stag considering he was a smaller-bodied Moluccan rusa yet still a monster compared to the larger Javan genes and one that rewarded our hard work. Officially scored he equalled No.41 of Australia's top 50 rusa stags at the time. I had him respectfully mounted the way he faced when I shot him and after many trips accompanying our taxidermist for display at shows along the east coast, he now stands tall on the mancave wall. ●



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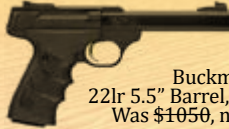
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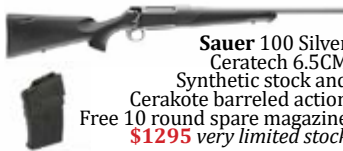
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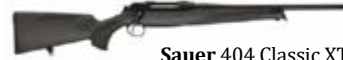
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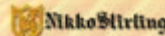
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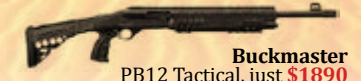


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Earned its stripes

John Maxwell salutes the longevity of the .310 Cadet rifle

Perhaps more Cadet rifles are being shot now than at any time since they entered service more than a century ago, as they're a whole lot of fun, light of recoil and accurate, the miniature Martini action being robust and reliable with a crisp trigger and finely adjustable sights.

By military rifle standards Cadets are cheap at generally less than \$500, compared to SMLEs which now fetch \$1000-plus and Mauser 98s for several thousand. They're also readily available with Commonwealth small-arms expert Ian Skenerton estimating some 150,000 Cadet rifles came to Australia and many survive to this day. There's regular competition for Cadet rifles too run by, among others, the SSAA Combined Services discipline.

Yet Cadet rifles aren't easy to feed and as far as I'm aware, no company makes commercial .310 Cadet cartridges other than the occasional batch of remanufactured ammo. So shooting your Cadet will be a matter of handloading and most components are available, the exception being powder with the more useful

propellants, particularly AR2205, not currently produced. ADI said it hopes to produce more 2205 eventually but we're still waiting. ADI pistol propellants suitable for cast bullet Cadet loads won't be produced any time soon, though there are some alternatives and on the plus side, a can of powder used for Cadet loads goes a long way.

The story of the Cadet rifle starts in the 1880s with the idea being to train teenage cadets - exclusively males and potentially the nation's future soldiers - in marksmanship using suitably scaled rifles, more conducive to instructing youngsters and cheaper than the service rifle. For most of the Cadet's career the issue rifle was the SMLE, their peak period being pre-World War Two, though Cadet rifles saw second-line Home Guard service during WWII and were officially retired in 1955.

According to Skenerton in his excellent *British Empire Cadet and Training Rifles*, the study of Australian (and New Zealand) Cadet rifles is a 20-year window on the British gun trade, with firearms and components sourced from assorted UK gunmakers as well as Belgium. August

Francotte of Liege is credited with refining the Cadet's Martini action, a derivative of the large calibre Martini rifles which featured in the Zulu wars.

Francotte delivered the first 500 Cadet rifles to the Western Australian government in 1887 with Victoria placing a subsequent order, these chambered for the .297/230 Morris, a curious bottlenecked cartridge. Other states also sought to equip their Cadet forces, ordering from Francotte and Birmingham Small Arms (BSA) and that's why there's such a diversity of Cadet rifles of differing models featuring various state markings.

With Federation in 1901 the new Commonwealth Government took responsibility for national defence and sought to impose some order, standardising on the .310 Cadet cartridge designed by British gunmaker William Greener in 1901, and placing big orders with Greener and BSA. The BSA Model 4b is the last and most common with some 70,000 delivered and is the most desirable for actual shooting and what most modern-day shooters will encounter. This features mass-produced interchangeable parts and a precision



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Earned its stripes

micrometre rear sight, adjustable for windage and elevation out to an optimistic 1000 yards.

As ammunition supplies dwindled Cadet rifles were retired to dusty cupboards and some exported, as the Americans were apparently quite keen on our small Martini action. Others were converted to different calibres such as .22 Rimfire, .222 Rimmed, .22 Hornet, .218 Bee, .357 Magnum and others and I've even seen one in 7.62x39 to use the cases of Chinese ammo left over from the buyback.

In the absence of reloadable .310 Cadet brass, conversion of Cadet rifles to .32.20 Winchester became relatively common, requiring only some machining to accommodate the thicker case rim. Nowadays quality Aussie-made cases are available from Bertram Brass for around \$1 each and, treated right, these last seemingly forever. Bertram brass takes small rifle primers and one fellow shooter says he achieved good results with small pistol primers, though at this time of component shortage, experiments with SP primers will have to wait.

Loading for the Cadet is something of a dark art and while what follows worked for me, others may have developed their own techniques. Die sets for .310 Cadet are available from Simplex, Lee, CH and possibly others and though Simplex was always viewed as best, it seems they all work fine. For best results brass should be of uniform length. Dimensions vary but I settled on 1.080" which is close to the length of new production Bertram brass.

Mouths of new cases should be flared but not too much or the cartridge won't



.310 Cadet cartridges, from left, commercial lead load with black coating, no headstamp (possibly Super brand), commercial soft-point with Sako headstamp, two handloads with TBF JHP projectile (one crimped), handload with HRBC cast projectile (also crimped).

enter the seating die and when seating projectiles for the first time, proceed carefully as it's so easy to collapse and ruin the case. BSA Cadet rifle bores come in at .316", an unusual calibre which complicates projectile selection. To check, take a soft lead projectile or ball larger than bore diameter, hammer it carefully a couple of millimetres into the muzzle then measure the impression using your Vernier calliper.

I achieved good results with lead projectiles and better ones with jacketed hollow points, initially from Taipan and more recently from The Bullet Factory (TBF), both in Queensland. Taipan no longer does Cadet projectiles and TBF only in occasional batches so be patient. For lead bullets the Hawkesbury River Bullet Company's 125-grain Round Nose Cadet works well, this being a heeled projectile

which means it can often be seated just with thumb pressure so long as brass is slightly flared.

Cadet brass needn't be resized after every use as that's only necessary once extraction becomes difficult, when the web just ahead of the rim has expanded excessively. You'll know it's time when you need a cleaning rod to tap out fired cases, though a temporary solution is a thin smear of oil around the base. There's remarkably little current Cadet reloading data out there with the latest ADI hand-loader guide listing just two loads both with AR2205, maximum 11 grains with 110-grain cast projectile (1500fps) and nine grains with 120-grain cast projectile (1270fps).

No US manual seems to list Cadet data and my first-ever reloading manual by Nick Harvey (about 1988) has only five, all for generic 99-120-grain projectiles (it doesn't say if lead or jacketed) and all with US powders. One powder listed is 4227 which is very similar to 2205 and Harvey suggests a maximum of 11 grains of 4227 for 1500fps. I actually settled on 11.5 grains of 2205 behind the JHP projectile travelling at 1425fps with good accuracy and nil pressure signs.

Why that loading? My mate Tony, who's loaded thousands of Cadet rounds, recommended 12.5 grains but, ever frugal and mindful this is beyond what ADI regards as maximum, I dropped it back a bit (much lighter than 11 seems to leave an abundance of partly-burned powder grains in the bore). With lead projectiles, four grains of AP50 averaged 1100fps while 6.5 of AP100 ran around 1350fps and accuracy was fine.

With projectile seated you may now find many of your cartridges won't fully



Cadet rifles can be astonishingly accurate, this group shot at 50m off a benchrest using TBF 125-grain JHP projectiles with 11.5 grains of AR2205.



John uses a .308 Winchester Lee factory crimp die for his loads, using a length of quarter-inch steel rod. Proper length was determined by trial and error using quarter-inch dowel.



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Earned its stripes

chamber, with the rim protruding enough to make closing the action difficult or even impossible. This appears to be to do with the Cadet rifle's tight chamber at the case neck so what to do? Factory Cadet cartridges feature a heavy crimp and I found the same effect could be achieved by running the entire cartridge through the full-length resizing die, removing the de-capping stem first of course.

That worked but wasn't a perfect solution as it often left projectiles a bit loose in the case neck and in theory distorted the projectile, though they still shot well enough. Plan B was to go for a proper



The Lee factory crimp die in use with cartridge support in the author's old Simplex press.



Preparing to load. This would work just as well with a powder measure.

crimp using a Lee factory crimp die (Lee doesn't make such a die for .310 Cadet, though their custom shop might). A little bit of experimentation found the .308 Winchester Lee factory crimp die would do the trick. The .308 is obviously longer than .310 Cadet, therefore some experimentation involved cutting a quarter-inch dowel to length to support the case while the crimp die collet did its thing.

The final tool was made from quarter-inch steel bar with pin to set the correct height. Problem solved? Well almost. The factory crimp die leaves a small ring just below the crimp, which can be removed by passing the cartridge part-way through the resizing die, the objective being for cartridges to fully chamber with nothing more than light finger pressure. ●

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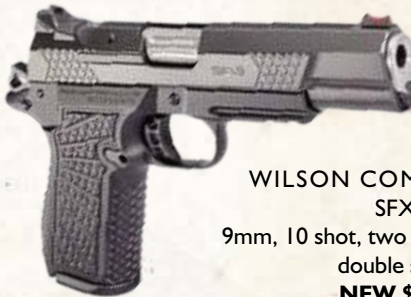
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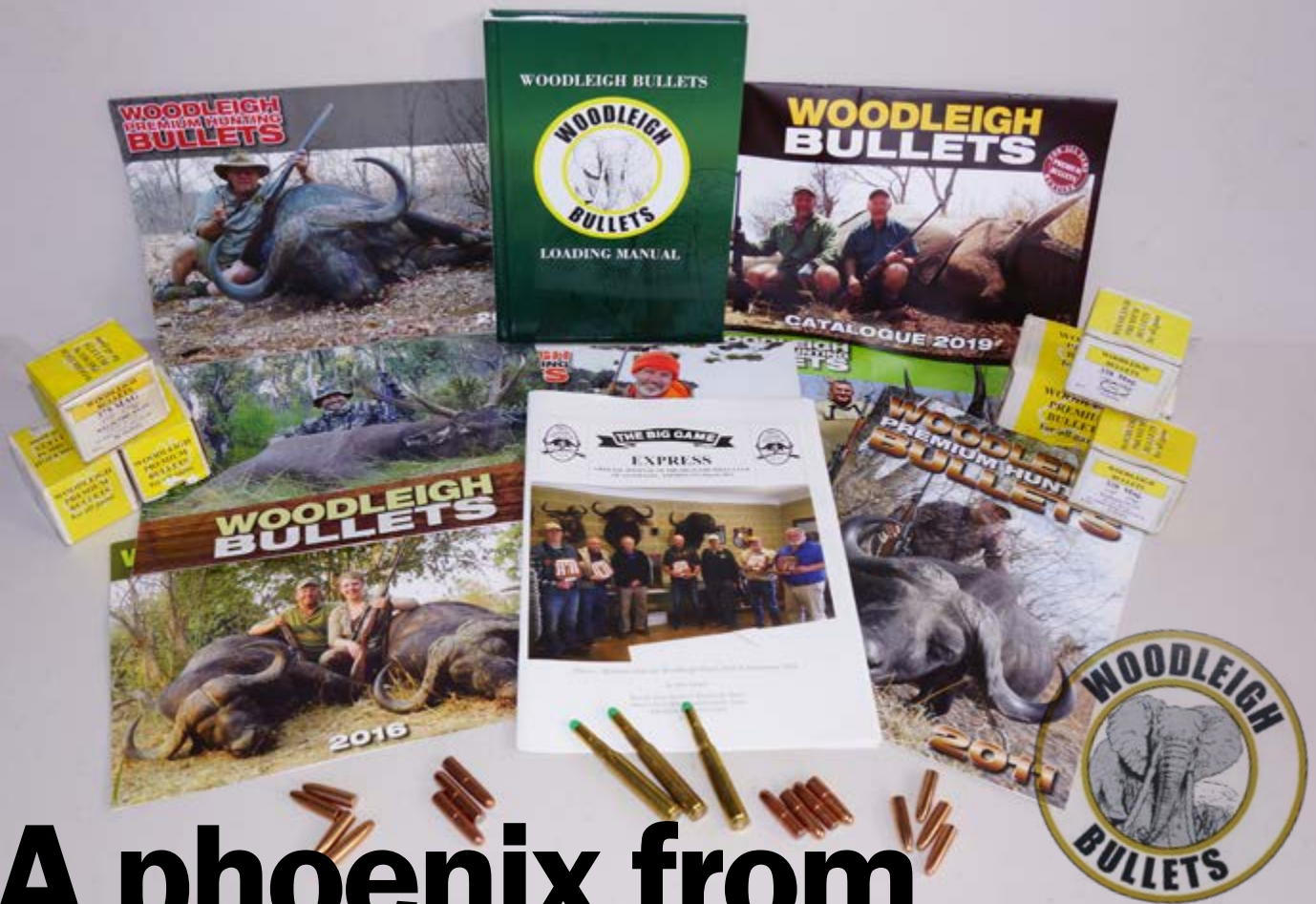


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A phoenix from the flames

Sam Garro charts the rebirth of iconic Woodleigh Bullets

Woodleigh Bullets are widely recognised and reputed for their extensive array of premium hunting projectiles and their effectiveness on all manner of game, bigger options in particular. The family enterprise with owners Geoff and Shirley McDonald began some 40 years ago on the Woodleigh family farm near Murrabit, Victoria at a time when bullets for vintage large double rifles to hunt big game like buffaloes in the Top End were becoming scarce, expensive and almost impossible to source.

