

AUSTRALIAN **WOMEN'S** SHOOTER

20TH
EDITION



Advantages for women shooters

A family firearm legacy

Game meat on the menu

Bergara BA13TD rifle review

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Editorial

Rachael Oxborrow

In this milestone 20th issue, we celebrate how important it is to take stock of what is vital to you as a shooter. For Laetisha Scanlan, success isn't linear and accepting that it looks different for every shooter is what makes you a better competitor.

As a target shooter now 25-plus years into my shooting 'career' I've enjoyed forging my own path while seeking guidance from those around me with a wealth of experience to offer. It is this approach that Suzy Balogh discusses while highlighting advantages women have as competitive shooters. Whether it is through using mental imagery, our naturally wider peripheral vision, or emotions as a motivator, some of the common female traits can be used to make us better shooters.

Kath Heiman is embracing her family legacy of hunting and shooting and taking her daughter Scout along for the ride. The pair have spent much of their lives around firearms, but they have both taken the plunge to gain their licence and permit so the excitement is high.

If you're in the market for a rifle that suits medium-sized game hunting but is comfortable to carry, check out Montse Jaime's review on the Bergara BAI3TD in .308 and finally, vegetarian turned game meat enthusiast Shauna Pickin tells Dave Rose why her passion for rabbits will appeal to your taste buds.

Rachael

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SHOOTER**

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Taking aim

with Laetisha Scanlan

What success looks like to you

The beauty and the beast about the shooting sports is there is no one set way to succeed. Unlike other sports where athletic prowess is important, shooting has no cookie cutter approach on what it takes to win.

There are many roads that can lead you to your desired goals.

What works for one is not guaranteed to work for another and because of this it can present a challenge to find your own path to success. Sure, there are fundamental steps that everybody follows at the beginning, but I find it so interesting that you can compare two Olympic shotgun champions side by side and how different they will be. Both shooters will have unique shooting styles, different gun set-ups, varied training regimes and even contrasting body shapes and yet both will have achieved greatness in their sport despite arriving there on completely different paths.

One key statement that rings true is

“whether you think you can or you can’t, you are right.” The power of your own self-belief needs to be unstoppable in competition shooting. If you have an ounce of doubt in your equipment, approach or attitude, these cracks will appear in high pressure situations. Those who can eliminate distraction and focus on the task will be the ones that can handle pressure the best and will most likely succeed.

Success can be measured in many ways, not just by winning. It’s so easy to become caught up in a toxic mentality of equating your victories to your own self-worth. I just came back from competing at the most recent Shotgun World Cup in Italy where I was lucky enough to take home the gold. My last World Cup gold medal win was in 2014, so it has taken me nine years to be atop of the WC podium again. Does that mean the past nine years of my shooting career have been disappointing or a failure? Absolutely not.

Success is not linear - it’s up and down, left and right. The quicker I accepted that, the better appreciation I had. Don’t get me wrong, winning is great. I love it and it feels incredible but don’t let your happiness in this sport be defined by a number, score or a position on a leader board. Remind yourself to enjoy the journey, the opportunities and the friendships because they will be the things worth remembering.



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Great shooting from Kath.

Connecting with *culture*

Kath Heiman and daughter continue a strong family legacy of hunting and shooting

In Issue 11 of AWS, I talked about the experience of marrying into a hunting family. The story covered the limited exposure I'd had to air pistols in Scotland in my childhood – the two firearms dad used on the small rural holding the family bought in my teens, as well as my gentle introduction to the hunting world through my husband Scott.

As a youth, I'd had neither reason – nor legal authority – to handle dad's firearms. So, it wasn't until I entered military service that such items became part of my own lived experience. And even with some 25 years of Army service under my belt, I've simply not had the need for a firearms licence. That's because firearm use in a military context is exempt from licensing requirements.

It's fair to say that there's always been a clear divide between my use of firearms in the Army and my involvement with them in a family context. In the military, firearms are simply 'part of the job', while on the home front many of our most memorable family activities have involved my growing daughter Scout and I joining Scott in the bush as he's stalked game species.

