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AUSTRALIAN Shooter

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In releasing the T3x Veil Alpine bolt-action rifle, it's clear Tikka haven't deviated much from the winning formula Australian shooters have come to expect and this is one which doesn't disappoint.

With handloading their own ammunition becoming ever-more popular among Australian shooters, we take a look at three of the most useful and informative handloading manuals on the market.

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National News

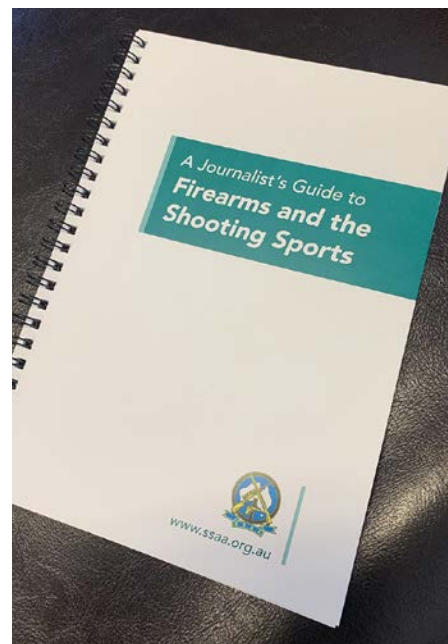
SSAA helping media towards educated and balanced reporting

SSAA National is supporting and informing journalists to create accurate news reports by updating and reissuing its *Journalist's Guide to Firearms and the Shooting Sports* publication. The third edition of the guide was sent out to libraries across the country earlier this year and will continue to be sent to journalists and other media professionals for use as an educational tool.

The initiative is part of the SSAA's role in promoting and explaining our recreation to create a better environment and community understanding of all forms of shooting sports and hunting. It includes the SSAA's 10 golden rules for journalists which encourages balanced and educated reporting when it comes to facts and figures, understanding the role hunters play in the environment and highlights. The first golden rule - to avoid photographing sporting shooters or hunters from dangerous positions such as in front of the firearm - comes from a real-life experience witnessed by one of our staff. It came about at an Olympic Games event when a photographer asked to take better pictures by moving down-range behind the targets... while competitors were shooting!

The guide also has a section featuring common firearm myths, addressing misconceptions such as 'disarming the public reduces violent crime' and 'people don't need multiple firearms - a limit should be put on the number of firearms someone can legally own'. Written by journalists for journalists, *A Journalist's Guide to Firearms and the Shooting Sports* covers all manner of topics relating to firearms, shooting, recreational hunting, wildlife conservation and crime.

The SSAA published the first edition of the guide in 2009 after identifying a knowledge gap in that area and looking to foster positive relationships with the media. Over



the years we've been able to help journalists who've referred to legal firearms as weapons, incorrectly identified a firearm type as a semi-automatic lever action rifle or misunderstand the rigorous licensing and checks involved in legally owning a gun. The guide has also served as a conversation starter with journalists and media professionals to address concerns or inaccuracies in media reports.

Importantly the guide has a focus on firearm safety, distinguishing between criminal activity and law-abiding and licensed firearm owners and users, while also striving to highlight that firearm, shooting and hunting legislation and regulations vary in each Australian state and territory.

If members have a suggestion of where to send a copy of *A Journalist's Guide to Firearms and the Shooting Sports*, please email as@ssaa.org.au. The guide is also available online at ssaa.org.au. ●

SSAA - Protecting shooters since 1948

Black powder on a budget

AS A LONG-TERM shooter of obsolete black powder-era cartridges I enjoyed Paul Heiser's article on reloading vintage cartridges (*Shooter*, May 2021) though maybe a couple of points weren't properly emphasised. He says a selection of reloading dies are essential if you hope to shoot vintage centrefire firearms, yet I've reloaded thousands of rounds for .577-.450 Martini Henry, .577 Snider and 11mm Mauser in the past 20 years and have never owned or needed expensive reloading dies in any of those calibres.

The brass is expensive (around \$7.50 a case) and if fired in one rifle never needs to be full length resized or even neck-sized, all that's required being a suitable shell holder (less than \$30) for priming the cases on a standard press. De-priming is done using a de-capping pin from an old set of dies and most gunsmiths will sell you one for a few dollars.

Once primed and reloaded with suitable powder and over-powder wads or filler, a lubed or paper-patched bullet is simply thumb-pressed into the neck of the cartridge. This is how our ancestors did it and, with the right bullet and charge, can be very accurate. On firing, the empty brass should immediately be thrown into a plastic bottle filled with water and a spoonful of washing powder. Clean-up is with hot water

and a small bottle brush and doing this I've never had to discard expensive brass. Also, cartridge firearms designed and proofed for black powder loads should never be shot with anything but black powder, including the original Martini-Henry, Snider, Trapdoor Springfield etc. Some people get away with shooting smokeless in these firearms but accidents have occurred. If things go wrong shooting smokeless in a black powder-proofed firearm and someone is injured, forget insurance cover.

Ben Gregory, via email

In time of need . . .

I WAS INTRIGUED by Mr Golden's argument for anyone requiring rescue having to fund it themselves to unburden the long-suffering taxpayer (*Shooter*, February 2021). By his thinking, if he requires any form of hospitalisation because he's perhaps a smoker or enjoys a drink, both with known health risks, he'd naturally fund this entirely by himself to unburden the taxpayer due to his own recreational pursuits contributing to these costs. I bet he'd have none of that.

Hunters, abseilers, bushwalkers all most likely pay personal income tax and GST on equipment for their passion. Things can go wrong from time to time and we look after people in time of need. Sounds like Mr

Golden needs to remember those ads from the '70s with Norm the couch potato - Life: Be in it!

Neil Angwin, via email

Curiosity on the cat

WHEN I WAS between about eight and 16 years of age, I had an uncle living on the 'Hampton Road' about 40km south-west of Lithgow, NSW (about 1942-55). He was a rabbit trapper with about 30-40 traps on each line, marked by cuts on nearby trees.

We holidayed with him often and I used to help out and recall him finding lots of wild cats in his traps. He called them bobcats which were large-bodied animals with tails about two feet long, all tortoise-shell coloured with large teeth and claws, spitting madly at us and definitely not happy. They were similar to a caracal or lynx but with a bobbed tail.

My uncle didn't carry a rifle so would set them free and even his 'trap dog' companion wouldn't dare go near them. In the past 70 years I haven't seen one since (I'll be 87 this year) and all the books I've read insist there are no native 'cats' in Australia. Would any of your readers have an idea what they might have been? Like my father before me I've hunted all my life but only ever saw them in my uncle's traps.

Ray Brown, NSW



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: communications@ssaa.org.au

Q I know we have liability insurance as part of our SSAA membership but what is it?

Bob Lawrence, via email

A SSAA liability insurance protects you against financial loss if your actions while engaged in lawful recreational shooting activities due to your negligence is found to have caused a person to be injured or killed or a person's property to be damaged or destroyed. The definition of lawful rec-

reational shooting under the SSAA liability policy is as follows: Bodily injury and/or property damage caused by the discharge of a firearm, crossbow or archery bow in a manner allowed or permitted by law and/or with lawful authority.

Liability insurance covers two key financial risks, firstly the legal cost of defending a claim and secondly the compensation you may be directed to pay the injured or wronged party, along with their legal costs,

if a claim against you is upheld. Obviously, SSAA liability insurance won't cover anyone involved in known hazardous activities or criminal actions.