Geoff had a passion for hunting from an early age, accompanying his father on rabbit treks in the 1950s. His first .22LR, a Gevarm E1 self-loader mounted with a Nikko 4x40 scope, enabled him to hunt small to medium game in his rural surrounds, later progressing to an SMLE .303 in average condition to target roos, pigs and emus. As an aspiring young hunter

his attention soon turned to the heavily built and potentially dangerous water buffaloes, a much tougher and challenging adversary requiring greater stopping power. This led Geoff in 1977 to acquire his first double rifle, a Charles Boswell 577x2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " BPE hammered underlever and Sako Magnum action fitted to a .458 WM barrel.

In the 1980s with big game cartridges difficult to source combined with a growing appetite for the sport, Geoff with his gunsmithing experience and unafraid to have a go turned his attention to specialising and manufacturing big game calibre projectiles. After considerable experimentation and trialling various load and projectile combinations, his determination and persistence saw him ultimately succeed. The rest is history.

The Woodleigh Bullets story is more comprehensively covered in the company's Loading Manual, a detailed 350-plus page guide entailing 80 hunting rounds from

6.5 Mannlicher-Schonauer to Geoff's own heavyweight .530s, acclaimed hydrostatically stabilised bullet and loading data for American, European, British and double rifle cartridges, recommended for any serious handloader.

Then disaster

On November 27, 2021 the owners suffered a crushing blow when the office and manufacturing plant burnt down, destroying everything they'd worked so hard to establish, not to mention the financial loss. It's believed the fire was started by rats gnawing on live electrical wires, a not too uncommon occurrence and at the time, Geoff and Shirley posted the following message on their website:

"Woodleigh Bullets factory fire: We regret to inform our loyal customers we had a nasty factory fire on Saturday, 27th November. Thankfully no-one was injured. Most of the working production machinery was damaged



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A pheonix from the flames

and all the packed stock was burnt. We do have some unwashed and unpolished stock stored in bulk drums but have no way of dealing with it at the moment. It will be available at a later date.

“Regarding our Woodleigh Load Manuals, they are on a very slow boat and will not arrive until February. It will take some time to assess the machinery damage and make a plan for the future. Thank you for all your texts and emails with messages of support. Regards, Geoff and Shirley McDonald.”

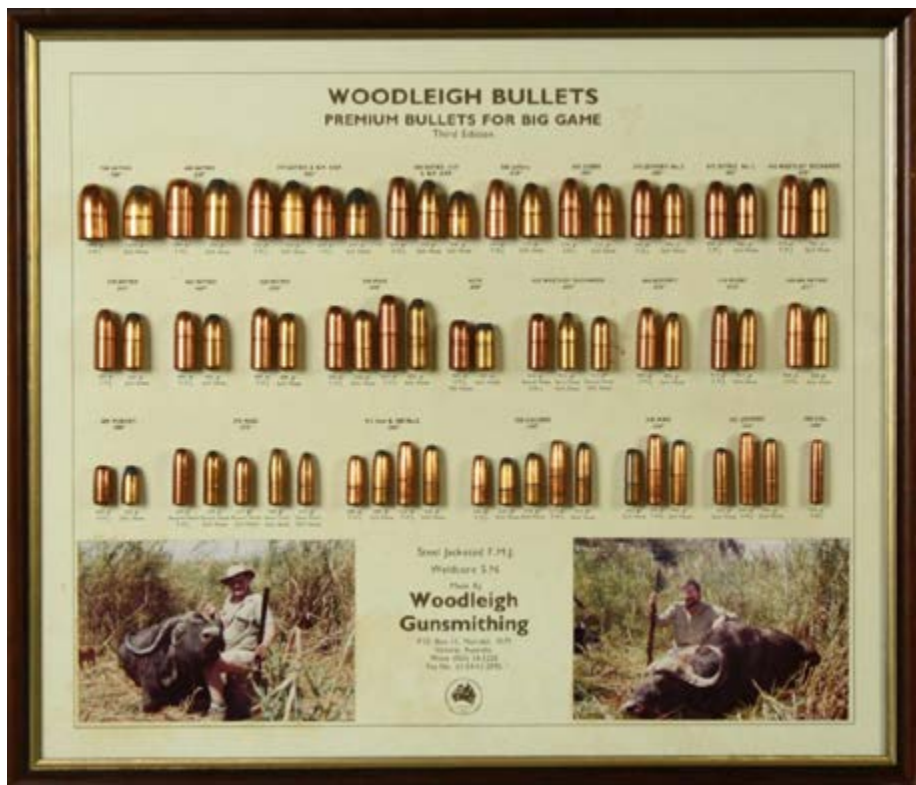
Before the fire their product distribution extended to many Australian stockists and established ammunition companies such as Norma Precision (Sweden), Krieghoff and RWS (Germany), Kynoch and Westley Richards (UK) and Federal (US), as well as demand for hydrostatically stabilised projectiles from South Africa for big game outfitters and professional hunters.

Inferno

Geoff had just arrived at the office area next to the processing plant when he was confronted by an out-of-control fire, the flames fuelled by loose paperwork, files, wooden furniture and computers. He tried desperately to control it with a fire extinguisher and pressured water hose though



Geoff with an impressive Asiatic water buffalo.



Early Woodleigh Bullets board showing gunsmithing.

both proved inadequate and he was forced to beat a hasty retreat. The blaze quickly spread to the steel plant, further fuelled by wooden packing tables and pallets, oil-soaked paper used to wipe down machines, oil on the machines themselves and even aluminium tar insulating foil sheets lining the walls and ceiling.

The bullet-forming and processing machines, lead ingots, gas bottles, completed and packaged bullets, tooling and

associated equipment were all extensively damaged or destroyed, along with some of Geoff's prized trophy mounts, collectables and irreplaceable photos. The fire was so intense the metal building actually warped with lead ingots and formed bullets melted into pools and rivers of silver liquid. The fire brigade was summoned - but couldn't get there in time to save the plant.

Start-up doubts

Speculation as to whether Woodleigh Bullets would restart again was aired across the wider shooting fraternity among hand-loaders, stockists and ammunition companies. Even Geoff, faced with so many logistical and financial hurdles, had moments of real doubt. When news spread about a potential run-out of Woodleigh bullets, retailers started to sell out of the stock and even those advertised on gun websites were quickly snapped up.

Never give up

Under such crippling circumstances it's often too easy to throw in the towel but, as in the past, a determination to succeed coupled with support from patrons, friends and family members encouraged Geoff and Shirley to restart. When you stop to think about it, apart from Woodleigh Bullets and Bertram Bullet Co in Seymour, Victoria there are no other projectile and case



The extensively damaged production plant.

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A pheonix from the flames

manufacturers in Australia who better cater to the handloader, particularly when it comes to wildcat and big game calibres.

Out of the ashes

Every year in May or June the Big Game Rifle Club (BGRC) holds a Woodleigh Shoot on the SSAA range at Little River, Victoria to acknowledge Geoff's work, involvement and support over the years. Initially the BGRC Woodleigh Trophy Shoot was staged at Geoff's farm with five events attended by 30-odd participants. The first was a difficult single-rise, two-shot 16-clay target shoot followed by four rifle class events including black powder, paper targets set at 80 yards and closing to 25 and 10 yards with the overall high scorer receiving the Woodleigh Perpetual Trophy.

Andrew Hepner, Pat Walsh and John Sutherland along with Lance and Robin Eastwood of the BGRC and others banded together and were instrumental in helping Geoff and his family to restart against what were realistically overwhelming odds. This was also a way to reciprocate and show appreciation and it took a few trips by working groups to clear debris, assist in rebuilding structural work, scrub down machines and help with their restoration.

Due to the specialised nature of the machines and their early origins (those acquired from Australian Government munitions years ago when production ceased), damaged parts and components were either fabricated or replaced. While progress has been slow, as most of the restoration work and machinery overhaul rested with the owners, results are finally starting to show, with new electrical circuitry along with additional fire mitigation aids installed to prevent a similar occurrence.



BGRC member Pat Walsh assists with paint spraying salvaged machinery.

Recognition

Woodleigh Bullets have stood the test of time and are recognised by shooters from all walks of life the world over, in particular big game safaris hunters, outfitters, guides and ammunition companies, their annual catalogues featuring photos of successful hunters and their trophies being testimony to the popularity and effectiveness of those premium bullets. In 2013 Federal's Premium Safari Line ammunition loaded with Woodleigh hydrostatically stabilised bullets (invented by John Marozzi) won the coveted *Field & Stream* 'Best of the Best' award in America, further enhancing the company's reputation (see article in *Australian Hunter* Issue 66).

On a personal note, for years I've loaded and used Woodleigh projectiles from protected points, RNSN, fully jacketed or



One of the machines fully restored.

solids and hydros in my Sako A1 .30-06 Springfield, Winchester 70 .375 H&H and Schultz & Larsen .338 WM on a variety of game with excellent results, while my trophy water buffalo of 93DP taken in Arnhem Land a few years ago was achieved using the S&L .338 WM and WDL 300gr RNSN.

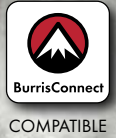
Owner's gratitude

Some machines still require tweaking but overall, restoration completion is expected before the end of year, all going well, with production gradually ramping up. Like new green growth sprouting after a bushfire, Woodleigh Bullets is rising from the ashes. Geoff and Shirley extend their thanks and genuine appreciation to those who helped and sent messages of support in their time of need, referring to them as "amazing true-blue Aussies". And for the business to continue trading successfully into the future it will require our ongoing support - and I'm confident that's a given. ●



A fresh start at the Woodleigh plant.

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Plenty of room for all you need.

Nick Radford

It's more than 50km from my workshop to the back paddock so it's important for me to carry enough tools and spares to tackle any problem that may arise, from broken pipelines to trees down on fences. For as long as I can remember I've been looking without success for a toolbox just the right size to hold everything I need. Until now. Enter the Upfitter Tuff Cargo Security LockBox.

Now before you say: "That box is made for a tub body," I know, but if a farmer can use a shifter as a hammer, I'm using this box in a flat-tray. Call it fluke or destiny but the Tuff Cargo fits perfectly with enough room to leave my fridge and diesel tank right where they are.

The box itself came pretty much assembled and all I had to do was fit the supplied thumb grabs to the latches and the rubber seal which already has backing tape applied. The Tuff Cargo comes with some pretty heavy-duty bolts to fix it to the floor of your ute and while it seemed a little bit light in thickness of steel, once bolted to the tray it did stiffen up.

The gas struts on the lid are superb and I reckon the addition of a battery powered

magnet light will be spot-on under it. If used in a tub ute body I can see the door on the back side being a bonus, just drop the tail-gate, open the door and you're in, quick access if you have a canvas tonneau cover, hard-top or other gear stacked.

The ability to lock both the top and back door is another great feature and it comes supplied with two keys. The doors both have a tight seal on the rubbers and so far dust hasn't been a problem at all, a pleasant surprise as good old bull dust usually seems to find its way in somehow.

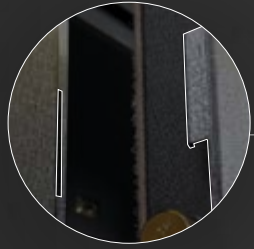
Perhaps the only issue I can see is the Tuff Cargo has a few holes in the floor to allow the bolts to secure it. You're not going to use them all and even though it's bolted down tight, this will allow any moisture between tray and toolbox to accumulate. I'll monitor it for a few months before I decide to store any power tools in there and, as we head into the wet season, it won't take long to figure out. Of course if it was in a tub and not an open tray without cover, this won't be a problem.