Beyond the satisfaction of despatching feral animals while simultaneously filling the freezer, there's a cultural heritage of hunting,





Scout's first shot downrange.

passed down through Scott's family line, that now becomes a part of our own small family's legacy.

It has been no surprise then, that for some time the prospect of Scout continuing the family tradition as a huntress has been more a question of 'when' rather than 'whether'. And it's fair to say that the conversation hasn't been dominated by the adults. With Scout's aspirations to work in captive animal management, she's linked having a firearms licence with her ability to qualify for a tranquilliser permit down the track, and thus have a leg-up over other applicants in her chosen profession.

And as the time came for her to obtain her minor's permit at 12 years old, I became determined to join her in the journey towards becoming a shooter. It was time for me to 'bite the bullet' (as it were) and transition to an A and B category licence.

Beyond the opportunity to model responsible firearms handling to Scout while she learns, there's another motivation for my new-found personal interest in firearms. The reality is that I fondly remember tailing my own dad around on hunts for pigs and bunnies – much as Scout and I do with Scott.

And since my parents emigrated back to the UK five years ago, the Marlin .410 lever-action shotgun that dad used on some of those later hunts is now sitting with Scott, behind

lock and key. It's the same firearm that Scott recommended to dad when he realised that his father-in-law was at risk of being flattened by the next big angry boar that he plinked with his .22 Brno.

With dad now in his mid-80s and mum in respite care, their inevitable loss is something that I'm conscious of more than ever before. And I know that loss will be mitigated – to some extent – by the opportunity to 'hunt with dad' and my own family, long after my parents have gone. So, I want to be able to use the Marlin myself, dropping pigs and reflecting on the satisfaction that dad gained in ridding his property of his four-legged nemesis.

While the rationale for Scout and me to have our firearms licences became self-evident, acquiring one requires a bit of work. The first thing was to book ourselves in for a Firearms Safety Course at the local gunshop, in our case Monaro Arms in Canberra. This course consists of home-based study, followed by face-to-face instruction including a 'show and tell' of equipment and parts, some theory and a written exam. Standardised under minimum national competency requirements, we needed to show that we both understood firearms – including our legal, social and personal safety responsibilities as well as how to possess (when 18 for Scout), handle and use a firearm safely. To help us achieve these

standards, we were provided with a 27-page leaflet, covering the key principles, which we were to study before we turned up.

What struck me about the study process was how much information Scout had already absorbed, simply by being part of a family for which firearms are 'the norm'. Thanks to Scott, she's been around firearms since before she could walk, and our routine family hunting trips have reinforced within her developing psyche the criticality of following instructions – staying behind anyone holding a firearm and never to touch. So, she already has an instinctive awareness around firearms that exceeds anything I had at her age.

As we studied the leaflet, you could have asked either of us about how to store firearms, who can handle them, and quizzed us on issues around firearms transfer between owners. We were already all over it. Similarly, there was little in the National Firearms Safety Code that caught us off guard.

Sure, it was going to take Scout a bit of effort to understand the parameters of the various firearms categories and to name firearms' component elements, but when it came to responsibilities, ethics, use and safety,

All of Scout's initial shots hit the paper – not bad for a first-timer with open sights.



we had prior learning in spades. So, we felt pretty confident as we entered Monaro Arms to attend the course and take the proficiency test.

Putting us at ease, owner Scott Keogh outlined the proceedings for the evening, and – over two hours – talked us through the key firearms principles that will ensure we can be entrusted to handle and operate a firearm safely.

The environment of the gunshop was particularly conducive to learning; set up in the style of a hunting lodge and with plenty of firearms and associated accessories on display to whet our appetites. Sure enough, by the end of the evening, we were brandishing our Certificates of Completion with a sense of pride.

So it was that Scout had her first taste of live firing one weekend at the small-bore range at our local SSAA shooting complex.

For now, this is a new experience for her – learning things they don't teach you in school. Under the guidance of the SSAA Range Officer, the weekend saw her take her first shots with both a Lithgow-made Slazenger Model 1A .22LR single-shot rifle with open sights and Sportco Model 62A .22LR with a 4

x 40mm Nikko Stirling Gold Crown scope.