For further information in relation to public liability or other member insurance benefits, call us on (08) 8332 0281 or visit ssaaib.com.au.

Animal rights extremists are *not* conservationists

An article on MSN news in early May reported the outcry of so-called conservationists to the proposed shake-up of laws regarding trophy-hunt imports/exports in the UK. A spokesperson from the group Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting claimed the UK's new proposed changes to their animal welfare legislation will lead to government-approved wildlife kills.

And while the report referred to 'conservationists', I'd prefer to use the correct term from here on. Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting and Humane Society International/UK are not conservationists, they're animal rights organisations. It's clear from this report these zealot outfits are upset the British government has not proposed the changes they want, which will lead to the ban of hunting trophy imports and exports. It seems the proposed changes have been developed after much broader consultation than these organisations would have liked, all of which meant actual conservation organisations with an understanding of the benefits of trophy hunting have been listened to.

As a result of not getting what they wanted they're now crying blue murder, telling the media the changes will open the door to shooting critically endangered species such as black rhinos, elephants and polar bears. Furthermore, they claim Britain is set to become a world loser instead of a world leader in terms of animal welfare legislation, all because they believe a loophole has been created which they say is an absolute disaster (in their efforts to ban trophy hunting).

From what I can see these proposed changes would ban the import of trophies where there are negative conservation outcomes. The loophole these anti groups are jumping up and down about is Britain has pledged to ensure UK import and export of hunting trophies "are not threatening the conservation status of species abroad". This means trophies derived from hunts which support conservation may still be able to be imported, very much a positive outcome for both hunters and communities which rely on income to support themselves, the habitat and species concerned.

The activist groups are calling the UK government's position completely unacceptable and threatening to boycott further talks. I would see a boycott from these organisations as no great loss, seeing as their push to ban trophy hunting (at this time through limiting trophy imports/exports) would have detrimental impacts on the species they show concern for. Time and time again it has been shown when local communities derive no value or benefit from wildlife, they will not care for it. Human-wildlife conflicts will always have a negative outcome for the wildlife involved which have no value to the community - with no incentives, local communities may turn a blind eye to poaching and even participate.

The MSN report afforded just two sentences to 'supporters of hunting'. Unidentified sources were quoted as saying that safeguarding areas for hunting protects wildlife against greater threats and income generated helps pay for the broader conservation of species.

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) on their website indicated they've lobbied hard against last year's proposal to ban all hunting trophies entering or leaving the UK. They reported that a ban on hunting trophy exports was off the table as it would've had a detrimental impact on the management of large mammals in the UK.

They said the proposals in the action plan are "to ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered animals abroad" but the meaning of 'endangered' has not yet been defined. BASC supports sustainable harvest of wildlife in the UK and overseas, while noting that well-regulated hunting plays an important role in delivering benefits to both nature and people.

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Powder selection crucial to any given cartridge

In this article I'll cover the now very limited brands of powder currently available to us here in Australia.

ADI, the only Australian producer of powder, recently announced that due to manufacturing issues they were ceasing development of some new powders and stopping production of some existing ones for the foreseeable future. ADI started production of powder in 1911 at the Cordite Factory in Maribyrnong, Victoria.

Many years ago quite a few overseas brands of powder were available but those from manufacturers like Norma, Dupont, Hodgson and Vihtavuori, although being brought here by various importers now and then, have all but disappeared from gunshop shelves.

Importers and individual gun stores are also finding difficulty obtaining and storing large quantities of powder, while prices have escalated due to cartage and storage problems being experienced because of terrorist control implications. It may therefore be advisable for reloaders to have a healthy but legal stock of their favourite powder on hand (at today's prices) for use in the future. The same applies to primers as they're the one item the handloader can't improvise if supply became difficult.

There are two basic types of powder - black powder and smokeless - but for now we'll stick to the latter. There are also two types of smokeless powder available - single base and double base - the most common being the single base type as made by ADI and used in all their rifle powders. The double base variety contains a substan-

tial percentage of nitroglycerine and has the advantage of producing slightly more energy for the same quantity of powder used.

Powders are graded by their burning speed ranging from slow to fast and it depends which cartridge you're going to reload as to what powder you should use.



Shotgun cartridges generally require a very fast-burning variety, pistol cartridges use fast to medium-burning and most rifle cartridges use slow to medium-burning powder.

Certain powders tend to overlap and some of those used to reload shotgun cartridges can also work in various pistol and rifle cartridges so, prior to loading any cartridge, you must study one or preferably more of the informative loading manuals or powder manufacturers' information booklets available to determine the correct powder. For example, Alliant Powders offer a large range with their Bullseye being specifically made for use in pistol ammunition, their Reloader 15 aimed at the .223 Remington and .308 Winchester cartridges, while Reloader 19 is ideally suited to medium and heavy loads in rifle cartridges like the .30-06 and .338.

Provided powder is kept in a cool, dry place with the lid tightly closed it has a very long storage life and will remain serviceable for many years. For safety reasons it's always a good idea to store powder in its original container and never smoke or use naked flames in the area close to where it's stored. Furthermore, never mix different powders even if their burning rates may appear similar, never substitute smokeless for black powder or use smokeless in black powder firearms as extreme damage and/or injury may result. Similarly never be tempted to use old, salvaged powder of uncertain origin - it's much better to dispose of it in a safe manner.



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Clay Target Q&A

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Q I'm hearing more and more conversation about 'all-round' shotguns at every range or gun shop I visit. Do you really believe one gun can successfully combat all the clay target shooting sports?

Gino DeMaria, NSW

A By an 'all-round' shotgun I assume you mean a solitary gun which can be used competitively in all common clay target disciplines. The emphasis here has to be on 'competitively' as there's no reason why any form of shotgun configuration could not be used to compete, providing it meets the minimum legal barrel length. Let me use this as an argument as to why you can use one shotgun for everything: Arguably the world's greatest 'all-round' shotgun competitor at the moment is a gentleman from Kansas by the name of Derek Mein. My reason for suggesting Derek holds this title is by the resumé he compiled in 2020, so let me run you through his accomplishments of last year.

He started in March by winning a place on the US Olympic Trap team to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Games now being held this year (he won by 12 targets). He then went to the US Sporting Clay Championships and won that, this event being about as competitive as any World Sporting Championship. After that he fronted up at the Grand American Trap shoot and finished third overall from more than 1000 competitors.

Derek then went to the World Skeet Championships in San Antonio, Texas where he lost a sudden-death shoot-off for the World 28-gauge Skeet title, an event he'd qualified for with a perfect 100/100.

The last event of the year threw up a bit of a dilemma for Derek. The World FITASC Championship was held in Mississippi but clashed with the big-money US 'Flyer' Championship. Now Derek's already a World Sporting Champion (2019) and was also beneficiary of the biggest-ever clay target shooting pay cheque of US\$200,000 when he won the 'Nad Al Sheba' Sporting Clays Championship in 2015, so you imagine he'd have competed in Mississippi but you'd be wrong. He chose the Flyer Championship, won it and apparently took home more than \$50,000. Not a bad year - and all with the same gun, same stock and same barrel length. For the record he uses an 81cm barrel Kolar shotgun and the only thing he changes are his chokes.