So for an off-the-shelf storage option I reckon it's pretty damn good. It'll take more abuse in my application than it probably

should, though so far has held together admirably. Among the fitting instructions (I seriously doubt anyone with (1) a ute and (2) the need for a toolbox will need them) was a little catalogue of other products, some of which I did take a liking to including lockable under-seat drawers. We all have different requirements but if you're after a toolbox and the Tuff Cargo fits your dimensions, I'd certainly recommend it. More at upfitter.com.au ●

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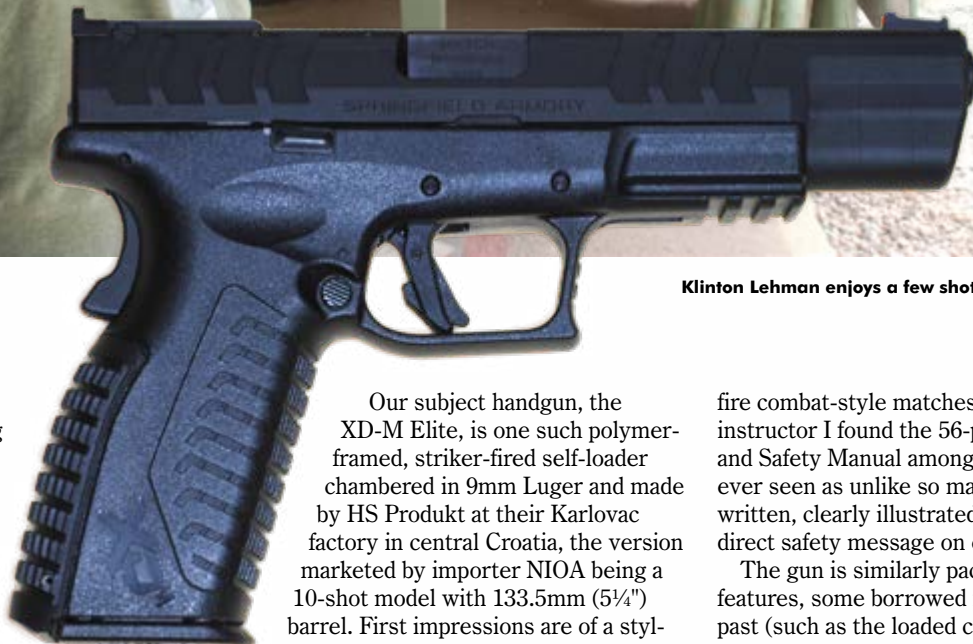
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Among the *Elite*

Geoff Smith enjoyed the new Springfield Armory 9mm



Klinton Lehman enjoys a few shots at the field turkeys.

The company now marketing firearms under the Springfield brand operates from Geneseo, Illinois but beyond the famous name itself, has no connection to the original Springfield, Massachusetts plant which made firearms for the US Government from 1777 to 1968. Currently operated by the Reese family, the manufacturers claim only to have saved the recognised moniker. They produce a large variety of handguns and rifles as well as importing various polymer-framed handguns to the US which are then marketed around the world.

Our subject handgun, the XD-M Elite, is one such polymer-framed, striker-fired self-loader chambered in 9mm Luger and made by HS Produkt at their Karlovac factory in central Croatia, the version marketed by importer NIOA being a 10-shot model with 133.5mm (5¼") barrel. First impressions are of a stylishly designed gun with clean lines that fits the hand well and points nicely. It's supplied with three polished stainless steel double-stack magazines and comes in a neat padded fabric 280x235mm (11x9") carry case.

Supplied accessories include two alternative backstraps (one larger and one smaller than the one on the gun), a tapered entry magazine well attachment and cable lock. It's essentially designed for rapid

fire combat-style matches. As a firearms instructor I found the 56-page Operation and Safety Manual among the best I've ever seen as unlike so many others it's well written, clearly illustrated and conveys a direct safety message on each page.

The gun is similarly packed with safety features, some borrowed from the distant past (such as the loaded chamber indicator and grip safety), others of more recent innovation like the trigger block and cocked striker indicator. Overall this pistol has been carefully and impressively designed both in terms of safety, functionality and ergonomics, with the only negative first impression involving the magazines, whose springs are extremely powerful. While functionally excellent, loading beyond a couple of rounds is challenging for older fingers, suggesting perhaps the inclusion of



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Among the elite

a loading aid similar to those supplied with Glock handguns.

Physically the gun measures 220mm long, 150mm high and 34mm deep and weighs 819 grams unloaded with magazine inserted. The frame is moulded from black polymer with the slide and barrel of nitride-finished satin black steel. The slide has both front and rear serrations giving a positive grip for manual racking and both magazine and slide release catches are permanently ambidextrous. The forward section of the triggerguard is recurved and serrated for double-handed shooting and there's a Picatinny rail under the barrel for attachments such as tactical lights, lasers and so on. The Partridge-style rear sight is adjustable for windage and elevation, the front sight dovetailed transversely across the slide and features a red plastic fibre optic insert which attracted positive comments from several fellow shooters.

The polymer trigger, as with many similar handguns, has a fairly long travel and feels different from the single-stage ones of revolvers and hammer-fired guns, testing with a Lyman electronic gauge giving an average trigger pull of 23.5N (5lb 4oz). It has a central safety lever which prevents operation unless the shooter's finger is applied across its face.

The grip safety requires the grip to be held before a shot can be fired. The loaded chamber indicator sits up when a cartridge is in the chamber so the shooter is aware the gun is loaded, however this is not the extractor, as it's much more robust and located at the right-hand side of the chamber. Similarly, at the rear of the slide a small pin protrudes to indicate the striker is cocked.

Field stripping is simple. After removing the magazine and ensuring the chamber is empty, the slide is locked open with the slide stop lever, the disassembly lever on the left side of the frame above the trigger is rotated 90 degrees clockwise, then the slide is drawn back so the slide stop lever releases. The slide will now travel forward and off the frame, the recoil spring is eased out and the barrel withdrawn from underneath. Reassembly involves replacing the barrel and recoil spring into the slide then slipping it back on to the frame and locking it open with the slide stop lever. The disassembly lever is then rotated back to its horizontal position and the gun is functional again.

Prior to firing some test rounds the gun was taken apart and barrel cleaned to remove any oil. The barrel is almost a work of art with both external and internal machining as close to perfect as any I've seen, the cleanly executed six-groove



Bench tests used six different loads, all of which cycled well and performed flawlessly.

CZ 600

SERIES



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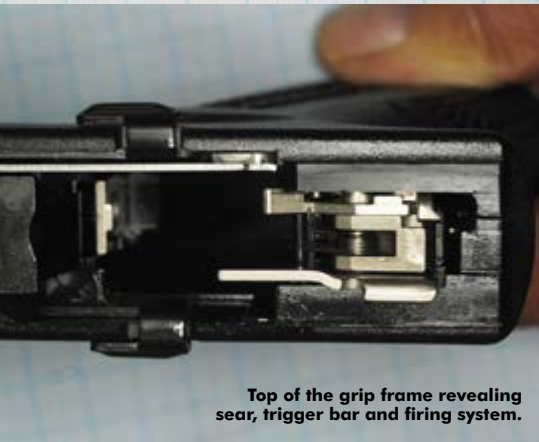
Among the elite



Breech end of the barrel shows the angled cam which enables it to disconnect from the slide during recoil.



Double-wound recoil spring assembly.



Top of the grip frame revealing sear, trigger bar and firing system.



Breech end of the barrel - the quality of machining is outstanding.

rifling having a right-hand twist with 1-in-10" pitch.

The trigger assembly sits in a metal chassis held in the frame by two transverse pins, while the sear assembly and ejector is pinned into the frame behind the magazine well. The trigger bar moves forwards when the trigger is depressed in order to release the striker and fire the gun. Once the slide moves out of battery, a cam on its underside pushes the trigger bar downwards to ensure disconnection between shots, which also means the gun can't fire unless the slide is fully in battery.

The barrel and slide are locked together for the first 5mm of recoil. During this period the barrel is forced downwards by the angled cam beneath the breech, engaging with its counterpart in the trigger chassis. This enables the slide to then disconnect from the barrel and recoil fully to cycle the gun, initial lock-up of barrel to slide being by way of the shoulder on the barrel above the breech.

The XD-M Elite was test-fired firstly during a Target Pistol match using supplied Federal 124-grain Syntech Range ammo and performed flawlessly though was shooting somewhat low. Later it was taken to a Field Silhouette match where opinions were sought from fellow shooters who generally spoke highly of it.

Hitting the field turkey at 75m with an open-sighted 9mm self-loader is a tall order

yet one of my friends managed to bring one down. Tests were then run over 25m shooting five-shot factory ammo groups with bullet weights between 147-grain Winchester silvertips and 115-grain Hornady Steel match. I also included a group of five reloads using 124-grain Tigershark round-nose bullets and 5.8 grains of AP100 propellant.

All loads cycled perfectly and grouped acceptably with my reloads surprisingly giving the tightest group. The machine-rested four-round group supplied from the factory (shot at 10m), when analysed graphically gave an average group radius of 2.65 MOA while my home-loaded five-shot group gave 3.84 MOA which, in approximate terms, means under ideal conditions the gun could group between 150mm-200mm at 100m.

To summarise then, the XD-M Elite deserves serious consideration if you're after a striker-fired 9mm handgun. The inherent safety features of trigger block, grip safety and out of battery firing pin block make it a safe option from the user's standpoint. It's well balanced, looks attractive and points well, so should prove an excellent pistol for anyone contemplating Practical Shooting competitions. The gun is distributed by NIOA and sells for around \$1500 but check with your dealer as prices can vary. ●



The gun comes with a neat padded fabric carry case.



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Illicit firearms estimates adjusted, NZ registry breach and WA firearms community wins fight for consultation

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) has adjusted the estimated number of illegal long arms in circulation in Australia, but has left the estimated number of illegal handguns in circulation unchanged. The ACIC statement said:

“Due to its clandestine nature, the size of the illicit firearm market cannot be definitively measured. However, based on available data, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) conservatively estimates there are 200,000 firearms (190,000 long-arms and 10,000 handguns) in the domestic illicit market. This is a reduction compared to the previous estimate released publicly in 2016.

This revised estimate is based on a range of intelligence sources, including historical and updated firearm importation figures, seizure trends, and the number of firearms surrendered during the course of Commonwealth, state and territory amnesties.

There are a number of variables involved in reaching this assessment, and the ACIC will continue to review this estimation as more definitive information becomes available.”

The Sporting Shooters’ Association of Australia (SSAA National) contacted the ACIC for further explanation but was declined further comment. In particular, clarification was sought around the unchanged nature of the estimated number of illicit handguns in circulation.

The estimation of Australia’s illicit firearm numbers dates back to 2012 and has been bandied about by mainstream media and politicians in search of a number to bring credibility to their viewpoints. This has been challenged on numerous occasions by SSAA National and remains a point of contention.

While the number is technically no longer outdated, estimating the number of illegal firearms in Australia without any method of establishing accuracy is dangerous when ultimately it is law-abiding firearm owners who bear the brunt of any negativity and changes to firearm laws.

WA Firearm alliance enters government consultation

An alliance bringing Western Australia’s grassroots firearms and firearms interest groups together has secured ongoing meetings to achieve transparent and ongoing consultation on the rewrite of the state’s firearms act.

The WA Firearms Community Alliance (WAFCA) has been pushing for meaningful consultation with the WA Government since its inception in April this year. The group’s creation was motivated by the member groups attending infrequent token consultation meetings and a tirade of media announcements and negative press demonising the concept of legal firearms being owned by law-abiding members of the community.

A rewrite of WA’s Firearms Act was announced in March 2022 and is set to be tabled in WA Parliament in November 2023. With a clear majority in both houses of parliament, the WA Labor party, previously led by Mark McGowan and now Roger Cooke, has had the power. Much of the media coverage that has followed reiterates that popularity, being particularly skewed. Most recently, The West Australian newspaper printed an article titled ‘Glacial progress on WA’s long overdue gun laws overhaul as another woman murdered in domestic violence horror’.

Linking these events shows a clear lack of understanding that the only group impacted by regulating firearms is the law-abiding civilians who have a genuine reason, license themselves, register their firearms and store them appropriately.

In another illustration of misrepresenting firearm ownership in Australia, a story for SBS introduced shotgunner Rocky Shi as an “unapologetic gun enthusiast” and went on to clumsily suggest there is a stereotype that “gun owners are violent” and there are ‘experts’ that back this claim.

When writing about firearms, maintaining fairness and balance while putting together a good story can be a difficult task, particularly when seeking sales or ratings.

Firearms and the shooting sports are also a specialised knowledge area and it

can be easy to get it wrong unless you are a sporting shooter or you have personal experience with the topic.

SSAA National actively works with the media and contacts journalists and news sources to help address inaccuracies and educate media professionals. *A Journalist’s Guide to Firearms and the Shooting Sports* was produced as an extensive guide to assist journalists and media professionals when reporting on firearms-related stories.

NZ firearm owner information breach

Just one month after its launch, New Zealand’s new Firearms Safety Authority has leaked private details of firearm owners.

Human error has been blamed for the incident that has jeopardised the safety of law-abiding licensed firearm owners and the wider public, should details ever reach the wrong hands. This breach leaked the email addresses, via an email sent by authority staff to more than 100 firearm owners in the carbon copy (cc) rather than blind carbon copy (bcc) address field, in an effort to notify them their address details needed updating. It also follows the theft of old firearms files from a disused Auckland police station last year that contained the names and addresses of thousands of licensed firearm owners.