These are the same firearms that Scott learned to shoot with at her age, back in 1985. And they are the same ones her Poppy learned with back in the 1960s. Like me, Scout has felt the satisfaction of generating a close shot group on a target. In this case, it was just 25m away - a good place to start. Making us particularly proud, she placed all rounds on the paper on her first go.

When we finished, she commented on the lack of recoil from the firearms and how much she enjoyed the experience. What she's yet to fully understand is just how much power can be generated with such a small cartridge. She has used bows and arrows for hunting in the past. But the .22LR has twice the amount of energy that can be generated by any bow and arrow that she might aspire to use as an adult. Indeed, the muzzle velocity and energy of the .22LR can be more than some 'larger' calibres.

Happily, as we learn these things together, we'll both be in safe hands. Now that we have secured our respective firearms licences, Scott will be keeping a close eye on proceedings. A marksman, former firearms instructor for the Australian Federal Police

and being a 28-year Army (Infantry) veteran, Scott has plenty of experience.

With me alongside her on the range, and Scott positioned in support, over the next six years Scout will learn how to generate her own sub 50mm shot-group at 100m – not just anywhere on a target – but exactly where she intends it to go. As well as learning how to fire from a bench rest, we will also use the SSAA Military Firearms Club (that's part of our local SSAA complex) so she can experience firing in the standing, seated and prone positions. And all the while, I'll be honing my own skills too.

For those of you who have read Issue 18 of AWS, you'll know there's a .223 Remington Model 700 SPS Tactical with a GRS Hybrid stock waiting for Scout in Scott's firearms safe for when she becomes an adult. So, we both have our eyes on a prize. But for now, our family is sharing a new learning journey together, modelling behaviours of safe firearms handling, while our daughter builds muscle memory, one .22LR cartridge at a time. ●

With a Certificate of Completion, there is only one thing left to do...



Suzy (right) offered guidance to Emma Cox at the San Marino World Cup, where she shot a PB to win the event. Of the 75 qualification targets, Emma had the equal-highest score of both male and female competitors.



The POWER within

Suzy Balogh OAM covers the advantages women have as competitive shooters and how to capitalise on them

In most sports, men's performances are better than women by 8-12 per cent, but is this the same for competitive shooting?

An International Olympic Committee study from the 2019 World Rifle and Pistol Championships showed no major difference between male and female scores in the rifle bracket, yet in the pistol contest there was a significant gap between men and women.

In shotgun we see women be as competitive as men at times, such as Zuzanna Stefecekova, a mother of two from Slovakia, at the Tokyo Olympics being the only Trap shooting athlete (male or female) to shoot the perfect 125 hits from 125 targets in the qualification rounds. However, as much as some brilliant female shotgun shooters can be as reasonable as men from time to time, there still lacks a consistency to this.

So, what advantages might women have and

how can they be capitalised on? I have focused in on 10 competitive shooting pluses women have and how they can exploit them.

Coachability

Having been a coach now for 15 years, from novices having their first shot through

Who has the advantage in competitive shooting?



Under tuition and with the right equipment, these novice shooters had comparable scores.



to world champions, I can definitely say that I find women more coachable. Generally, women come with fewer preconceived ideas, are more ready to listen and then take on board instructions and are happy to ask questions until they understand.

I thought maybe there is a bias to these observations as I too am female. So I thought I would see if male coaches were of the same opinion.

In September 2020, the United States' publication *NRA Women* looked into whether men or women were better beginner shooters. The author of the article, Wendy Lefever, said that the male coaches interviewed were of the same opinion as me, summarising that 'women are better shooters than men because we listen to our firearms instructors, believe them when they say what will and will not work, and weigh the advice of professionals more than that of their buddies.'

Then I asked one of Australia's most respected shotgun coaches, who was by my side for my Olympic win, Greg Chan, for his view. Greg agreed that women are more

coachable as they are more receptive to listening to and taking advice. And that once the physical differences are addressed with correctly fitted firearms, women should be as competitive as men.

How to capitalise: Continue to be inquisitive and engaged, and don't be too stubborn to take on good advice.