So by that we could assume the argument is over as Derek proves one gun can be used successfully in *all* shotgun disciplines but, despite that, I wouldn't recommend it to the 'Average Joe'. Not many people have Derek Mein's ability and to master a discipline like American Trap, which is best suited to shotguns with a point of aim approaching 100 per cent high, then with the very same gun to be world-class in Sporting Clay events where lower patterns of 60 per cent high are quite common, is remarkable.

Derek clearly adjusts the pressure he places his face on the stock to alter this point of aim percentage relative to the discipline or even the type of target he's shooting at. I strongly suggest you don't try this, as consistency in gun mount should be one of the basic fundamentals you need to master first. If your discipline is solely going to be Trap then buy a Trap shotgun with a high Trap stock, if it's Sporting Clays then do the same.

If you're after something you can participate in all disciplines with then buy a gun with a low enough stock which has an adjustable comb that can be raised when needed and make sure the shotgun has interchangeable chokes. My barrel of choice for an all-purpose shotgun would be 75cm.

There's certainly a market and increasing demand for versatile multiple discipline shotguns but as a general rule the absolute elite competitors use firearms made specifically for one discipline. In saying that, if Derek Mein goes on to win at this month's Olympics, I wonder how many people may change their opinion on this topic. You'd be a brave person to bet he isn't capable of taking home the gold.

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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS ?

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

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Q As a gunsmith, I've had several clients looking to have their firearms repaired following disastrous events resulting from trying to reduce moisture in their gun safes. One client put moisture-absorbing gel in his safe before going away for an extended period and on his return found it had taken on so much moisture it had expanded and overflowed all over his guns, removing blueing and damaging stocks. He'd been advised to put the gel into a large enough plastic container so it wouldn't overflow. So I must ask the question: Is this a good idea?

Rob Blomfield, SC Gunsmithing, Qld

A My article published in this magazine last October about long-term storage of firearms touched on this. The usual material used for moisture reduction is actually silica gel, the anhydrous oxide of silicon which readily *adsorbs* (not *absorbs*) moisture through its capacity to attract water molecules to its surface.

Loose silica gel will soak up moisture until saturated, at which point it no longer works and in fact can cause serious corrosion problems if it then spills. It requires monitoring, sometimes through coloured beads which turn from blue to red when no longer working. At this point it can be reactivated by heating to about 120 degrees Celsius for a period (depending on how much you have) to dry off the moisture.

As suggested previously, humidity must not be reduced to zero as wooden gun

stocks will warp and may crack. A much safer solution is to locate gun safes in areas not exposed to extremes of hot or cold, coat firearms with preservatives to prevent corrosion rather than using dessicants and, where possible, check firearms regularly for signs of deterioration. A very useful website brought to my attention after my article was published is www.xrust.com.au which has a section dedicated to keeping guns free from rust and corrosion.

Geoff Smith

Q I've noticed some shotguns have both a front bead and middle bead on their rib. What's the reason for this? My gun only has the front bead so is it a good idea to have a middle bead installed?

Mario, NSW

A Most shotguns designed for field shooting usually have only one bead while those for competition shooting have two beads on the rib. The reason for this is the smaller mid bead helps to tell us whether the gun fits us well when we mount it and see the middle bead in line with the front bead.

If there's a bit of space between the beads but they're still in line, that suggests the gun will shoot high. If the beads appear to be touching in a 'figure of eight' shape or even fully line up then the gun will probably

be shooting pretty flat. You should of course test this by patterning your gun to confirm where it shoots when comfortably mounted and 'aimed' at the pattern plate target.

It's often said we don't aim a shotgun, we point it. This is true of shooting in the field and at clay targets where you look down or along the rib and through the beads to concentrate on the target and the lead you're giving it. Swing and when you fire the shot are important, as is follow-through when you take the shot.

If you try to aim a shotgun at a moving target you invariably stop the gun momentarily to confirm your sight picture and miss behind. This means a second bead isn't necessary as an aiming device but it's useful in your subconscious sight picture for ensuring the gun is correctly mounted and that the shot will go where you intend it.

I like a centre bead but always make sure my guns fit me like a glove, so the issue of the gun shooting off line and this being confirmed by the beads not lining up doesn't become a concern. If you're shooting well with one bead leave it at that - install a second bead if it helps with gun fit and gives you more confidence.

Paul Miller

Q It's been almost a year since I put together my new rifle and I'm super keen to try it out and run in the barrel at the range, but the problem I'm facing is the unavailability of ADI AR2209 in the new 1kg containers so I can assemble some handloads.

I know I'm not the only shooter waiting desperately for arrival of new stock and the disruption to distribution due to COVID-19 is understandable, but it's certainly not the first time reloaders in Australia have faced this issue. I feel it would be helpful for the reloading community to know how this problem is being tackled and when we might be able to see some improvement in reliability of supply.

I think the ADI product is of great quality and I'll wait regardless until it's available

but if you could shine some light down that dark tunnel with no end, it would make the wait a lot more bearable. Thanks for a great magazine.

Richard Krah, via email

A Availability of ADI rifle powders and roll-out of the new APS range of pistol powders is something many shooters have been concerned about for some time. ADI, otherwise known as Australian Munitions, claim a number of factors have led to the current situation, not just for AR2209 powder but for all propellants across the range.

To quote from a recent post on their website: "... there have been occasions where particular orders have exceeded the current volume of stock on hand and deliveries were delayed for a number of internal and external factors, but generally speaking we had stock of popular propellants available. However, over the past 12 months and as far back as mid-2019 for certain propellants, we haven't been keeping up with demand from the market."

As you say Richard, this has been going on for some time and ADI points to the pandemic as leading to increased demand for powder for one reason or another. According to ADI, the amount of powder the factory can produce has an upper limit and it takes up to six months to produce a single batch of any type of propellant. Last year saw a sudden rise in demand for powder they haven't encountered in at least six years, so it's a supply and demand issue - and one ADI is keen to fix.

Since March this year ADI has been posting a number of articles on the current situation regarding production and distribution of their products. At time of writing, while ADI have not yet directly addressed the question of when things will return to normal, they've at least shed some light on how we arrived at this point. www.adipowders.com.au/news

Rod Pascoe

• See Page 48 for the latest on this subject.



Q Can you help with information on this rifle, made by Hollis & Sons expressly for F. Lassetter & Co. Ltd., Sydney. On the action is written 'The Vixen'. Any information appreciated.

Les Binnie, Qld

A Your firearm is a shotgun, not a rifle. It has a bead foresight and no dovetail for a rear sight and the Birmingham proof marks under the barrel indicate it was proofed for 12-gauge black powder cartridges from 1904-1925. The action has a rotary underlever, a design patented and improved by one Henry Jones in 1859 and 1861 respectively. This is a strong action which became an industry standard until snap actions were introduced.

Isaac Hollis & Sons were in business in various guises and different names from 1861 to around 1953 and were primarily producers of inexpensive trade and sporting guns for the South African and British colonies, their firearms always regarded as good, affordable working guns. F. Lassetter and Co. was established by Frederic Lassetter (1828-1911) in 1863 and continued in business as universal providers until 1926 when the company was bought out by rival firm Anthony Horderns. In Lassetter's cat-



alogue No.26 dated 1911, several Hollis & Sons shotguns are listed, all carrying trade names such as The Spitfire or The Marksman which fits pretty well with The Vixen markings on yours.