It is this exact scenario that the Sporting Shooters’ Association of Australia (SSAA National) has raised as a concern during the public submission process to the Attorney-General’s Department about the National Firearms Register concept.

The existing firearms registries in Australia’s states and territories are rife with errors, which are inevitable during data entry. There is also a lack of consistency in data uploading of firearms that has been further exacerbated by human entry. Over the years there have been numerous breaches of these registries where the details of firearm owners have been made public, often with human error to blame. The potential for this to occur on a larger scale is very real when you consider the details of one million firearm owners could be accessed from one central point.

The consultation process for the Register questioned whether trusted non-government entities should be able to access registries for reasons such as verification of permits. However, we are mindful that the more people altering Register entries equates to greater potential for errors and in turn, an increased potential for misuse and possible privacy breaches. ●



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No quick fix in proposed National Firearms Register

John Maxwell

On December 12 last year when many Australians were contemplating the Christmas break, Constables Matthew Arnold (26), Rachel McCrow (29) and local man Alan Dare (58) arrived at a remote Queensland property for what they thought would be a routine check on a resident. In what followed, all three were shot dead in a brutal ambush and subsequently the three culprits - brothers Gareth and Nathaniel Train and Gareth's wife Stacey - were shot and killed by responding police.

Much of what occurred, the how and the why of this tragedy, hasn't been revealed but will no doubt emerge at the inquest. What this did initiate though was a renewed push for a National Firearms Register, linking the different state and territory registries into a more seamless whole, allowing police anywhere to check on the licensing and registration status of any person and any firearm.

In the case of the shootings at Wieambilla, a rural locality on the Darling Downs in south-east Queensland, the issue is whether police might have behaved differently, with more caution and perhaps greater numbers had they known of the guns and background of those at the property. According to media reports Gareth Train was a rabid conspiracy theorist, an active participant in conspiracy websites, sovereign citizen, anti-vaxxer and gun enthusiast hostile to government and police.

The officers' visit to the property apparently had a dual purpose, one a request from NSW for a welfare check on Nathaniel Train initiated by his estranged wife (he hadn't been in contact since October). The other was a separate check on Train over an incident on December 17, 2021 when he apparently tried to sneak from NSW into Queensland by backroads at the height of COVID lockdowns. His vehicle became

bogged at the border crossing and for some reason he abandoned two registered firearms. The warrant related to a breach of COVID restrictions.

Police had unsuccessfully visited the property previously seeking to locate Nathaniel Train so was there any reason to believe this visit would be any different? Again the inquest might shed some light. Train held a NSW firearms licence which had been suspended at the time of the shootings because of the border incident, police subsequently saying they found six firearms at the property, two registered to Nathaniel Train, three unregistered and one unknown.

So were there any red flags which may have alerted police to the danger their officers might face at this remote property that day? Again we'll have to wait for the inquest, though the mainstream media was already running stories about how this might all have been prevented had there been an effective national gun registration regime. This is a longstanding issue.

In the 1996 National Firearms Agreement (NFA) those jurisdictions without firearms registration (NSW, Queensland and Tasmania) agreed to create registration systems, while the others were required to review their existing registration systems so databases could be linked. And so was developed the National Firearms Licensing and Registration System (NFLRS) to serve as an Australia-wide reference library for police and law enforcement agencies. That has passed through various incarnations and in 2002 CrimTrac took over its management which, for shooters, meant unfortunate connotations. Were we criminals in need of tracking?

Most recently individual state and territory registries were linked by way of the Australian Firearms Information Network (AFIN), previously known as the National Firearms Interface and operated by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). AFIN was commissioned in 2018-19, requiring states and territories to transition to the new improved system.

What's proposed now appears to be what was aspired to back in 1996 but if seamlessly linking registries was cheap and simple, it would've been done long before now. Considering the ambitions, history, diversity of data and legacy of state and territory systems, what's proposed has the potential to be the IT project from hell, costing a fortune and taking forever to implement. The underlying problem is the existing national system has never worked very well and has been described as 'clunky'.



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No quick fix in proposed National Firearms Register

Some of the shortcomings have been highlighted in various inquiries. The one into the 2014 Martin Place siege suggested authorities experienced challenges in ascertaining the status of the gun used by the perpetrator. This seems curious as that perpetrator had never held a NSW firearms licence and was in possession of a pump-action shotgun (banned for pretty much everyone since 1996) which had its barrel and stock shortened.

In the report of the 2015 Senate committee inquiry into firearm-related violence (initiated by the Greens), CrimTrac said NFLRS was a capability which did its best to bring information to a single place but didn't replace the local system. Even the newest state registration systems and their databases hark back to the 1996 NFA, when the priority was getting it all up and running quickly, not so much ensuring they could effectively communicate outside their state or territory.



What's proposed
has potential to
be the IT project
from hell

Furthermore, any IT system requiring manual data entry of all those serial numbers, calibres and firearm descriptors is bound to contain errors as many shooters have seen for themselves. And there's more. Terminology isn't standardised across the different state and territory registries. "There's no consistency in terms of any of the systems we run when you run states and territories and a Commonwealth system. And that's the difficulty of trying to run hybrid systems," former ACIC head Mike Phelan told a Senate estimates committee in March 2021.

And to put it at its kindest, some state registries just don't work very well. A 2020 report by the Queensland Auditor-General found a stack of problems with the police-run licensing and registration system, as the firearms register was neither accurate nor up-to-date and was no longer fit-for-purpose, it said.

A 2019 Auditor-General report said WA Police's key firearm licensing information system didn't effectively support the entity to carry out its licensing and compliance activities. Basic licence and compliance information was unreliable and hard to get, the Auditor said. "It was disappointing to find that Police still has significant weaknesses in its regulatory controls and information systems, particularly given that this Office in its 2009 and 2013 audits had previously reported many of these weaknesses," it said. In 2019 the NSW Auditor concluded information on the state's firearms registry was inaccurate and out of date.

And so getting on for three decades after a national system was first proposed, something which actually works could finally be in sight. After some back and forth between the Commonwealth, states and territories, the go-ahead emerged from an extraordinary meeting of the Police Ministers Council in Sydney on April 3.

Here's Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus: "We want this Register because we want to ensure we're doing everything we can to prevent an incident like Wieambilla occurring again," he said. "We want to keep our police and communities safe. What the National Register will do is create a single shared record of firearms and firearms owners. It'll give us the ability to trace firearms throughout their life in Australia and police say this will let them assess risk better than they currently can."

A post-meeting communique set out the broad objectives and a discussion paper went into a little more detail on what the register aims to achieve. The National Firearms Register will be able to operate in near real-time, supply details of licence holders and provide a single firearm record with technical details, identity and history. It will be inter-operable between jurisdictions, linking firearms and individuals and where possible will make use of existing systems.

That does suggest entire state or territory systems (or elements) deemed beyond remediation will be replaced and significantly, considering what happened at Wieambilla, it'll provide notification of cross-jurisdictional movement of firearms. So does that mean anyone heading interstate on a hunting trip or to a competition will have to give notice? We don't know, although that's already the situation for any shooter travelling to Western Australia.

The discussion paper says that in providing better information on firearm movements (import, export, interstate transfer and ownership), the Register would also aim to increase identification of the

movement of firearms to the illicit market "allowing law enforcement to take decisive and timely action to locate and seize these firearms".

"The sharing of information between jurisdictions could also facilitate efficient administration of licensing, permit and registration systems, decreasing regulatory impost on the firearms community through reducing duplication, while ensuring vital information can be shared between registries," it says. Any move to reduce the regulatory impost on the firearms community is to be welcomed but on this one we'll hold judgment.

There's more. The National Firearms Register, the paper says, would provide a single shared record that uniquely identifies each firearm in Australia, as well as each non-government individual or entity authorised to possess a firearm. It would provide a view of firearms in Australia with an ability to track movement between entities, from import or manufacture to export or destruction. It should feature an alert or notification function for prescribed high risk information or events. For example it would raise a red flag for rejected, suspended or cancelled licences, interstate transfers, detected non-compliance with licence conditions, stolen firearms and ongoing probity checks.

The discussion paper poses some questions, some unexceptional, but number two asks: Should a National Firearms Register trace more than firearms, for example firearm accessories, magazines, parts and ammunition? From the viewpoint of the shooting community the answer should be an emphatic 'No!' Firstly it's challenging enough just tracking firearms and secondly, any tracking regime would require those parts, accessories, magazines to be individually identified by serial number, creating a bureaucratic nightmare and delivering no conceivable community safety benefit.

The discussion paper does suggest firearms dealers will play a greater role. "The contribution authorised firearms dealers make to community safety could be strengthened as part of a Register," it says. "Specifically, a Register could improve how trusted entities engage with firearms registries by providing a verification service to support licensing and permit systems, capable of electronically verifying any firearms licence or permit issued in Australia." Furthermore, dealers would be able to electronically submit and manage information on stock and make relevant reports to registries. ●

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This one's for you, Dad

Doug Walker reflects on his first trophy stag

I've been interested in hunting since I was a young boy when Dad would let me have a shot of his Webley Vulcan .22 air rifle in the garden back in England, shooting at old milk bottles or whatever we could lay our hands on to make some sort of target. Occasionally we'd take that rifle on camping holidays to north Wales and Dad would ask the farmer whose land we stayed at if he'd mind if we went looking for rabbits, which he never objected to. Dad and I would talk about buying a proper rifle eventually but that day never came and sadly in 2014 he passed away far too young.

Fast forward 25 or so years from those afternoons when smashing a milk bottle with a lead pellet gave me such a thrill, and in 2019 I married my now-wife whose parents own a 100-acre hobby farm in northern Victoria. It's about 25 per cent cleared, backs on to pine plantations and when we go there I always take a walk to see what's about. Invariably I spot a few fallow deer grazing near the creek and plenty of roos sharing the pasture, though this time after a wet summer in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains, all the animals were fat and their numbers plentiful. Joe, my father-in-law, assured me he'd seen lots of deer and if I went and sat up by the back boundary, soon enough I'd spot them coming out of the pines and heading for the creek.

Early one Saturday morning I donned my camo gear and Crispi boots, shouldered my .223 Ruger American and with much anticipation went to see what was grazing among the gums and tall grass near the creek. Now I'm no expert hunter, I shoot a decent group with my .308 Voere LBW from 100 yards but still have much to learn about the art of stalking, hunting and high-calibre rifles. What I do have is a passion for the sport and enthusiasm to learn. I feel there's no greater meditation than being in the wilderness - just me and silence and nature - the



Doug savours the moment.

intense awareness and concentration a good hunt demands.

Last time I was on this property I walked almost the entire perimeter before returning a few hours later only to see a fallow doe and her fawn barely a stone's throw from the house. So I headed straight to the creek just beyond the first paddock hoping I'd be lucky again. Sure enough I was but the three fallow saw me long before I spied them and off they scampered into the scrub. The deer were pretty jumpy considering they're rarely hunted but Joe assured me there were plenty so I persevered.

Next morning I headed out a bit later and followed a similar path, taking a slightly higher line near the crest of the hill and being careful where I stepped. Again a small herd of about five or six saw me and retreated to safety while in the same moment an unmistakable shape caught my eye in distant peripheral vision. The image you see on magazine covers that makes your heart beat that little bit faster - a royal, broad-headed stag with antlers almost as long as my arms standing proudly

surveying his territory. And yes, he was looking straight at me, even from the 300m that separated us.

I crouched on one knee, lined him up in the scope and placed the cross-hairs on his chest. We both remained motionless for what seemed like an age though was probably only five or 10 seconds, before he bolted sideways and into the pines. He was there, I'd seen him with my own eyes so I'd be back that evening to wait for him with the .308.

Everyone was settling into some cheese and wine before dinner when I told them I was heading out again to look for the stag I'd seen earlier. I was on a mission so off I went in my new Spika camo gear, knife in sleeve, ear protectors, meat bags, three rounds in the mag, three in the pocket and boots zipped up.

I headed straight to the back boundary fence line where he'd leapt out of sight. It was 5.45pm and by 7.30 it would be dark so if I was going to take him it would have to be in the next hour or so. I found a spot which gave me a vantage point almost straight down the boundary and clear



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This one's for you, Dad

range to about 300m. The drizzle had set in and a cooling chill started to nip the air. My breath was steaming above me though I didn't mind being cold and wet for this experience. I lay in wait behind a fallen tree as the minutes ticked by, hoping he'd show himself before dark.

Maybe I was too early, maybe I'd spooked him that morning, maybe he'd emerge further up the pines out of my line of sight and I'd be forced to go stalking again. Or maybe he just wouldn't show and I'd have to save my excitement for another day. Half an hour went by and serious doubt was starting to creep in until suddenly, as if he owned the place, a young fallow strutted confidently out of the pines about 150m away. Tempting and good to see but not what I wanted. Then a few minutes later a sambar followed the same path through the blackberries skirting the plantation.