Better balance

Females have a wider pelvis and lower centre of gravity – which does provide more stable balance.

How to capitalise: Do core and stability training (pilates, yoga etc) to take what women are naturally better at and turn it into a real superpower.

Better endurance

Females have more 'slow twitch' muscle fibres, which are more efficient in using energy during longer, slower duration activities. Women are less powerful but more fatigue resistant.

Women are actually delayed in 'hitting the wall' as they have more of the hormone adiponectin, which regulates fat metabolism and glucose use.

Men have more 'fast twitch' muscle fibres, which are for strength and explosive movement. Weight training for women can increase the balance of 'fast twitch' muscle fibres.

How to capitalise: Pace yourself, but it won't hurt to do some weight training for a bit more explosive power.

Mental imagery

In general, females report more vivid (realistic) imagery than males, but at about 50 years of age females' mental imagery reduces in intensity.

How to capitalise: Empower your performances by harnessing mental imagery (see Issue 19) when young, then this well-practised skill will still be highly effective when the clarity does decrease with age.

Vision

Women have a wider peripheral vision, effective up to almost 180 degrees and are better at discriminating colours.

Men have better detail at distance, depth

perception and tracking of fast-moving objects.

Hormones and brain wiring variations in key visual areas of the brain are responsible for these differences.

Women are more likely to have cross-dominance of the eyes (see Issue 1).

How to capitalise: Have your eyes checked regularly to ensure vision at distance can be as crisp as possible and there are no other potential vision deficiencies. Don't be shy to opt for prescription glasses or to undertake some eye muscle exercises. Understand any cross-dominance you may have and seek remedies for this from a good coach.

Training for particularly fast-moving targets can assist in visual target acquisition speed. Once any potential vision weaknesses are addressed, work on further enhancing your peripheral vision through training drills.

Females can discriminate colours better than men so grab a set of shooting glasses and select the best lens colours for you to really make those targets stand out clearly under any conditions and turn that advantage into a real bonus.

Emotion

Research says women are more emotional than men... only slightly though. Instead of this being a perceived weakness, think of it as PASSION, and hence harnessing emotions becomes a strength. Being emotionally bound to and passionate about something means that the shooter will go the extra mile to achieve their desired outcome.

How to capitalise: Keep a diary that includes noting your emotions throughout training, competition and casual shoots. You may be able to identify some feelings that you experience when you shoot particularly well. Then work out ways of bringing those sensations forward or emulating them when needed for a beneficial outcome.

Accomplishing tasks

Women tend to be more relationship oriented and accomplish tasks by building relationships first. They then know who to ask and are comfortable probing others to get things done. Men tend to be more task oriented and go straight to the task.

How to capitalise: Gather your information, set a plan, outline some goals and go forth and achieve them.

Women embracing women

The willingness of women to be a support to one another is powerful. I have made some amazing connections with other female shooters and coaches, and to this day continue to share knowledge as well as also being a supportive friend. This embracing of female friends in the shooting community has been a positive tool in helping me not only love to travel and catch up with my friends but also helps me to achieve my goals.

How to capitalise: Utilise the sisterhood. Seek out positive female friends who will be supportive and informative and help you achieve your goals. Find those role models to assist you on your journey.

Choking

I have read a couple of studies on professional tennis players. The general gist was that when playing mixed doubles, the male servers were more likely to choke and double-fault on a break-point against a female receiver than against a male receiver.

In my experience this happens in shooting too. When I'm in an elimination shoot-off against a man I'm more likely to be successful. I see this trend in general too - men seem to put more pressure on themselves when shooting against a female.

How to capitalise: If men do put an added pressure onto themselves to not be defeated by a female shooter, we might as well benefit from this by letting them feel the pressure and not you. Ladies, just focus on the task at hand, which is simply to hit the target.

Menstruation

Yep – I'm going there! There have been some studies done on whether menstruation has a negative effect on sporting performance or not. For some sports such as football, the females feel cramped and less powerful, affecting their performances negatively in some cases.

Personally, I seemed to actually perform at my very best during that time of the month – it was probably most likely that I was in a 'take no prisoners' mood.