Your gun doesn't appear to be in very good condition and is obviously missing the fore-end tip, so I'd place its value at around \$100 or perhaps a little more if you can find the right buyer. Many of these old guns saw a lot of use so I wouldn't be in a hurry to shoot it until it's been checked by a competent gunsmith - keeping in mind it was proofed for black powder cartridges originally and may not stand up to the pressures of modern smokeless loads. In my experience there doesn't seem to be a great deal of collector interest in these old workhorses unless they're in very good condition.

John Dunn



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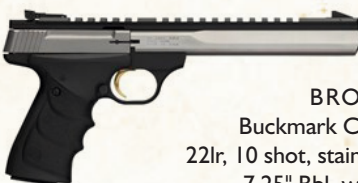
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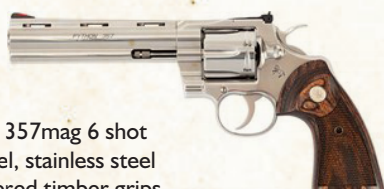
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CZ 515 Tactical

Echoes of a bygone era

Daniel O'Dea



Years ago and long before he retired I was visiting an old mate, gunsmith Bob Taylor at Lidsdale, NSW not far out of Lithgow. Chatting in his workshop I saw he was working on a strange little single-shot rifle and with the metalwork fresh out of the blueing tanks he was busy reassembling it. Once complete, beckoning me to where he'd test-fire his guns he said: "Take a look at this."

Proceeding to dig a .22 shot out of an old box of ammo, he dropped it into the open chamber of the gun and pressed a button on the left of the receiver. Instantly the bolt flung forward and on depressing the trigger and firing it flew back again, locking open as the spent case ejected clear. Placing another diminutive round in the chamber and with an approving grin on his face, he repeated the process. The smile was clearly contagious as I immediately found myself beaming as the rifle once again spat a spent case clear on firing. Sparked with interest I immediately asked more about this rifle, a type of which until that point I'd never seen or heard of.

Turned out it was a Belgium-made

Bayard, a galley-type gun from the turn of the last century circa 1908-1912. Anyway, I asked Bob what he wanted for it and ended up owning it for a price I recall was more attuned to a gift than a sale. I was fascinated by the self-ejecting function and just had to have it. Fast-forward to the end of last year and I received a note from the editor asking if I'd take a look at the CZ 515 Tactical from Winchester Australia, a lever-release bolt repeater which operated not too differently to my delightful Bayard, the rifle arriving with a Meopta Meopro 4-12x50 scope for testing.

The CZ 515 has modern styling and design as it uses polymer and aluminum, the main components being a fibre-reinforced polymer stock and pistol grip assembly, alloy receiver, 16" hammer forged barrel, tubular alloy barrel shroud and full length (530mm) continuous Picatinny rail.

The stock has a high bore axis relationship, MSR-style, and floats on a six-position polymer receiver extension providing adjustment for the collapsible stock which also has a height-adjustable cheekpiece moved via four small hex screws, two each side of the stock. The tweak is only about

15mm but based on the inline design with an already high bore axis, it's doubtful you'd ever be able to mount a scope high enough to need that full upwards alteration.

If you live in NSW, collapsible stocks are prohibited by law and fitment of such makes an otherwise legal category A or B firearm a prohibited item so there, any such stock would need to be permanently fixed in an approved manner. For the record, as a licensed firearms dealer and for the purposes of this review, I'm appropriately accredited for such prohibited firearms in NSW. Naturally, it's always advisable to confirm any regulatory requirements in your home state with the local firearms registry.

As previously mentioned the CZ 515 works in a similar manner to my old Bayard, albeit a magazine-fed repeater as opposed to a single-shot. Starting from a closed bolt on an empty chamber you first draw back the bolt until it's caught by the automatic bolt stop which holds the bolt in the open position, then insert the magazine. The conveniently located lever release can be triggered allowing the bolt to fly forward, stripping a round from the magazine and



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CZ 515 Tactical: Echoes of a bygone era

loading it into the chamber. Upon firing, operating under blow-back pressure the bolt flies back, extracting and ejecting the spent case before being caught again by the automatic bolt stop. Triggering the lever release again starts the sequence over, repeating the cycle. The action is officially referred to as a 'bolt-action, lever release' and is basically a straight pull action which uses blow-back pressure to extract and eject fired cases. The important distinction with this mechanism is although it in effect automatically extracts and ejects spent cases, it requires both a distinct and separate physical input from the shooter to reload the firearm for subsequent shots. As it doesn't reload itself it's in no way self-loading (semi-automatic).

The system is quick, intuitive, safe to operate and for reloading speed would be a toss-up if run against a pump or short stroke lever-action rifle. The ergonomically designed lever release is directly above the trigger housing with thumb pad right in line with the trigger (it comes mounted on the right of the receiver but can be moved to the left). Intuitively I found myself operating the lever release with my trigger finger, moving from one to the other between shots, though also found I could comfortably rest my palm on the right side of the pistol grip, grasping it with my lower three fingers while actuating the lever



Although 100 years older, Daniel couldn't help but draw comparisons with his Bayard self-ejector that works in a similar fashion.

release with my right thumb and using my trigger finger just to break the trigger.

From a safety perspective I'd go as far as to say this system is without equal - and here's my reasoning. Upon firing and without any input from the shooter, the default position automatically becomes 'bolt locked open' with the chamber empty. Also, you'll find the finger outside the triggerguard as it's drawn to the lever release. With a quick glance you can see if the chamber is clear and if there's any ammunition still in the magazine.

To completely clear the rifle you just drop the magazine with no further manipulation

of the mechanism required. If training or instructing a minor for instance, a cautionary eye will always know the exact condition of the rifle during the firing process. The bolt is either locked open on an empty chamber or forward on a loaded one, the only exception being if the lever release is actuated on an empty magazine.

Arguably the automatic bolt stop acts as an active safety in locking the bolt back on an empty chamber and the rifle also carries a conventional cross bolt safety catch directly behind the trigger bow as the main passive safety. The CZ 515 Tactical comes with a single polymer 10-round magazine



The CZ 515 Tactical comes supplied with a single 10-round polymer magazine.



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CZ 515 Tactical: Echoes of a bygone era

and I was surprised to discover it was the standard pattern as used in both the old Brno and current CZ bolt-action .22 rifles.

The gun is supplied effectively as 'optics ready' with full-length continuous Picatinny rail. There are no iron sights as standard but, should they be desired, with the Picatinny rail on the same plain for its entire length, a set of MSR-style back-up sights such as Magpul MBUS flip-up iron sights can easily be fitted. Likewise, with the rail at 530mm it leaves ample sight radius for effective sighting with such iron sights.

The oversized tubular handguard finds the barrel somewhat offset towards the top within the shroud, leaving plenty of room for cooling should you find the barrel hot. Threaded holes strategically placed around the barrel shroud offer an additional opportunity should you wish to hang more gear off the rifle such as a bipod, light or sling attachments, the muzzle also threaded if you want to suspend anything from that.

The Meopro is an excellent full-sized riflescope with sharp clear optics, perhaps a little big for this style of rifle but would certainly do the job for testing. Because of the inline design with a high bore axis and no drop at the comb, you'll require extra-high or MSR-height rings/mounts to place your scope high enough to see through, especially if it has a large objective lens.

On the range the CZ 515 performed flawlessly as I dipped into my ammo larder for a wide variety of both current and some unopened packets from my supply of old favourites. It didn't matter what I used - be it 32 or 42-grain, standard or hyper velocity - it was all fired and ejected without pause.