My pulse quickened, adrenalin flowing now as drops of gentle, persistent rain started to soak through my trousers as I crouched behind the fallen gum. It was pushing 7pm, light was fading fast and it looked like tonight wasn't going to be the hunt I'd hoped for. Right then that shape reappeared as if from nowhere, slowly crossing from the pines into Joe's property about 200m away. This was it, the moment I'd been waiting for as I positioned my rifle on the timber in front of me with the stock tucked firmly into my shoulder.

He took a few more steps then stopped, antlers reaching high above his head like branches of the burnt trees nearby, his deep chest side-on to me. The Leupold making



as much of the little light remaining gave me just enough to lock that image in my memory before taking one more second to be sure I was set. Safety off, breathe, squeeze. The Federal soft-point caught him squarely in the left shoulder and down he went in an instant. Got him! I sprinted the distance between us, shaking from the adrenalin pumping through me.

What a stunning specimen he was with broad chest, solid forehead and big brown eyes, my first trophy stag. As I stood over him I knelt and took a moment to take in

what I'd just done, the gratitude I felt at this amazing opportunity and contrasting sadness at taking a life. Then came the excitement of landing my first trophy antlers along with regret that Dad couldn't be there with me.

That mix of emotions was something I hadn't expected when the day finally came and reflecting on that weekend now makes me realise this sport is far more intense than I ever anticipated. It's a serious hobby, one to be respected and practised carefully. I rushed back to the house, told Joe an excited version of the past couple of hours then we took Joe's ute to retrieve my trophy.

It's fair to say I'll never forget that weekend and now I have the antlers to prove it. I still have the old Vulcan .22 at home and while it's not much of a hunting rifle, it's a beautiful piece of craftsmanship that'll stay in the family for as long as I can be sure of it. Who knows, the Voere might even join it in the heirloom treasure chest. ●





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Left side of receiver with clean lines and resemblance to standard Howa M1500 but scaled down to reduce weight.



The Lite fantastic

Con Kapralos salutes Howa's lightweight winner

For a hunter who prefers to stalk quarry on foot, the weight of a hunting outfit encompassing rifle and scope is something that's taken seriously. While varmint and long-range set-ups have their place in hunting and shooting, lugging a rifle which can weight 4.5kg or more over hill and dale isn't conducive to a pleasurable trek. Ever since American custom-rifle maestro Melvin Forbes pioneered the ultra-light hunting rifle decades ago, there has been a dedicated band of manufacturers the world over who still produce fine custom-made ultra-light stalking rifles.

Many respected companies have dabbled in producing some attractive options though most of them are at the top end of the price scale. An ultra-lightweight rifle is one generally weighing less than 5lb (2.3kg) without a scope or rings/bases and it has taken Howa of Japan, in conjunction

with Fuller Global, to come up with a truly affordable version in two proven short-action calibres in the Howa Super Lite.

Available in 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Winchester, the Howa Super Lite tips the scales at a tad over 2kg and is based around a newly-designed reduced scale short action, which size-wise is between Howa's Mini Action and standard Short Action profiles paired with a carbon-fibre stock. Australian distributor Outdoor Sporting Agencies sent *Australian Shooter* one of the new Super Lites in .308 Winchester for assessment and review.

At a glance

The rifle arrived in two separate cartons, one containing the M1500 Super Lite barrelled action in .308 Winchester and the other the Stocky's carbon-fibre riflestock. The gun was assembled as per user manual instructions and the bore cleaned to remove

any factory preservatives. A compact Crimson Trace Brushline 3-9x40 riflescope with suitable rings was also supplied, the receiver fitted with a one-piece Picatinny rail designed specifically for the Super Lite action. The rifle weighs 2.08kg bare and with the Crimson Trace optic fitted settled the scales at 2.6kg.



Layout of the action is pure Howa M1500, with three-position safety and well-proportioned ejection port.

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The rifle comes with a LimbSaver recoil pad and QD sling swivel studs.



The integral recoil lug, part of the receiver unit, mates with a corresponding recess in the AccuBlock bedding system.

Barrelled action

The Super Lite action has been designed from scratch by Howa. Its size falls neatly between their Mini Action and standard Short Action, being a scaled-down version of the M1500 but retaining some of its features. The receiver is milled from a single piece of circular steel bar stock with the front receiver ring retaining the round profile, while the rear ring has the top milled flat. Top of the receiver is drilled and tapped for scope mounting though Howa have decided to supply the rifle with a Picatinny rail made precisely for the Super Lite action.

The ejection port still has plenty of room to allow for discharge of fired and unfired cases. The left side of the receiver has a small gas port on the front ring with make and model engraved into the flank, with the bolt release tucked in just behind the receiver tube, butting up alongside the tang. On the right side only the serial number adorns the front ring.

The recoil lug design follows those found on all Howa M1500s in that it's integral to the receiver frame, milled from the same piece of steel, the action anchored to the stock by two Torx bolts screwed into the recoil lug and rear tang. To match the scaled-down receiver the barrel is of a number-one contour, measuring 510mm (20") and in the review calibre of .308 Winchester has a one-in-10 rate of twist. The barrel's finished in matte black to match the receiver and bolt body, handle and shroud. The muzzle is threaded 1/2x28 threads per inch for use with accessories and in the case of the Super Lite, a muzzle brake would be an advantage to reduce muzzle flip.

Bolt

The Super Lite bolt when compared to the one on my Howa standard short action .223 Rem is svelte to say the least. It retains all the features we've come to know in a Howa bolt, with M16-style extractor and plunger



Super Lite bolt with dual-opposed locking lugs and M16-style extractor and plunger ejector.

ejector and dually opposed locking lugs with 90-degree bolt lift, with which I've never had an issue on the countless Howa rifles I've reviewed. The bolt always locks solid and travels smoothly when cycling the action.

Trigger, safety, magazine

The trigger is the superb Howa Actuator Controlled Trigger system (HACT) which is a fully adjustable, two-stage design. It came set from the factory at 1.4kg, breaking crisply and cleanly and was left as-is for testing. The safety is part of the HACT unit and is Howa's three-position system with middle blocking the trigger but allowing the bolt to be cycled, while rearward the bolt is locked down and trigger blocked. Fully forward allows the rifle to be fired.

The triggerguard and magazine shroud are made from a single piece of polymer and the detachable box magazine follows the trend, being polymer with the exception of the steel spring. The magazine is retained by a small clip on front of the shroud and pressing the latch releases it for easy removal. It holds three rounds which is plenty for an ultra-lightweight hunting rifle.

Stock

Naturally an ultra-light rifle would need a lightweight stock and the Howa Super Lite is no exception at 480 grams. It's made of hand-laid carbon-fibre by Stocky's Stocks in the US and uses their patented AccuBlock technology.

The stock has a pleasant profile with



The stock with soft touch finish and spider-webbing gives additional grip.



A lightweight, compact scope in Crimson Trace's Brushline 3-9x40 was perfect.

clean lines and no unwanted cheekpieces or raised combs and has a soft-touch finish applied with a grey webbing effect which gives additional grip. A LimbSaver recoil pad is also included which will help reduce some of the felt recoil, while sling swivel studs are fitted as standard. Inletting is perfect with the AccuBlock patented recoil lug bed mating precisely with the steel lug on the receiver frame and the barrel fully free-floating.

Range testing

The Howa Super Lite's forte is as an ultra-lightweight stalking rifle and not one suited to long-range sessions punching paper targets. To set up the rifle with the supplied Crimson Trace optic, a range session beckoned and it would be interesting to see how the four supplied hunting loads from PPU and Hornady would fare through the pencil-thin barrel and 2.6kg weight.

Single five-shot groups were fired from each ammunition sample and it was pleasing to see all groups less than 1.5 MOA. In all cases, the first three shots printed groups between 0.75-1 MOA but as the barrel warmed up, shots four and five

did tend to disperse, even though the barrel was allowed to cool somewhat between shots, considering the temperature was in the low 30s. The rifle was a tad lively to shoot off the bench but with its light weight this was to be expected, though most importantly it was an accurate shooter for the task it's designed for.

Field testing

The Howa Super Lite was called into action for a deer hunt on a private concession close to home where its light weight was a blessing. The rifle carried superbly over the shoulder and when required, was easy to manoeuvre on the fidgety fallow deer being culled. While shots were less than 150m, the rifle and Crimson Trace optic yielded a couple of deer for the table and two less pests for the landowner to worry about. The outfit's weight and resultant recoil was never an issue when hunting on foot as you'd be lucky to fire two shots in quick succession.

Summary

The Howa Super Lite is superb for the stalking hunter looking for an affordable ultra-lightweight rifle. The calibres in 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Winchester will handle all medium to large game species in Australia without any issues. Adding an appropriate optic, in this case the Crimson Trace Brushline 3-9x40, made for a combination that was a joy to carry and use. The gun retails for around \$1650 but shop around for the best deal on this cracking little hunting rifle. More at osaaustralia.com.au • Next month: Choosing a light-weight rifle ●

Weight and resultant recoil was never an issue when hunting on foot

SPECIFICATIONS

- Manufacturer:** Howa, Japan
- Model:** M1500 Super Lite
- Action:** Push-feed, dual-opposed locking lugs, steel receiver with integral recoil lug
- Calibres:** 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Winchester (tested)
- Barrel:** 510mm (20") No.1 contour, one-in-10 twist (.308 Win), threaded 1/2x28 TPI for accessories
- Magazine:** Three-shot polymer detachable box
- Trigger:** Two-stage Howa HACT, set at 1.4kg, fully adjustable
- Stock:** Stocky's carbon-fibre with AccuBlock bedding system
- Length:** 985mm
- Weight:** 2.08kg
- RRP:** \$1650 (guide only)
- Distributor:** Outdoor Sporting Agencies



Polymer saves weight and the Super Lite uses it for the magazine and triggerguard/magazine shroud.

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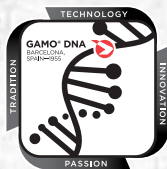
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At home on the range

Robert D. Moore makes the most of a walk in his local 'Park'



The venerable Howa in .308 Win.

With a planned Sunday at the range there's always much to do and look forward to. This is a day for my main hobby with sunshine, exercise, fresh air and the excellent company of like-minded people, all determined to have a great day. At my local range, Victoria's Eagle Park, many opt for benchrest shooting while others, like hunters, are doing their own but different preparations. The two are not in conflict but do have different skill sets with women equally represented in both groups and this is where a lot of male shooters discover ladies are sometimes better shots, as often they have a far lighter touch on the trigger.

Before the day there is (or should be) lots of preparation as often there's much to be taken from your last visit. You can learn from your achievements, maybe more from your mistakes and the question should be: What can I do better next time? Many in business use a program of continuous

improvement, a lifelong pursuit of beneficial little changes usually called a one per cent change. Often it's little things that can make a big difference, stack up a few one per cent victories and you'll quickly find you've made considerable improvements.

A good example is when benchrest shooting, removing a redundant sling attachment point used to mount a bipod afforded a better position of my Ruger .223 on the front shooting rest, which led to improved balance and allowed the rear rest to be repositioned. The outcome was better control and the result an overall improvement in groups - simple, no cost, quick and effective.

And a close look at spent cases is worthwhile. Check for evidence of overloads (condition of the fired primer might give you a clue) and keep an eye out for faults and damaged cases. You may choose to focus on 'flyers', the shot which doesn't land where it was aimed and it's here the

spent case in question should be examined, though your conclusion could be it was just the 'Nut on the Butt'.

It's helpful to devise a program to suit your interest. Benchrest shooting and hunting are different but equal as you must understand what you want to achieve and have a plan to get you there. Many shooters take more than one target to the range and to help make your assessment easier, consider arranging targets by calibre and even different loads. Look at contrast as often it's easier to use black dots as aiming points on a target. You might choose a row or column to test one load, while another might be allocated to a different load and a detailed look at the results will be useful.

It's personal choice but I usually decide on the size and placement of aiming points by calibre and load. The 6.5 Creedmoor with a first focal plane scope works well with a 12mm dot out to 100m, whereas the Howa in 308 Win with a 3x9x40 second

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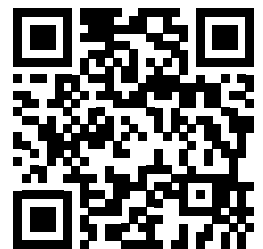
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At home on the range



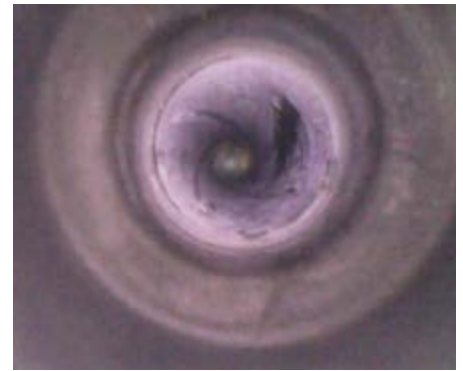
Reloading is a sure way to save money on ammo.

focal plane or .22 WMR are much better when 25mm dots are used. And remember, how your eyes perform changes at longer ranges and as the years roll by.