How to capitalise: Track your cycle and moods and how your body feels. Check your shooting results and see if there is any point in the cycle that you perform poorly or you may function fabulously. Then you may be able to manipulate your cycle so that you can avoid major competitions during the detrimental part of it or align important events with parts of your cycle that may see a peak in performance.

In conclusion, shooting with equitable experience, coaching, strength and conditioning, resources and good old female grit and determination, means that women can be as competitive as men.

To be consistently competitive, pay attention to your bodies, build meaningful female networks, continue to listen and follow instructions, be inquisitive and do your research. Build that strength, practise those skills, set those goals, find the right equipment that fits and most of all continue to enjoy shooting. ●

Suzy has harnessed her strengths as a female competitor and coach.





The BA13TD works a treat as a stalking rifle on pests like foxes.

Bergara at its best

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

Safety above all else. When I think back to my youth, this is what pops into mind. Things were easier those days. As a kid I was a bit of a tomboy and often tagged along with my dad.

He encouraged me to carry a knife on the property and out bush and no one made a fuss about it. Once I became older, I was taught to use firearms. Unlike being told to be careful with a pocket knife and keep it sharp, guns were subject to a zero-tolerance approach.

From day one, we were told that guns are not toys and that if we were ever seen not to handle them in a safe and responsible manner, they would be taken away, permanently. Early on, this meant that I made a point of

never chambering a bullet unless I was about to take a shot. Not much later, it led me to almost exclusively switch to single-shot rifles for much of the pest control we did and for my hunting.

The use of a single-shot rifle came with another benefit. In addition to liking the discipline required when you only have one shot, many break barrel single-shot rifles are light and compact, which is handy when you are only 1.63m tall. While I appreciate game meat, I am not a huge firearms collector and often use my husband's variety.

He chases bigger animals and at 1.87m tall often opts for calibres that pack a bigger punch. So, while I like the low weight and power of some of his favourite guns, I do not love the fact that they have a fair bit of recoil.

After testing a number of rifles at the range, I settled on what has become my adopted calibre - the mildly recoiling .243.

However, wild boars, deer and other larger animals have become a problem and as such, an increasingly common target. While .243 works well on them, I feel comfortable with the thought of a more powerful calibre. So, I started my search for something suitable.

The criteria I settled on were simple. Something with single-shot and a slightly longer barrel to calm it down a bit. Given the places I hunt, it also had to withstand harsh climates and lots of rain. This put me onto Bergara. More specifically, the Bergara BA13 Take-down Thumbhole (BA13TD) single-shot rifle.

To obtain the desired additional punch, I got it in .308, with a 51cm barrel. To have a more

weather resistant rifle, I also went with what Bergara calls their stainless barrel. I have now used it a fair bit and continue to take it out when the occasion calls. It is a fine rifle, albeit on the heavy side for long walks.

The Bergara BAI 3 family of rifles comes in a wide array of models and is available in various calibres, barrel lengths, in a standard or thumbhole stock version in a number of colours, with or without iron sights and with a threaded barrel as standard.

All models are single-shot, break-barrel rifles. Bergara lists takedown and regular versions on their website, but continues to illustrate how the standard version has an easily removable stock for transport. This leaves the barrel attached to the action. The takedown rifle, by contrast, leaves the action attached to the stock and allows the user to remove the barrel for transport. Theoretically, structural integrity should be better for the regular version of the rifle. In practice, it's doubtful anyone will notice the difference.

This is unless you intend to put thousands of rounds down a range with the rifle, but who would opt for a single-shot rifle to do that? All options have synthetic stocks in different sizes, shapes or forms and if you are bored of whatever you ordered, the stocks are interchangeable and available at decent prices.

My rifle features a black ambidextrous thumbhole stock, measures a compact 89cm overall, with a fairly noticeable weight of 3.14kg. It breaks down in seconds by removing the fore-end, like you would to disassemble any traditional shotgun.

Rather than opting to go with a sliding switch or other option that is often seen on fancy rifles, the BAI 3TD has a cocking hammer. This means that unless you cock the gun, it will never fire. On top of the barrel there's a low-profile removable Durasight Weaver-style rail and the optional iron sights, which are also removable.