The 16" hammer-forged barrel sits offset in the generous tubular alloy shroud.



Accuracy was more than acceptable as I fired a series of 10-round groups at 25m and with the exception of a few operator-induced flyers, most could be covered easily with a dollar coin.

I was shooting more for fun, using just a basic rest so I reckon you could tighten the results up even further if you wanted to go all slow and deliberate benchrest style. But the CZ 515 is built to be a fun plinker and handy small game hunter, not a target rifle, so that's how I wanted to enjoy it. It's bound to become a favourite among gunshop owners as it's an addictive ammo burner and I'm sure for those who are selling them, ammo sales are set to rise. ●



The CZ 515 Tactical provided great practical accuracy with all types of .22LR ammunition as demonstrated by these 10-shot groups.

The CX 515 Tactical has a six-position collapsible stock (pinned in NSW) and adjustable cheekrest.



Specifications

Rifle: CZ 515

Action: Bolt-action, lever-release tactical

Trigger: Single-stage, adjustable

Calibre: .22LR

Capacity: 10-round detachable magazine

Barrel: 16" (406mm) hammer-forged sporter profile (threaded 1/2 x 28)

Weight: 2.8kg

Muzzle: Threaded 1/2 x 28

Sights: 530mm Picatinny rail for optics mounting

Stock: Polymer six adjustable for position and comb

Overall length: 839mm

Length of pull: 305mm

RRP: \$1450

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After the shot

retrieving meat the easy way

Brad Allen

There's always pressure on hunters to use the meat we harvest from the wild. For some of us older guys it's no big deal, as learning how to butcher our kills was just one of those things most rural and semi-rural people absorbed as that knowledge was passed down through families. Unless you're lucky enough to have such 'tutors' who can teach you the finer points of field butchering, it can be a daunting task to master. Yet butchering game animals is a skill anyone can learn if they're so inclined, there are just basic principles and commonsense points we must adhere to.

It's true that cleanliness is next to godliness and keeping our newly-killed meat supply clean and fresh is a priority. Meatworks have stringent controls and our own standards also need to be high in order to protect ourselves and anyone else

who consumes the game meat we process. Apart from keeping dirt and grass off the carcass as we butcher the animal, probably the most important part is to gut the animal quickly and keep its abdominal contents in the stomach and intestines and not all over the meat we intend to eat.

Whether you take the whole carcass home or only remove the main cuts of meat in the bush where the animal fell will dictate how to go about the procedure. If you need to carry the carcass any distance, believe me, you don't want to be lugging anything you can't eat. The skin and bone of a deer or goat for instance weigh quite a lot and neither can be eaten. That goes for bullet-damaged meat as well, unless you take it for pets. Why go to the trouble of carrying out weight you can't use and will discard later anyway?

If the animal has been shot through the

chest it's likely one or both shoulders may be bullet damaged. In this case the main meat worth taking will come from along the backbone (on both sides) from above the shoulders right back to the animal's hips, back legs and neck area. The backstraps are good eating and probably one of the easiest muscles on the carcass to remove. To accomplish this we need to roll the animal on to its belly and make a cut through the skin from the base of the neck right down to the hips. It's then a matter of skinning the hide away from the centre line of the animal's back to expose both backstraps.

Using a sharp straight-bladed knife, cut through the head of the backstraps near the base of the neck then along the backbone protrusions on both sides of the spine, down to the hip bones. Now start cutting under the muscle to release it from the backbone and ribs while gently pulling the

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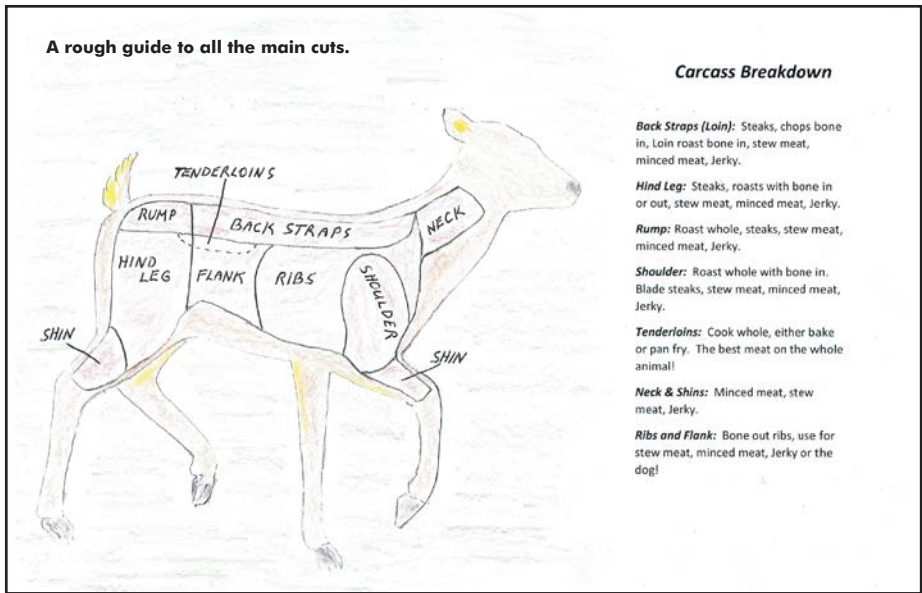
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After the shot: retrieving meat the easy way



backstrap up and away from the carcass. You should end up with one long piece of muscle/meat from behind the shoulder blades right down to the pelvis, where we cut through it to remove the whole piece. Now repeat the process for the other side.

By this point you'll know if either of the shoulders are damaged and worth taking, so skin down over one or both shoulders before separating the shoulder blade (which contains two main muscles, the blade and oyster blade) from the body of the animal. This is achieved by cutting through the skin along the ribs under the front leg, between

the leg and ribs, until the whole leg is free from the rest of the animal. Then simply cut the front hoof off through the animal's elbow joint and remove the remaining skin from the shoulder.

Now you should have two backstraps and maybe one or two shoulders cooling down on a nice clean surface or hanging from a shady tree branch. That leaves most of the edible meat still on the carcass, that being both hind legs. Now it's a matter of rolling the animal on to its back and once there you need to remove each hind leg by cutting through the hip ball joint. By holding the



leg out straight and applying some downward pressure, cut down through the skin into the hip joint, making sure not to cut through the stomach wall which can release or puncture the intestines. Cut slowly and carefully.



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After the shot: retrieving meat the easy way

Once through the ball joint, keep cutting along and against the pelvic bone until the leg has been released, right back to the backbone near the tail. Repeat for the other leg and you're done. At this point I usually skin the legs right off, cut the hoof off at the hock and place them to cool with the shoulders and backstraps.

Yet the best two pieces of meat are still attached to the carcass. They're the small muscles on the inside of the backbone which run from the pelvis back along the spine for a short distance to near the kidneys, commonly known as tenderloins. To release these from the carcass we need to open the animal's belly, taking care not to puncture the intestines.

But first you need to cut around the anus into the body cavity so it can be pushed inside the animal then open the belly cavity without cutting the intestines or stomach. Make a small incision into this area, just ahead of where the back legs meet. Place your index and middle fingers of the left hand into the hole with palm facing up then place the tip of the blade between these two fingers and not protruding into the gut cavity below the fingers. Then it's a matter of moving the left hand and the knife in your right hand up along the belly to the base of the sternum, exposing the intestines. The two fingers of your left hand protect the intestines from the blade tip.