Give some thought to which 'toys' you'll use on that next visit. The usual practice is to take more than one rifle to the range, as a session with your .22 WMR can be as much fun as a session with the Creedmoor and could be a lot cheaper in terms of ammunition costs. Shooting the .22 WMR and .223R both without muzzle brakes is a fine low-cost combination and a switch to firearms with cheaper ammunition is also

an option. Reloaded .223 ammo is often one-third the cost of some centrefires and 25 grains of propellant for the .223 vs 55 grains or more for larger calibres can save plenty. Compare a \$39 box of 20 factory .308 loads to a box of 50 .22 WMR at the same price.

Under your plan, select the firearm(s) then make up or buy test batches of ammunition. As an example, a recent test was to find out if my .308 Win using 168g ELD-M performed better with 44g of ADI 2208 or, as recommended, 39g of ADI 2206H (in this case 2208 was better). On another



Cause for concern . . . the Howa's burnt barrel.

day using 130g ballistic tips on the 6.5 Creedmoor, a test was done to learn if 39g of ADI 2209 was better than the recommended 41g of the same propellant, the 41g load winning out. And don't believe all advertised claims about the performance of anything, do it yourself and find the truth about you, your firearms and your situation.

On another day several brands and types of .22 WMR ammunition were checked, essentially comparing the 40-grain family of projectiles and newer 30-grain rounds with ballistic tips. All the latter in terms of accuracy, with their lower weight and higher speed, outperformed the others on paper, the 30g ballistic tipped ammo producing near consistent 1" groups out to 100m. Not so the others though a 2" group from a 40-grain .22 WMR isn't all bad. A fellow shooter with a chronograph let me fire several rounds to determine the veracity of a claimed speed of 2200fps at the muzzle and it's fair to say that, on the day, the maker's claims were not replicated. I don't know if this was typical or what the result might be hunting but the exercise was very educational.

If you're spending \$100 a month on factory ammunition then consider reloading. This can be both tedious and enjoyable but will save you money. Usually you're trying to pocket a few dollars and perhaps solve a problem like what's the best load for what you're trying to achieve. If you buy a new hunting rifle and plan to go after deer, you want to know if you'll get the best accuracy with 150g soft-points or 150g hollow-points. You could load a test batch of five rounds of each and even change the propellant charge with each batch. For maximum value, document all details of each batch: calibre, projectile weight, bullet maker and type, cartridge overall length (COAL), propellant, load weight and expected speed then write the details on a label attached to your storage box.



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At home on the range

While working with a .308 I felt some frustration trying to shoot better groups. The rifle has fired about 2500 rounds and many would blame a burnt-out barrel so a borescope was used to determine the extent of damage to the start of the rifling lands, my quest being to find the best seating of projectiles to the lands. Based on experience and a measure of luck, the loaded rounds had the seating depth altered by 005" increments starting at 2.820" COAL, in this case best results found in the range of 2.830-2.835". Simple and effective, no frustration and easy to reproduce.

And so to the mysteries of the toolbox. On almost every trip to the range someone needs help - a band-aid, screwdriver, Allen key, torque driver or fat torque wrench. A high-viz jacket and beanie with your footy club colours or SSAA logo are essential as are safety glasses, hearing protection and spare bore flags. The list can be as long as your imagination or size of your toolbox (and wallet).

Loading your vehicle requires attention to detail and of course you'd know to stack in the reverse sequence to unloading at the range. Firearms, bolts and magazines are stored separately, ammunition by type in boxes under separate lock and key and don't forget other items such as targets,



wind flag, spotting scope, front and rear supports, miscellaneous tools and water bottle.

Once loaded it's time to lock up, set the alarm and head to the range, ready for another walk in the park, Eagle Park in my case, which is set in a natural amphitheatre forming part of the You Yangs ranges not far from Geelong. Now if only we can arrange to manage the wind! And remember when you choose a day consider the family, satisfy their needs first even that's just coming home safely with bread, milk and a newspaper, keeping in mind you'll earn lots of 'Brownie points' towards that next trip. ●



It pays to record your test results for future reference.

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Eyes like a Hawke



Frontier scopes put Con Kapralos firmly in the picture

Hawke Optics continues to produce some fine sports optics and believes in listening to their customer base and the marketplace before updating or refining products in their line-up. The flagship model in their riflescope range is the Frontier and this includes an extensive number of variants with both 1" and 30mm main tube diameters. More recently they released a selection of riflescopes with a 34mm main tube, obviously targeted at long-range and Precision Rifle Shooting (PRS) disciplines where maximum internal adjustment is required.

Australian Hawke Optics distributor The Scope Store approached *Australian Shooter* with a request to review a couple of scopes in the Frontier 30 SF 4-24x50 with LR Dot reticle (18 430) along with the Frontier 34 FFP 5-30x56 SF IR specification with MOA Pro Ext reticle (18 641).

At a glance

The Frontier 30 SF 4-24x50 with its 30mm main tube weighs 662 grams and measures 369mm, while the newer Frontier 34 FFP model in the 5-30x56 SF IR was much longer and heavier, coming in at 830 grams and 392mm.

Frontier range

All riflescopes in the Frontier stable use the H7 optical system with high zoom ratio, supreme clarity and light transmission, encompassing 14 reticles in either the first (FFP) or second (SFP) focal planes.

The H7 optical system features lenses made from high-grade, low-dispersion Crown glass with 21-layer full multicoating and combined with a wide field-of-view and high-volume eye-box, they give the utmost riflescope performance in all light conditions.

The Frontier range also comes supplied with some neat accessories in a zoom magnification lever, professional metal flip-up lens covers, sunshade extension (model dependent) and a lens cleaning cloth. And user literature isn't skimmed on with Hawke supplying booklets covering instructions, scope alignment and detailed information on the reticle.

Frontier 30 SF 4-24x50

This is an excellent choice for a hunting scope, especially for medium to long-range work with the LR Dot reticle. Having recently added a 7mm Remington Magnum to the stable, the Frontier 30 SF 4-24x50 would be a perfect optic on this rifle with its illumination, side focus and, in this instance, the LR Dot reticle being spot-on for shooting out to 500m. The main tube is made from a single piece of aircraft-grade aluminium and has a matte black hard anodised finish, the turrets being ¼ MOA per click with the elevation turret having Hawke's Zero Lock 'n' Stop feature.

Both turrets are exposed dials with push/pull locking. To adjust, the caps are pulled up and can be moved in the direction required, anti-clockwise for the elevation dial moving point-of-impact up and likewise

for the windage dial (anti-clockwise moves point-of-impact to the right). With the elevation turret's Zero Lock 'n' Stop feature set, you can dial up point-of-impact then easily return to the zero point. What's pleasing to see is Hawke stipulate the zero stop can be removed for users who wish to do so, simply by following the instructions in the manual. Both dials are superbly designed and properly marked, having accurate and repeatable clicks which are easy to feel and hear.

Adjacent to the elevation and windage turrets are the parallax (side-focus) and illumination dials. The parallax dial is closest to the main tube and superbly designed for adjustment from 15 yards (14m) to infinity, graduations in between clearly marked and easy to adjust with the dial moving smoothly from minimum to maximum.

The illumination dial is next to the parallax and allows for the central dot on the LR Dot reticle to be illuminated by up to six brightness settings with an 'off' setting in between and even with no illumination the reticle dot is black and perfectly suitable for daylight use. A single CR2032 lithium-ion button battery powers the illumination and is housed in the dial body.

The ocular housing containing the high-volume 'eye-box' has been designed to work as it should on a high-performance optic. The magnification power dial is well designed and moves between 4 to 24-power smoothly with all settings clearly marked. A small lever is supplied which can be attached to the power magnification dial to

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Eyes like a Hawke

assist moving it through the range though there was no need for it during testing.

The eyepiece has a fast-focus (dioptre) function which lets you focus the reticle precisely to your eyesight and has a locking-ring which secures it in position. Eye relief on both review optics was generous at 100mm. The objective bell and ocular housing use professional quality aluminium flip-up lens covers which protect the external surfaces against the elements when not in use.

The LR Dot (16x) reticle is one of several options offered and my personal favourite for sheer simplicity. It's a variant of the classic L4 reticle and uses a more open outer post design to keep more of the target visible and offers additional aim points for holdover. The reticle is in the Second Focal Plane (SFP), meaning it stays the same size through all magnification settings.

Frontier 34 FFP 5-30x56

The Frontier 34 range is squarely targeted at users who demand more internal adjustment, such as long-range target shooters and PRS disciplines. This model (18 641) has several unique features in its 5-30x56 magnification range including side focus, illumination and the reticle in the First Focal plane all housed within the 34mm main tube.

The sheer size and weight are immediately obvious with that 56mm front objective lens, 392mm length and 830-gram weight. The windage and elevation turrets have been designed with the end user in mind with ¼ MOA per click adjustment values for both turret, though the dials are laid out differently from each other. The elevation turret dial still incorporates the Zero Lock 'n' Stop feature but the collar is marked with increments from '0' to '24' MOA (quarter MOA sub-increments).

Once the turret has been dialled one entire rotation (upwards), bracketed figures above the '0-24 MOA' marks enable you to dial from 25 MOA up to roughly 50 MOA using these reference marks. With the windage turret dial from the '0' mark there are 12 MOA adjustment graduations to the right and 12 to the left, something only seen on windage dials which have been designed correctly with the long-range shooter in mind.

The parallax and illuminations dials are side-by-side adjacent to the elevation/windage turrets, laid out with clear markings and smooth in operation. Parallax adjustment is from 15 yards (14m) to infinity with ranges of 20, 30, 50, 75, 100, 200, 300 and 500 yards marked for quick adjustment. The illumination dial contains

The two scopes as reviewed, Frontier 34 FFP 5-30x56 (top) and 30 SF 4-24x50.



11 settings with an 'off' position between each, numbers 1-6 designated as night settings with 7-11 for daytime, handy moon and sun icons on the dial indicating this. A single CR2032 lithium-ion battery in the illumination dial housing powers the electronics, the ocular housing identical to the other review scope in design and operation.

The reticle is the MOA Pro Ext version and is in the First Focal Plane. Such reticles alter their size and subtension graduations with changes to the magnification settings. While FFP reticles are available in hunting riflescopes, their forte is at distance and the PRS disciplines where shooters are constantly dialing in to long ranges and must allow for crosswinds to make consistent hits on targets out to 1000m. The MOA Pro Ext reticle resembles a Christmas tree to me, such is my familiarity with them.

Range testing

Both Frontier scopes were tested informally at the range, the 4-24x50 mounted on a Sako 85 in 7mm Remington Magnum and the 5-30x56 paired with a custom Howa Sporter in .223 Remington. Shooting to 300m both scopes performed superbly

with the H7 optical system giving crisp, clear images out to the maximum distance. Each tracked as expected with adjustments made via windage and elevation dials being precise and repeatable.

The LD Dot reticle on the 4-24x50 with its hold-over graduations was right on the money with the ballistic data supplied by Hawke and I warmed to it so much it'll be on the shortlist of scopes I'll consider for the 7mm. The 5-30x56 with its 34mm main tube was excellent on the .223 Remington, though I see it as a perfect partner on calibres used for long-range shooting. At time of writing the Frontier 30 6-24x50 SF LR Dot has an RRP of \$1523 and 34 FFP 5-30x56 SF IR FFP MOA Pro Ext an RRP of \$2230. ●



The ocular eyepieces on the Frontier 30 and 34 are well designed.

Comparing the differences in elevation turrets on the 34 FFP (left) and 30 SF.





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Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX

By Nick Rositano

A good hunting boot in my opinion is a very important piece of equipment, along with a few other key essentials. After years of hunting with work boots and eventually making my way up to entry-level hiking/hunting boots to the more premium, it was about time to invest in a decent pair that can handle our harsh terrain and last years without the need to upgrade every season or two. Now, I guess this comes with a bit of a price, as the more durable boots on the market generally seem to be the less forgiving regarding comfort; however, the new (ABSS) system from Crispi this immediately caught my eye and had me very eager on getting my hands on a pair. I've had my eye on the Crispi range for quiet sometime!