It is mostly used when I go out for pigs in bad weather or for other species like deer, wild dogs, foxes, goats and so on.

The barrel

This measures 51 cm and is coated with a silver-grey Cerakote. The BAI 3TD is button rifled, after which it is honed. It is factory fitted with a 5/8 – 24 UNEF thread to attach a suppressor, where legal. A protective ring in a



colour that matches the barrel is provided. The coating is well applied without obvious imperfections. The twist rate varies depending on the barrel length, for the barrel of the review rifle it is one in 12.

Receiver and action

The receiver is coated in the same Cerakote material as the barrel. It is a simple, no-nonsense affair. Contrary to more sophisticated locking mechanisms, closing the barrel locks it flush to the receiver. It opens again by pulling back on the breeching lever, which doubles as the triggerguard. Nothing fancy, but simple and effective.

The BAI 3TD has an equally operational firing mechanism. The firearm uses a hammer, which is pulled back to arm the rifle. Holding

it and pulling the trigger allows you to gently lower it to disarm the rifle. When armed, the firearm cannot be opened, so if you do not take a shot, first disarm the rifle by returning the hammer to its safe position, then break the barrel.

There is no ejector, but a generous and sturdy extractor claw makes short work of lifting spent rounds so you can easily remove them.

Trigger and safety

The trigger is single stage, breaking at just over 1700g. There is no easy way to adjust this. There is no pre-travel to mention and fortunately the trigger breaks consistently.

There is no dedicated safety mechanism on the rifle. The best safety measure is to carry

it with the barrel open. That said, even with a closed barrel, the rifle is perfectly safe as long as the hammer is not cocked. However, you, the shooter, are the only one who knows if there is a round chambered and the only way to check this is to open the gun.

Stock

This is a synthetic black thumbhole. If you become bored with the colour, damage it or just feel like a change, it can easily be swapped out with one of Bergara's other stocks. It is ambidextrous and it fits like a glove. The back of the stock is factory fitted with CrushZone Recoil pad. The fore-end has two screws to adjust it and ensure a snug and properly aligned fit.

In the field

The BA13TD in .308 has become my 'go to' gun for medium-sized game. Ammunition is easy to find in a wide range of loads and projectiles. For these reasons it has turned out to be a versatile little rifle.

After tests with a variety of loads, I settled on Sako Super Hammerhead factory ammunition. I can shoot these around 1 MOA off the bench with muzzle velocities consistently just over 2850fps. You will notice firing the rifle, but it does not kick too much with this load.

My husband sometimes uses it too with Lapua Mega factory ammunition. These are 185gr brass jacketed soft-point bullets, which he groups under 1 MOA off a bench at 100m. He reckons they pack a good punch with a muzzle velocity of just under 2700fps. I have tried them, but find the recoil too much, which can be explained by the difference in energy of just over 7.5 per cent (the Lapua at 3950j versus the Sako at 3670j).

In the field, the rifle has proved to be reliable and more than accurate enough for the



A shooting stick makes it easier for Montse to take aim and fire well.

type of hunting I do. Most of it is pest control and my shots are between 50-150m. While the weight of the gun absorbs some of the recoil, it does make it on the heavy side to shoot offhand, so I typically try to find a tree or use a shooting stick for balance.

With the synthetic stock, there is no need to worry about damage or scratches. From experience, the 150gr bullets are more than enough to responsibly drop a large variety of game.

While the gun has been mostly trouble free, there are a few things worth noting. The breech lever (triggerguard) was rough out of the box. Or rather, it was smooth, but the machining on the edge was coarse, which meant it kept becoming caught on the pull back to open the breech.

I am sure this would have worn in quick enough, but after a quick polish on the edge,

it was sorted. While I typically disassemble and clean my rifle after use, I must have put the BA13TD in the safe without doing so on one occasion.

The next time I pulled it apart, I found some oxidation in the breech. It formed on the lugs on which the barrel rotates. I cleaned it, greased the gun properly and have not seen oxidation since, even out in heavy rains for days on end.