Scoop the intestines out of the body cavity to expose the tenderloins and note the animal doesn't have to be fully gutted at this point to gain access to the tenderloins which are soft and can be peeled away from the backbone on most animals without too much effort. Just cut through and release the head of the muscle then peel or cut it away from inside the backbone. Believe me, this will be worth the effort as the tenderloins are the best meat on any game animal.

Most of the best edible meat cuts have now been removed but if you want to cut away any further forequarter meat, which is fine for stewing, go ahead. Just cut along the backbone, forequarter and neck wherever there's undamaged meat and peel it away. The second method is to totally gut the animal and carry out the whole carcass. This is my normal routine as I like to use the whole animal if possible and am always on the lookout for dog tucker as two Labradors eat a lot of meat and bones.

If you intend to hang the carcass in a cold room to mature for a short time before it's boned out and cut up, it's wise to leave the skin on the animal to stop the meat from drying out. Alternately, if your aim is to cut the carcass up sooner rather than later, it's probably a better idea to skin the animal in



the bush which means less to carry out and fewer unusable bits to be rid of.

Once you've done this a few times you'll know it takes far longer to explain the method than to actually do it. And don't worry if it doesn't go totally to plan first time and you end up with a punctured gut or intestine - it still occasionally happens to me after all these years. Just clean or wash it off as best you can immediately and, at the first available opportunity, give it a good scrub and 'boundary ride' it with the knife where necessary. After your first successful field butchering job you'll be hooked and wonder why you didn't try it sooner. So grab your favourite hunting rifle and knife and head bush to fill your freezer. ●





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Deer may be classified as game animals in some areas but to farmers plagued by them, they are pests.

Summer hunting with helping hands

Leon Wright

With the arrival of warmer weather I, like many other hunters, take a bit of a break from strenuous outings like tracking sambar deer and either turn to the more relaxing pursuit of fishing or other forms of hunting on a smaller scale. Having completed our last deer hunt then guided my grandson to landing a couple of Murray cod, it was time to do just that. My farmer friend Peter, rang to enquire if I was still hunting as I hadn't been out his way for a while and rabbits were starting to grow in numbers. Next on the list was another farmer mate who also had a rabbit challenge and finally, for the moment, was Lorna and Ken who had a fox problem.

I thought I'd take care of Peter's hassle first as he's one of those farmers who sees one rabbit and automatically it becomes a hundred. After a phone call to let him know

I was on the job I headed out with a mate and my Beretta 12-gauge over-and-under. With two properties to hunt we'd be there for a couple of hours after dark.

Rabbits were concentrated around an abandoned farmhouse on one property and the house block on the other. We arrived just after dark, parked the ute beside the gateway and, set with the Beretta and Nitecore MT40 light, headed out. Half an hour later with six of the seven rabbits we'd seen we were off down the road to the other property. A casual stroll around the out-buildings netted us another six so with a dozen to our credit we made for home. A phone call next morning to report our tally brought a grateful 'thank you' and a reminder to return as soon as possible.

The following week we were after more rabbits on a different property and once again they were concentrated in a relatively

small area, probably no bigger than 50 acres, but were there in force. This time I had my Beretta Silver Pigeon in 20-gauge and, of course, the Nitecore MT40 torch as we'd be hunting on foot. Rabbits had taken up residency among a pile of old farm machinery which was almost hidden by waist-high Salvation Jane and with the bordering paddock having been cut for hay, were feeding on new grass shoots among the fodder rolls.

The 20-gauge was perfect for bowling them over as they made a break for the safety of their burrows under the wrecked machinery. After exhausting the rabbits on one side we moved through the gate and hunted our way along the fence line, taking any bunny which had left its escape plan until the last minute.

We were working our way towards the farmers who were harvesting the crop in

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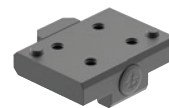
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Summer hunting with helping hands

the next paddock when we noticed a fox was following the header along, just on the edge of the lights.

I'm amazed when I hear people say foxes are stupid - believe me they're far from it. Naturally you'll have the odd youngster throw caution to the wind and bolt straight to your call, but that could be because it's out on its own for the first time and mighty hungry. This one was no slouch and I was convinced it was following the header along and dining on injured quail and any mice flushed out. But foxes do have one failing - insatiable curiosity.

"Too bad we don't have the caller with us," my young companion said. "You young blokes worry me," I said, "just get ready to shoot and I'll bring it in." I started sucking on the back of my hand with pursed lips as the fox stopped in its tracks and, after working out where the sound was coming from, started casually trotting our way. At 45m it stopped and sensed something wasn't right but it was too late as it fell to a load of No.4 shot (luckily we'd switched shotguns before hunting this section as we were low on 20-gauge ammo). We finished the night's hunt using the Beretta 12-gauge for about 20 rabbits and a fox and over the next few hunts our tally grew to 140 bunnies.

Between these missions I went to take care of the fox which was causing havoc among Lorna's laying hens and had killed 20. Naturally they wanted it gone as soon as possible and were sure it had a burrow on the property next door (they'd arranged permission for me to hunt there any time). Daybreak next morning found me fully camouflaged, settling in beside a big gum



Taking a break from shooting, Leon's grandson William with his first cod of the season, which he released.

tree bordering the stripped crop. My best rendition on the fox predator call sounded great to me but found no takers so I tried a couple of other places but still no results. I was becoming a bit disheartened but as it was still early morning I'd no intention of giving up.

While moving to the next spot I wanted to call over, I detected the smell of fox heavy on the air so switched to a small stand of saplings where I'd blend in perfectly with my surroundings. The grass was high and I was glad I was using the shotgun. I had my Beretta Silver Pigeon in 12-gauge, loaded with heavy No.2 shot

in the three-quarter choke barrel and a substantial amount of BBs in the half-choke barrel (the loads of Winchester BBs were remnants of ammo I'd taken to Flinders Island after Cape Barren geese). I think they were 1½oz of chilled copper-clad shot packed in granules of polystyrene which were dynamite on geese and would flatten a fox out to 60m so long as I played my part.

I'd been working the call for a few minutes when I spotted a fox peeping out of high grass 20m away. It was watching me intently, having crawled in like a stalking cat and I'd almost missed it - an easy shot but one I was happy to take. Buoyed by



With crops stripped, foxes are easy to spot. This one fell to a 22.250, the perfect rifle for long shots over stubble paddocks.



Leon's nephew Sean joined him for a sortie after rabbits following a request from a local farmer. Gun is a Miroku in 12-gauge.

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Summer hunting with helping hands

my success I moved down a few hundred metres to try again and, after several minutes calling, sneaked a quick glance behind me in case one had come in upwind. Sure enough there it was but it was ready for off after seeing all was not what it should be. The first shot was right on the money but it kept going so I fired the head load of BBs and had fox number two.

The morning was slipping away so I strolled back to the ute, content with my tally of foxes. I was looking at the number of rabbits moving through the high grass and thinking I'd probably be asked to take care of them, just as I caught sight of a fox darting off. It had come out of the stubble paddock from the direction of Lorna's house and was probably just as surprised at the meeting as I was. I clear missed it with the load of No.2s as it was heading away but for some reason it turned and ran side-on to me for a good 50m. I swung the gun to bear on the fast-moving target and, giving it a healthy amount of lead, dropped it instantly.