Upon opening the box of the Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX, you see the quality of workmanship that has gone into making these premium boots. Crispi's are handmade in Italy, unlike many other manufacturers whose boots are mass produced. The Nevada Legend EFX GTX are lace-up ankle boots. They feature Nubuck leather uppers with leather collars. The inside of the Nevada Legends EFX GTX feature a Gore-Tex Dual Tech lining, which has a 100 per cent waterproof membrane for the harshest conditions to keep your feet dry. The Ankle bone support system (ABSS) gives added protection and support around the ankle, preventing sprains in those harsh conditions. The Nevada Legend EFX GTX are fitted with Vibram soles with a rubber rand around the lower edges of the boots, which provides excellent traction on all terrains and gives the boots added protection in all environments from cuts and splits from sharp objects found out in the field. The boots weigh in at about 800 grams each boot (US10), making them on the lighter end compared to other options on the market. The boots feature 200 grams of Gore-Tex membrane, not only keeping your feet dry but also giving you warmth in those cold/sub-zero conditions.

After having another brand of higher-end



The Nevada Legend EFX GTX boots are extremely comfortable to wear straight out of the box.

hiking/hunting boots fail on me in less than a year with there so-called 100 per cent waterproofing, I was determined to put the Crispi's to the test. In the time I've owned the boots, I can honestly say the 100 per cent Gore-Tex dual lining held up to its name in wet paddocks to creek/river crossings. In my opinion, there is nothing worse than setting out in the early morning to find that you now must continue your hunt with wet feet and socks for the remainder of the day. Putting the boots on for the first time I noticed just how comfortable the inner sole was combined with the leather lining inside. Unlike many other boots which I've worn over the years, the Crispi Nevada EFX GTX don't need to be worn in and are good to go straight out the box, meaning no blisters or sore feet after a long day out hunting. Like many products, Crispi recommend proper care instructions for the boots to insure you get the most out of them and I think these boots, being an investment, you should take the time to do this. The boots come with proper instructions and a small bonus tub of waterproofing and conditioner, which should be applied as per instructions with the sponge included.

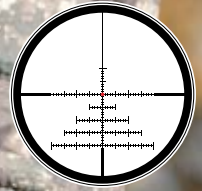
After putting these boots through the paces in the field, they have held up exceptionally well. What I really love about the boots is the comfort, especially the mid sole, which gives a shock absorbing feel



The Ankle Bone Support System is a game changer.

generally not found in other boot brands. The ankle support is phenomenal; walking on rocky surfaces to large inclines and declines, not once did I feel like I could roll my ankle even with my backpack loaded after a big carry out. While stalking I noticed the boots to be very quiet compared to other boots I've had in the

past, which can be quite loud. Matched with the Vibram sole, the boots were very grippy even in wet weather. Generally, with some of the other brand of boots I've had, the first thing I want to do when I'm back at camp is to take the boots off to give my feet a rest. I can honestly say with my Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX this didn't even cross my mind. If anyone is in the market for an exceptional pair of hunting/hiking boots, I highly recommend the Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX. They may be on the higher price bracket on the market at (RRP) \$669, but like the old saying goes 'buy once, cry once'. There is no surprise to me on the quality of Crispi boots having been founded in 1975 by Alessandro Marcolion. Crispi has been serving the market for more than 40 years. Their technology and designing behind the Crispi Nevada Legend EFX GTX is second to none and I look forward to many more seasons out hunting with them! ●



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Outside edge

Joseph Nugent applauds a pocket-sized sharpening solution



The use of bladed tools and the necessity to maintain them is an important yet sometimes overlooked aspect of many outdoor pursuits. An experienced person understands the significance of retaining a properly honed edge on any (and every) bladed implement, so it's essential to have the ability to sharpen your bladeware prior to and after use, as well as small touch-up jobs in the field.

With a variety of products on the market advertising a 'one size fits all' approach, it can be tricky to determine which are gimmicks and which are actually fit for purpose. Talking to other hunters and trying their gear is one way of making a choice, reading reviews another. Yet ultimately the decision is about personal preference and most likely based on your individual circumstances, proposed usage and, of course, cost.

In my case I was looking for a relatively small and handy device I could use in the field or at home, had the capacity to accommodate a variety of sharpening scenarios across a broad range of implements and was less than \$100. My choice was the Work

Sharp Guided Field Sharpener from online retailer Tools Warehouse.

This is the complete sharpening solution for both home and field use. Designed specifically for outdoor enthusiasts it's compact, lightweight and incorporates a variety of stones, ceramic rods and leather to cover all aspects of sharpening and honing. Suitable for the majority of blades inclusive of axes, broadheads and knives (both straight-edged and serrated), the Work Sharp Guided Field Sharpener is an essential item for anyone serious about preserving their equipment.

Established in the US, Work Sharp has been making sharpening tools since 1973 under the brands Darex, Drill Doctor and Work Sharp knife and tool sharpeners. Currently they produce a variety of sharpening devices for the home, workshop and field with best-sellers including their electric kitchen and workshop tool sharpening devices, though they also offer a number of sharpening options catering to outdoors enthusiasts.

These vary from small pull-through style touch-up sharpeners to more sophisticated benchtop options. The Guided Field Sharpener sits in the middle of this product list, providing a broad spectrum of sharpening solutions at a reasonable price. Retailing for around \$70 it's an affordable option offering the most bang for buck in terms of capability. All Work Sharp equipment is quality checked and comes standard with a three-year warranty.

Unrivalled versatility

In my experience the Guided Field Sharpener is the most versatile, handheld sharpener on the market. Weighing less than 120 grams it's lightweight and fits easily into a pouch or pocket and, with its array of features, is capable of completely reviving an old or damaged blade, refining

an existing edge and everything in between.

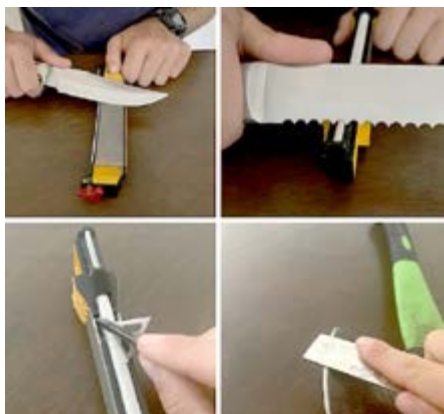
The wedged sides provide either a 20 or 25-degree angle, allowing even the most inexperienced operator to maintain a consistent angle when sharpening. Conversely the stones are both removable, a handy feature when working on larger blades such as axes or machetes. By working through each component of the sharpening system appropriately, most knives will have no trouble giving you a close shave at the end of the process.

Features include: A lanyard hole to attach the unit to your person when afield; brightly coloured components should it be misplaced in a field or a lowlight situation; 320 Course and 600 Fine diamond stones for initially developing the edge and removing larger imperfections in the blade; a three-position ceramic rod which when rotated reveals a coarse and fine piece of ceramic for honing an edge (additionally the grooved side is designed to remove burrs from fish hooks); a small ceramic that's ideal for touching up serrations; a leather strop designed to polish the edge and remove any final burrs.

In summary

To date the unit has lived up to all expectations having been used on an array of bladed equipment including sheath and butchering knives, hunting broadheads and axes. Its performance adds that extra capability to all my outdoor pursuits from fishing and camping to hunting and archery.

The Work Sharp Guided Field Sharpener is a true one size fits all sharpening solution. Designed specifically for outdoors people, it's the perfect piece of kit to cater for all equipment sharpening needs. This is a high quality piece of gear backed by a warranty from a reputable company and for around \$70, the performance and results it gives is well worth the money. ●



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Renaissance of the 9.3x62mm Mauser

Brad at the range, sighting the 9.3 to be 1.5" high at 100 yards.

Brad Allen celebrates a century-old classic

Metallic firearm cartridges in their current form have been with us since the late 1800s, though many new cartridges 'passed away' quite quickly to be replaced by better and more efficient ones. Have you ever heard of the 22-15-60 Stevens, 35-30 Maynard, 40-90 Peabody or 9.09 Eagle? Probably not and there were many others which swiftly joined them in the obsolete stakes.

On the flip side there are many 'classic' cartridges from the late 1800s and early 1900s still alive and kicking quite hard today, so you'd have to conclude the inventors of those had the formula right first time. The majority of those successful cartridges were military such as the great .30-06 Springfield, 7x57mm Mauser, 6.5x55 Swedish, 7.92x57mm Mauser, .303 British and the old .45-70 Government to name but a few. They were all the product of intensive military research and development and consequently all have served the worldwide hunting community extremely well for more than a century.

Yet not all great hunting cartridges were adapted from military origins. During the early part of the 20th century, European

expansion into the southern African countries presented its own challenges, notably the lack of suitable firearm calibres to deal with the exceptional size, tenacity and sheer number of large animals. Rifles and calibres which had been suitable for hunting traditional European game were, in most cases, inadequate to handle those bigger and often dangerous African beasts.

British double rifles in their respective Nitro calibres were available in small numbers and did a good job but even back then were prohibitively expensive, both in rifle and ammunition for the average European settler. Consequently there was a healthy market in the African colonies for moderately priced, well-made rifles in adequate calibres. So around 1905 German rifle-maker Otto Bock developed a suitable medium bore cartridge for the affordable and legendary Mauser rifles to fill the gap and thus the great 9.3x62mm Mauser was born.

The new cartridge fitted easily into the standard-length Mauser action and fired a .366", 286gr bullet (soft-point or solid) at about 2150fps, entirely adequate for most African big game. Although not recommended for dangerous game or elephants,



The 285gr PPU soft-points at about 2350fps are a formidable load for deer and pigs.

in the hands of a competent marksman it's known to have accounted for many thousands of the great pachyderms and Cape buffaloes. The cartridge's widespread success in Africa and Asia soon led to its acceptance and extensive use back in Europe on the likes of red deer and wild boar.

Since then the development of more modern gunpowders, muzzle velocities and consequently bullet energy have been

dramatically improved to around 2350fps, with the original 286gr bullet generating more than 3500ft-lb of energy and being close in power to the great .338 Win Mag with 250gr bullets. When modern gunpowder and 'premium' 250gr bullets are used in the 9.3 it can now be loaded to around 2550fps, generating in excess of 3700ft-lb of bone-crushing energy.

The 250gr load greatly enhances the 9.3's ability to cleanly take larger game animals and extends its effective range out past 200m, although the 9.3x62 has always done its best work inside 100m. Rifles in 9.3x62 are currently made by many European firms including Mauser, CZ, Tikka, Sako, Blaser, Sauer and the budget-priced Zastava in both blued and stainless. Ruger also offered their 'African' model in 9.3x62 some time back, a beautiful rifle if you can find one.

I'd never heard of the 9.3x62mm Mauser until a mate of mine moved from Queensland to the Northern Territory. Being a hunter, he mixed with the locals and decided his next buffalo rifle would be a fine new Ruger African in 9.3x62, though not long after ordering it he was told by the gunshop there were none in the country and there would be a substantial wait. With the offer of as many buffalo hunts as he wanted, he promptly cancelled the order and bought another suitable rifle that was readily available, a CZ in the classic .375 H&H which did a fine job.

Needless to say the 9.3x62 was already popular in the Territory and for good reason. With premium bullets it was a proven buff stopper, most rifles held four or five rounds in the mag and recoil was quite acceptable in a reasonably shaped and weighted rifle. Furthermore, the ammo was by comparison to other big game magnum rounds relatively affordable.

While hunting sambar in Victoria I noticed the venerable .30-06 was one of the favourite cartridges with our southern deer hunting brethren and also discovered the 9.3x62 is quickly gaining favour among their ranks. My good mate Matt, a dyed-in-the-wool .30-06 man, has recently upgraded to a Browning Maral straight-pull 9.3x62 shooting handloaded premium 250gr bullets. He says the sambar don't like it much as it knocks big animals over like nothing else he's ever hunted with.

With my interest in the calibre sufficiently piqued I started searching for a suitable rifle for my own purposes, that being a dangerous game rifle in Australia for water buffalo and a suitable sambar rifle too. The fact I'm a committed Mauser 98 fan meant my decision was easy. I wanted the safety of 'controlled round feed' from the



Popular African game cartridges, from left the .416 Rigby, .458 Lott, .375 H&H, .338 Winchester, 9.3x62 Mauser, .30-06 Springfield and .270 Winchester.

tried-and-true Mauser 98 action for buffalo, with the durability of a stainless barrel and action in a synthetic stock for hunting sambar in less-than-ideal conditions.

Ultimately I bought a second-hand Zastava stainless/synthetic with a light 22" barrel which I immediately had bedded, floated and trigger tuned, then added a Leupold VX3 2.5-8 scope. I wasn't particularly after a 'pretty' rifle with lustrous blueing and Turkish walnut, I wanted something I could hunt with in any weather without concern, as this rifle would be more of a 'tool' than a treasure.

I saw just how effective large heavy bullets in the same weight range at similar velocities are on red deer, when I hunted with my old mate Gordo and his beloved Ruger .35 Whelan. More than once I've heard the .35 Whelan - introduced in 1922 and a full 17 years after Bock's 9.3x62 - described as America's answer to the 9.3x62. Yet the 9.3x62 still maintains the advantage of a larger bore at .366" compared to the Whelan at .358", with both having similar capacity shells.