Finally, there is the trigger. While it is consistent and has never failed me, I would have liked it to break lighter. The fact that it does not do so out of the box is okay, but it would have been better to be able to adjust it. The flip-side is that this should only be done by someone with enough experience, so perhaps it is fine as is.



The factory-fitted Crush-Zone Recoil pad works a treat.



Pulling the triggerguard back opens the barrel.



The Durasight Weaver-style rail makes mounting optics easy.



In .308, the BA13TD easily despatches various species of deer.

Final observations and recommendation

All in all, I really enjoy shooting the BA13TD and plan to keep it for a long time. What better recommendation can a gun have? The compact size works well for my smaller frame and the trigger and hammer are easy to operate with my hands (glove size 7).

Combined with the utilitarian nature this is what made me purchase the BA13TD. It is a reliable workhorse and for the money it is well made. The .308 is a versatile calibre that will have you covered for almost all your hunting and pest control, save for the largest of animals.

Accuracy has been good since day one and slightly improved as the barrel wore in. On the note of barrels, I have found the BA13TD to be sensitive to temperatures. Not those you will encounter out in the field, rather, the heat generated when you put a number of consecutive rounds down your local SSAA range. Anything over three or four rounds in fairly rapid succession noticeably reduces results.

Let the barrel cool down and it improves again. This is unlikely to be an issue in your average hunting situation where you fire one shot. It has never been a problem when out in the field. If you are keen to shoot heavy subsonic projectiles in .308, the shorter 42cm and 46cm barrels have a one in 8 twist rate, which may suit them better.

Whether or not you go with the optional

sights is up to you, but the fact that all BA13TD models are sold with a Weaver-style base on the barrel means you will not have to look long and hard for compatible scope rings or quick release mounts. It is good to have a rifle you can just mount your scope or red dot on without having to first spend big bucks on a proprietary mount. The fact that it sits close to the barrel lets you mount your optics low.

All up, I would recommend the BA13TD. It is an affordable and reliable rifle that comes in so many calibres and stock options that it is likely you will find one that fits you well. Being compact means the BA13TD works well for women and the

fact that it's not ultra-lightweight means less recoil than some of the alternatives.

So would I buy the BA13TD again? Yes, I would. I prefer it over many other rifles I have shot. So, if you are looking for a reliable single-shot rifle that does not break the bank, the BA13TD is certainly worth a look.

With proper care and maintenance, it should serve you well. It may be hard to find the exact review model but try getting your hands on a BA13TD in your local gunshop to see what stock fits you best and whether the trigger works for you. You can also visit bergara.online for more info or get in contact with Herron Security and Sport via herrons.com.au ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Style: Single-shot rifle

Overall length: 89cm

Barrel: 51cm, one in 12 twist rate, 5/8 – 24 UNEF thread

Action: Hammer

Trigger: Fixed, 1700g

Magazine: None, one round in chamber

Scope mounts: Durasight Weaver-style rail

Stock: Synthetic, black thumbhole

Weight: 3.14kg

Price: About \$950



The BA13TD in its compact case for easy transport.

Tenvel of the wild



Move from meek diet back to meat suits chef Shauna, writes **Dave Rose**

Tasmanian hobbyist chef and SSAA member Shauna Pickin is so glad she made the switch from being a vegetarian to learning how to carry out the skills of hunting in order to supply food for the table.

Along with her husband, Adrian, also signed up with SSAA, the Hobart-based pair are now on the trail of rabbits and deer to turn into tasty morsels for the couple and their various visitors.

It has been almost a decade since Shauna switched her dietary agenda, but she has been pleased with how things have panned out.

"I turned vegetarian for some time but then decided to go back to eating meat," she said. "It happened about 10 years ago. After going to barbecues and seeing all the various meats on display it seemed a good move.

"My health improved immediately. With the factors of agriculture and farming it seemed to be more sustainable and ethical."

The actual task of hunting was a slow progression, with Shauna and Adrian having to learn the fundamentals of handling firearms.

"The initial idea started when we visited a butcher's shop and saw rabbit on sale from Victoria and it was quite expensive. So, we thought why don't we do it ourselves," she said.