To avoid my daughter chewing on my ear any more than usual I drove out to her

farm to tackle the foxes there. Her brother-in-law, Blake, wanted to try my newly-acquired Z Vision light on the nervous foxes around the farm so, with the Z Vision mounted on the 22.250, we ventured out into the back paddock and it wasn't long before we encountered the first fox. With the animal centred perfectly in the red beam, Blake fired, the bullet sailing clean over the fox's head, but it just sat there giving him time to reload and send down a fatal shot.

Through the night more vermin fell to the 22.250 and to say Blake was impressed with the Z Vision would be an understatement. Next morning I had a call from a mate asking if I'd like to head off in search of Murray cod. An afternoon on the lake watching ducks with the possibility of a fish on the end of a line seemed most appealing. ●

Son-in-law Robert helped Leon on one of his many nightly forays after troublesome rabbits. Shotgun is a Beretta Silver Pigeon Classic in 20-gauge.



A taste for poultry was the cause of this fox's downfall. Shotgun is a Beretta Silver Pigeon Classic in 12-gauge.

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CLASSY CHASSIS transforms the 101

Con Kapralos

The popularity of Australian-made Lithgow LA101, LA102 and LA105 rifles has not only been embraced in its home country but also in the toughest marketplace - the US - and worldwide. Promotion of the LA firearms via Australian distributor Outdoor Sporting Agencies (OSA) and its global subsidiaries through Fuller Global, means the new breed of products has undoubtedly kept the Aussie flag flying, the greatest testament being their build quality and superb accuracy.

Lithgow LA101 Crossover rimfire rifles were introduced here in 2014 and offered in a variety of options with the traditional stock platform which included walnut and polymer models. But with the burgeoning popularity of composite alloy chassis systems in recent years, adaptability of the LA101 to embrace such a stock option wasn't overlooked by the folks at OSA. And

they didn't have to look far for an excellent chassis option - the team at Southern Cross Small Arms in Sydney's western suburbs had already cemented a relationship with OSA, having manufactured some quality chassis systems for the Howa APC rifle, sold in the US through Legacy Sports.

The requirement for a suitable chassis to suit the Lithgow LA101 was developed and modelled along the lines of the proven TSP X system and by adding a TSP X chassis to the LA101 rimfire, a new shooting platform can be created with stability and accuracy the chief goals. Australian Shooter was sent for review the TSP X Chassis mated to a Lithgow LA101 in .22LR and accompanying the rifle was an outstanding optic for the rimfire shooter and hunter, the new Nikko Stirling Panamax Precision 4-12x40.

On receiving the rifle my immediate reaction was: "This rimfire platform means

business!" For the range shooter, PRS competitor after a rimfire (training) option or the hunter who enjoys taking small game from stationary positions, the TSP X chassis is a serious option in the after-market stock department and takes the LA101 to a whole new level.

TSP X Chassis

This gives the rifle its identity and purpose. The chassis itself is made from billets of aircraft-grade 6061 T-6 aluminium before being subjected to a multitude of state-of-the-art CNC machining processes to form the final pieces. Each chassis consists of three individual machined parts - buttstock, chassis inlet and fore-end - and when semi-assembled these are fitted with the grip, forward magazine assemblies along with the recoil pad and cheek riser assembly.

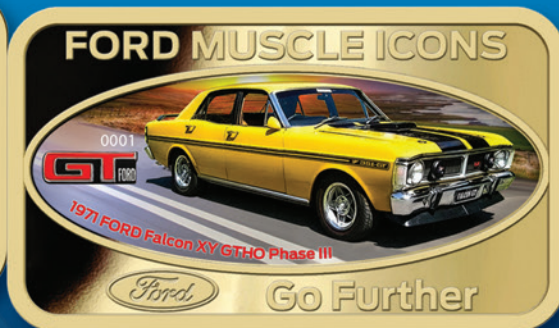
The three main components of the



The Lithgow LA101 TSP X Chassis rifle as supplied in .22LR.

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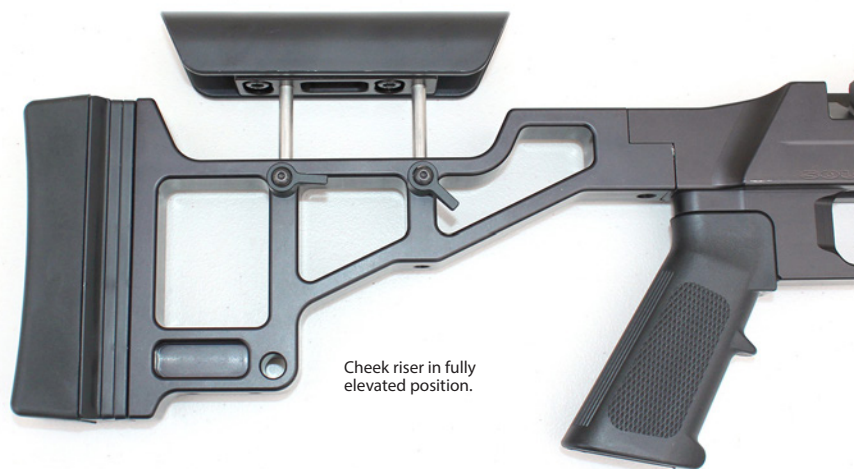
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Classy chassis transforms the 101

chassis once machined are tumbled polished before being anodised, strict quality processes ensuring all products meet stringent guidelines. The three individual segments are bolted together using hi-tensile hex head bolts and added to that, the three main recesses are lugged for superior rigidity and precise alignment. The stock, when complete, has an overall length of 780mm, width of 38mm (widest point), height of 46mm (tallest point) and weighs 1907 grams. Looking at the chassis as a finished item, it provides the LA101 barrelled action the utmost in stability, the action sitting securely atop the chassis and fastened firmly using the two guard screws.

The barrel is free-floating and guarded by the aluminium fore-end which has, machined into its sides and underside, M-Lok slots as well as two QD cups for sling swivel attachment. The fore-end has two longitudinal scalloped sections along its sides (under the M-Lok slots) which allow the leading hand to grip it comfortably as well as the fore-end to sit securely in a front shooting rest or bag.

The pistol grip is of an A2-style supplied as standard and the same sub-assembly incorporates the triggerguard. Forward is the magazine shroud which surrounds the original Lithgow-fitted magazine well and supplied 5-shot magazine. Accessing the magazine release is easy. For the diminutive .22LR magazine well, the TSP X shroud dwarfs it and in reality is designed for larger centrefire box magazines but in this



Cheek riser in fully elevated position.



The 5-shot polymer magazine and Lithgow magazine well.



The business-side of the TSP X chassis accommodates the LA101 action perfectly.

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Classy chassis transforms the 101

instance the design works well and caused no problems.

The buttstock is a skeletonised triangular design and pleasing to the eye, absence of buffer-style tubes giving the TSP X stock more visual appeal. The buttstock is dominated by the adjustable cheek riser which uses two vertical braces to house the two steel columns to which the riser is attached, two small locking levers allowing for the height of the cheek riser to be adjusted as required.

Of note, I did encounter an issue in getting my master eye low enough to look clearly through the scope, the supplied scope having a 40mm objective bell and mounted low over the barrel. Even with the cheek riser in its lowest position I still had to forcibly press my cheek down and would assume the riser is made with larger objective bells and higher scope rings in mind.