With rifle tuned and the Queensland red deer rut approaching, it was a no-brainer I'd take the 9.3 on its maiden hunt for a stag. However, after seven straight hard hunting days I was unable to locate a suitable animal so my 9.3 was as yet uninitiated. The following week found me in the south-east Queensland granite belt hunting fallow bucks and as the rut had just started, I was cautiously confident. The penultimate morning of the hunt saw me quietly



circumnavigating mobs of feeding kangaroos and fallow does in the half-light of pre-dawn as I approached the rutting stand of a vocal buck.

With a light breeze in my face the stars aligned, the hunting gods smiled and at 80 yards the mature buck eventually presented a side-on shot where I took the chance to place a 285gr PPU soft-point through his left shoulder. The effect was dramatic and he hit the ground as if struck by lightning,

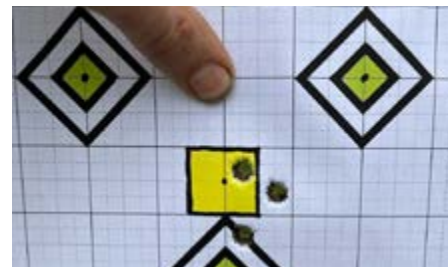
Renaissance of the 9.3x62mm Mauser

the PPU round breaking both shoulders as well as doing significant damage to his vital organs. Being quite a soft bullet, expansion was spectacular with the jacket coming to rest in the off shoulder and the bullet's core travelling right through the animal. I'd rate that load suitable for pigs and most deer in this country, but premium controlled expansion projectiles would take the round to the next level.

The decelerator kick-pad on the rifle did a great job taming felt recoil, making it seem more of a big comfortable push that was easy on the shoulder. After hunting with my light Kimber Montana .338 Win Mag for the previous 14 years, it was a pussycat by comparison. I've already

bought some 250gr Barnes TSX projectiles and AR2208 powder to start working on a load for buffaloes and sambar. My eldest son Bill was so impressed by the performance of the 9.3x62 cartridge, he bought a Sauer 100 stainless/synthetic and topped it off with a 2-7x33 Leupold VX1 in anticipation of hunting both those species.

The 9.3x62mm Mauser is a powerful, efficient and inherently accurate cartridge, as useful today as it has ever been. It borders on magnum performance without any fuss or fanfare and is currently listed by most major firearms' manufacturers, with factory ammo reasonably available as are reloading components and dies. With rifle and ammo sales in this calibre on the rise




Brad's son Bill shows an MOA group fired with his Sauer 100 in 9.3x62, shooting PPU 285gr factory ammo.

in Australia and worldwide, there appears to be a renaissance of the classic 9.3x62mm Mauser. Looks like Otto Bock nailed it the first time. ●




Bill's stainless/synthetic Sauer 100 in 9.3 is not only utilitarian but accurate and aesthetically pleasing.

*Image taken by remote means




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The Jumbunna Collection Volume II: More stories from the bush
by John Dunn

John Dunn's second volume picks up where *The Jumbunna Collection* left off back in 2000. The monthly anecdotes travel down the years until the latter part of 2020 and one of the joys is you don't have to read it from cover to cover, just can pick and choose any tale you fancy.

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SSAA Bush Kettle

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

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

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SSAA Traditional Logo Belt Buckle

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The SSAA Rechargeable Knife Sharpener uses an abrasive belt sharpening system that operates on batteries located in the handle. It is designed to sharpen every knife you own. Use it on straight or curved knives, filleting or serrated blades and even scissors! It is the only knife sharpener you will ever need.

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SSAA Hoodie

You can never have enough hoodies! Why not add our SSAA Navy Hoodie to your collection? With the traditional 'kangaroo pouch' and hood, it is sure to keep you warm as you show off the cool SSAA logo.

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

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The SSAA Renegade Jacket is made from wind and water-resistant breathable material and lined with cosy microfleece to keep you warm. The clamshell jacket comes with a structured hood to keep the rain off and has a multitude of zippered pockets to keep your belongings secure in the field, on the range, while hiking, hunting or just out and about.

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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

National Target Pistol Championships

September 16-17, 2023
SSAA Para, Adelaide, SA
Program: Friday 15th practice; Saturday 16th Any Rimfire .22, Any Revolver, Distinguished Revolver, followed by discipline meeting. Sunday 17th Mayleigh rimfire, Any Centrefire, M9. Full details and nomination form on National website. Send nominations to: para_range@iinet.net.au Rules: As per current National Target Pistol rule book. This is a National team selection event. Prizes: National medals and local prizes.

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

SSAA Practical Shooting Handgun National Championships

October 14-15, 2023
Host: West Coast Pistol & Revolver Club, Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, Perth, WA
Program: 12 Practical Handgun Stages over two days. Full details and nominations on National website. Nominations to Paul Fitzgerald: practicalshooting@ssaawa.org.au. Rules: SSAA Practical Shooting Rule Book No.6 2019. Huge prize table. Camping on site. Full canteen Saturday and Sunday; Sunday presentation dinner included with entry fee. Contact Paul Fitzgerald on practicalshooting@ssaawa.org.au or 0407 773 826.

Australian Single Action Shooting National Championships

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 Woodsdale 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).

SSAA Steel Challenge National Championships

October 20-22, 2023
Discipline: Action Match
Host: Kukerin Practical Pistol Club, Kukerin, WA
Program: Range open for practice Thursday, October 19; Rimfire Friday, October 20. Centrefire Saturday 21 and Sunday October 22. Nominations: See National website. Rules: Steel Challenge International Rule Book. Camping and canteen on site. Limited local accommodation. Contact: Steve Marris - ssmarris@westnet.com.au

NSW

SSAA NSW Muzzleloading Shotgun and Cannon Titles

October 14-15, 2023
SSAA Bathurst, NSW
Program: Saturday, 14th October - 9am start. BP Cannon 25m (7 shots, 5 to count); BP Cannon 50m (7 shots, 5 to count); BP Cannon 100m (7 shots, 5 to count). Lunch break. Caplock Muzzleloading Shotgun - MLAIC Trap - 25 Clays; Flintlock Muzzleloading Shotgun - MLAIC Trap - 25 Clays. Sunday, 15th October - 9am start. Flintlock Muzzleloading Shotgun - Field Shotgun - 25 Clays; Caplock Muzzleloading Shotgun - Field Shotgun - 50 Clays. Presentations. Nominations (see website for form): \$50 max (Ladies and Juniors \$25) \$10/Shotgun round, \$10/Cannon event. Rules: SSAA Muzzleloading Rule Book No. 8. Prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Facilities: Rifle Range, 100m (Cannon). Shotgun Range, with Trap and Field/5-Stand layouts (Shotgun). Camping, toilet block, shower, kitchen. BBQ breakfast, lunch and drinks for purchase (advise for catering). Contact: Shayne Bamsley - 0418302062 or darth_royce@hotmail.com

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-westernpistolclub.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@ssaqlld.org.au

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@ssaqlld.org.au or 0409 262 966.

SA

SSAA SA State Muzzleloading & Blackpowder Shotgun Championships

September 17, 2023
Southern Rangers Black Powder and Modern Shooting Club
Program: 9:30am start; 25 clays per match from 5 stands. 1 Breech loading Shotgun DTL; 2 Percussion Shotgun DTL; 3 Flintlock Shotgun DTL. Nominations \$10 per event, payable on the day. Forms and full details from National website. BBQ Lunch \$7/head. Rules: Rule book 8 applies. Contact Michael Nicholas: secretary.srbpc@gmail.com

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 sighters) any sight, Classic Multi Target (24 shots), Classic 1020 Match (102 shots). Contact: Dave McCarthy atm3855@yahoo.com.au. Let him know if you're coming for catering purposes.

SA Rifle Metallic Silhouette - Air and Rimfire

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 or 0421 775 101

SSAA SA Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Titles

October 7-8, 2023
Monarto Metallic Silhouette Rifle Club, Monarto Shooting Complex. Program: Saturday 40 shots Centrefire Hunter and 40 shots Rimfire. Sunday: 80 shots Centrefire. State Titles Centrefire Match preceded by a Hunter Centrefire Match and an invitational Rimfire Metallic Silhouette Match (40 shot) on Saturday. Range open at 8:30am both days for practice/weigh in; first match 10am; afternoon match 2pm. State Discipline Meeting on Saturday and presentations Sunday evening. Nomination forms on National website. Adults: Centrefire \$25, Centrefire Hunter \$15, Rimfire \$10. Juniors/Pensioners: Centrefire \$15, Centrefire Hunter \$10, Rimfire \$5. Forms to Mark West: markwest@kentcivil.com.au; 0421 775 101. Event is catered with onsite camping. Contact: mmsrcsecretary@gmail.com for information.

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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mail@hartmann.net.au

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, Giffkins 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 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.

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Middle name _____

Last name _____

Residential address _____

Town/suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

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Date of birth _____ Male Female Other

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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.

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Connections: We all need them and benefit from them

As is my luck I recently spent a couple of hours talking with the author Peter Ryan. If you've read any of Peter's books or the innumerable articles and stories which have appeared in some of the world's most prestigious hunting publications, you'd know his work is that of a thoughtful and considered hunter with an engaging outlook on life and encyclopaedic knowledge of hunting, its history and the natural world.

For me one of his most memorable stories is of door-knocking rural properties in Argentina. Truth be told it inspired me to become a more confident door-knocker and has helped me gain property access in the Brisbane Valley and expand that access over time. In recounting his story, at the time Peter was a backpacking hunter traveling through South America. With little in the way of Argentine-Spanish he'd travel the countryside and on spotting birds in a given field, would begin the process of gaining access to shoot.

I can imagine him approaching a farmer with the conversation something like "Hola!" followed by pointing at fields, the flapping of arms then shouldering an imaginary shotgun and, of course, boom! By Peter's telling, once he'd broken through the initial confusion brought about by the actions of this crazy gringo, he was usually successful and at times would end the day sharing a meal with others on the farm as they struggled to relate hunting adventures across the language divide.

During our conversation he shared a little more about his recognition and experiences with the connections made through hunting. Even though geographic locations may vary, the spoken language is unfamiliar and the food unique, he encountered a powerful thread which binds hunters together. For Peter it happened time and again and no matter where he found himself, there was a great sense of familiarity standing around



From Facebook page to pigeon hunting in England, our connections can take us as far as we want them to.

a fire, enjoying a drink and reliving adventures with likeminded people.

Having come to hunting as a loner I've always been interested in this connection and know such an attachment exists among the hunters of South Africa and duck hunters of New Zealand in their mai-mai. I also greatly admire the American Deer Camp which seems so much more than just a place in time, rather a means of celebrating and growing hunting participation through generational renewal.

For us it can be a little more fragmented. Certainly the hound hunters of Victoria appear to enjoy a close community and network among crews, with many hunting clubs and associations holding their own events where members come together to share a camp. With Queensland hunting access being what it is, the connection is

harder to make though not impossible. Some of my earliest experiences were hunting camps, chasing pigs and goats or deer during the rut. Camp and camp life are, for me, an integral part of the process of hunting and even if the camp is small in number it needn't be so in outlook.

Following a growing family tradition, my son and I along with a group of hunting mates attend an annual winter deer hunt and this year even a non-hunting friend joined us to see what it's all about. Though it may sound strange, for all its pitfalls, social media can also help build real connection, as I met Jonathan McGee from England through a hunting Facebook page. To date I've hunted with Jonathan on three family visits to the UK and even on our last trip though we didn't hunt together, we managed to catch up for a drink.

Lately I've become more actively involved in trying to build connections. With good friends Ian and Jono we've put together a camp which, as of this year, allowed 25 licensed hunters to be part of something greater than themselves. While each was their own boss and responsible for their gear and equipment, it did allow people when not actively hunting to meet, share stories, learn and further their own journeys.

The pursuit of game is often a solo one, just you and the animal, yet the culture and tradition of hunting encompass so much more than the hunt itself. We all know the benefits of the campfire, the joys of conversations that flow around it and have learned from the wisdom which rises with the flames. If cave paintings are anything to go by, our hunting culture is at least 45,000 years old so it's our job to keep it rolling. Get out there and build your own network, create your own traditions and lead your own camp.





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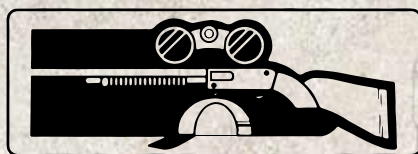
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All privately owned firearms registered to the member and fixed accessories.

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Any commentary provided in the advertisement is general information which does not take into account your individual situation and you should consider SSAA Mutual's Financial Services Guide and Statement of Protection (www.ssaib.com.au) before deciding to become a member and to purchase and hold discretionary protection issued by SSAA Mutual Limited. ACN 655 675 662