"Rabbits are our main quarry, but the venison also goes down well with guests who we invite round.

"We use ferrets sometimes to grab rabbits and don't need firearms for that. A lot of the rabbits are everywhere around Tassie and have spread to suburban areas."

In her full-time job Shauna runs a jewellery store, Mayben Jeweller, in Hobart and even teaches people how to make jewellery. Meanwhile, Adrian operates as a parking inspector.

"We are looking into getting a game handling licence to operate in Tasmania," said Shauna.

Adrian is originally from England but moved to Australia when he was young. In his youth he helped out his grandfather with ferrets so

his knowledge stems from that experience growing up near Nottingham.

"We enrolled at the local SSAA club at Glenorchy, which was quite intimidating at first, but everyone was so helpful even though it took me a while to get used to how things worked. After all, it was not until I reached my late 20s that we did this," she said.

Shauna is also aware that she is engaged in an environmental crusade as rabbits are an invasive species and commit damage to



Shauna uses her Anschütz .22 with Leupold scope for hunting rabbits.

the natural surroundings on a major scale. Now that she has the confidence to handle firearms, it is on with the task.

"For rabbits I use an Anschutz .22 with a Leupold scope," she said. "But for deer I switch to a .243 or .308.

"I grew up on a farm in Orange in New South Wales but didn't really have any experience of firearms. My dad just wasn't into using them.

"We don't sell the meals as that is not allowed. But I enjoy all the cooking."

Shauna feels that rabbit is an overlooked item on modern menus and vastly underrated. She cites all kind of influences, ranging from Indian butter rabbit through to Polish and Italian offshoots.

Although rabbit may not be the flavour of the month at present, Shauna can see a growing response as people become aware of the idea.

Venison also takes a significant place on Shauna's culinary adventures. She feels that the adaptability of venison is the key to exuding a rich and aromatic texture compared to 'standard' meat dishes.

"I love venison because it is so versatile and is definitely one of my favourite meats," said Shauna.

It seems that putting meat back on Shauna's tasting palate has worked out a treat and the hunting connection has only added to the feelgood factor. ●

Venison has less calories and saturated fats than beef, while boasting more proteins, vitamins and minerals.



A hearty rabbit recipe from our Australian game cookbook: *Field to Fork - Second Helpings*. Voted best meat cookbook in the world and featuring over 50 delicious recipes. Scan the QR code or visit onlineshop.ssaa.org.au to order your hardcover copy now for just \$49.95 delivered.



Bacon-wrapped rabbit parcels with roast potatoes

8 sprigs fresh thyme

8 fresh sage leaves

1 rabbit – quartered with bones left in

8 strips streaky bacon

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 leek – finely sliced

1½ cups chicken stock

1 tablespoon cornflour

1 tablespoon sherry

½ cup cream

truss tomatoes and potatoes

Serves 2-4

- 1 To prepare rabbit, place thyme and sage on each piece of rabbit, then wrap the bacon around each piece. To hold the herbs in place, wrap and knot with cooking string.
- 2 Heat the olive oil in a frypan over medium-high heat. Add leek and cook for 1-2 minutes, until softened slightly. Transfer leek to a casserole dish.
- 3 Add a little more olive oil to frypan if needed, then add rabbit parcels and brown on all sides. Transfer rabbit parcels to casserole dish.
- 4 Pour a little chicken stock into the frypan used and deglaze the pan. Then pour over the parcels, along with the remaining chicken stock. Cover and bake in a preheated 180C oven for 1 hour, until tender. Check the seasoning.
- 5 Remove parcels from dish and discard string, cover with foil and allow to rest for 2-3 minutes. Transfer stock back to frypan.
- 6 Meanwhile, combine cornflour and 2 tablespoons water in a small bowl. Add cornflour mixture, sherry and cream to frypan and stir through. Bring to the boil. Reduce to low heat and simmer for 3-4 minutes, stirring continuously, until the sauce has thickened.
- 7 Serve rabbit parcels with roasted truss tomatoes and potatoes. Drizzle sauce over the top.

Tip: White wine can be substituted for sherry.



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