At the end of the buttstock an acclaimed rubber butt-pad with adjustable length of pull spacers is fitted and makes tailoring the stock to the individual's needs easy. Length of pull on the test rifle was 340mm and there were QD sling swivel cups fitted to the buttstock frame to accept a sling. The Lithgow LA101 in .22LR with fitted TSP X chassis had an overall weight of 4.09kg and length of 985mm.

In summary

The pedigree of the Lithgow LA101 Crossover rifle has been well entrenched in hunting and shooting circles since its 2014 debut, and taking an established



Southern Cross Small Arms' TSP X chassis designed for the LA101 rimfire barrelled actions.



The left side of the chassis/action. The SCSA logo, 'Made in Australia' and Aussie flag adds a touch of class to the package.



M-Lok slots and sling swivel stud cups on the underside of the fore-end.

rifle and re-purposing it by adding the Southern Cross Small Arms TSP X Chassis will certainly win it many new fans in the process.

It makes a fine target-shooting or PRS 'training' platform in rimfire calibres as well as a rifle suited to stationary hunting

practices, be it shooting from a ground blind or vehicle rest. The Southern Cross Small Arms TSP X Chassis to suit the Lithgow LA101 has a RRP of \$699 and is available through any Outdoor Sporting Agencies firearms retailer. More at www.osaaustralia.com.au ●



The Lithgow LA101 TSP X chassis rifle was put through its paces at a private range.

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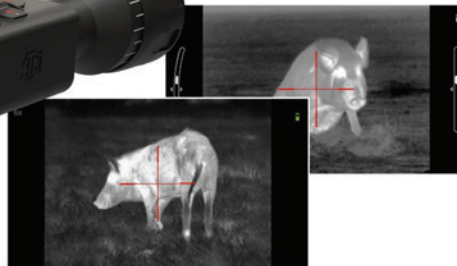
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Little Red was well worth enduring less-than-ideal conditions for.

Sodden slog rewarded with surprise double

Ben Unten

We're in for a wet backside," were the first words out of my hunting partner's mouth as I jumped from the ute. We'd travelled from opposite directions to reach the property and had both driven through several hours of steady rain prior to our arrival and as we unloaded gear and set up camp in the deluge, several thoughts ran through my mind.

I class myself as a pretty keen hunter but pull up short of being 'single-mindedly obsessed.' If I must I'm prepared to cop a shower while hunting, but to actually set off in a heavy downpour has me thinking that relaxing in front of a warm fire sounds like a more attractive proposition. My hunting mate Thommo was having none of that. Once the camp was in place he ploughed straight ahead and changed into weatherproof camos with Gore-Tex jacket and brought a rifle under cover with the clear intention of readying it for action. He managed to avoid all eye contact and in doing so completely neutralised my only pseudo super-power - 'conversational persuasion.'

So very slowly and with much muttering under my breath suggesting the weather didn't appear to be easing and it would be slippery and dangerous on the tracks, I also changed into camos and boots, leaving them unlaced to help me drag them more dramatically to and from the ute. I ran a dry patch through my laminated/stainless Tikka 30-06 and only after I'd done this did my old mate come over and put an electrical tape 'X' over the muzzle, thereby protecting the barrel from water ingress.

So already reasonably damp we dragged wet, mud-caked boots into the ute and set off towards the hunting grounds. We barely made it halfway before it became clear that proceeding any further would significantly damage the track and therefore destroy the 'tread-lightly' relationship I'd worked for more than a decade to cement with the farmer. So we parked up and proceeded on foot.

The going was steeply uphill, my boots soon caked after several kilograms of mud and I discovered previously hidden weak points in my H₂O-resistant camo pants and jacket as the rain continued to bucket down.

It's fair to say I wasn't leaping in the air, clicking my mud-caked heels together and bursting into song but eventually we made it to the top of the hill and took shelter under a tree as we paused to catch our breath.

The rain also seemed to need a break as it soon reduced to a light drizzle, occasionally stopping altogether. The stalk now began in earnest and it was my turn for first shot as Thommo had bagged a nice fallow on our last outing, so we fell into single file with rifles carried rather than shouldered. With senses on high alert we began the slow descent over the far side of the ridge. I can't speak for my buddy but for me everything else is pushed aside when I'm in deer country on a proper hunt. That feeling of 'tension but no stress' coupled with you never know what's around the corner is one of the elements which drags me back to the bush year after year - I love it.

We slow-walked for the best part of an hour seeing nothing but a few roos which we did our best to avoid, until deep in the rhythm of the mission I was surprised when I spotted a young red deer about 120m

Surprise fallow was a late-hunt bonus.



ahead of us. I dropped to my haunches an instant before my partner did. The deer was staring straight at us and obviously aware of our presence but didn't appear unduly alarmed - perhaps the not-completely-waterproof camo was doing its job.

I had a partially obscured shot-path so motioned to my partner that he should shoot if a clear shot was on offer. He mimed back he couldn't even see whatever it was I was talking about, let alone have a crack at it, so I used some low shrubbery as a very improvised field rest and waited for the animal to turn broadside. Eventually it did. The 30-06 boomed, the laminated stock lightly smacked me in the chops as it sometimes does off an improvised rest and I saw the deer take off, making less than 30m before keeling over. I knelt there for 10 minutes staring at the brown blob in the scope to make sure it didn't suddenly jump up and dash away.

Thommo asked: "Did you get it?" I stammered: "Yeah, I think so." Eventually we broke cover and made our way slowly towards the spot, never taking my eyes off it and even when we reached the downed

animal I could still hardly believe it. His headwear was negligible but I couldn't have cared less as I marvelled at the physical presence of a red stag and I suspect until you've experienced it, you can't quite imagine that feeling.

We nicknamed him 'Little Red' due to his small head-wear and I know some may 'tsk-tsk' and haughtily proclaim that, if left alone, he'd have had a chance to grow into something. However, on this estate my 'client' - the property owner - recognises the fact that all feral animals are competing with his stock for feed so my instructions are clear. After a brief modelling session in fading light we field dressed the deer, harvested the common cuts and loaded them into backpacks to lug out.

We were chatting intermittently between gasping for air as we ascended the short but steep hill which would eventually lead us back to the ute, when we spotted a fallow deer on top of the rise. We dropped to the ground as per our standard protocol and once again I motioned to Thommo to take the shot as it was clearly his turn. Although he could see the animal his shot was



Thommo volunteered for the field dressing.

blocked by scrub and, as I had a more stable rest this time, was happy to confirm the old edict that a medium-sized fallow is no match for a well-placed shot from a 30-06.

By now it was too dark for the camera to effectively capture the result without artificial light and as Thommo had dipped out on this hunt, I offered to retrieve the full butchering kit from the ute (including the gambrel) and bring it back to our present location. On my return, Thommo very generously began the field dressing process.

I struggled to recall a more satisfying stalk and end result. To have taken two such animals in unappealing conditions resulted in an outing I can't imagine I'll ever forget, although Thommo was proved correct in that we did indeed suffer a wet backside (along with a wet front-side, side-side and more). His determination was the telling factor in what turned out to be a cracking hunt - he's made of sterner stuff than I and far less likely to let little things like torrential rain, slopping mud and challenging terrain change his mind. I'll always be grateful to him for that. ●

Lock your guns at the TOUCH OF A FINGER

RIFLES, SHOTGUNS AND HANDGUNS

Geoff Smith



The lock fitted to a revolver.



The box contains the lock, a charging cable, instructions and keys.

An online outdoors goods store currently trading as Xhunter.com.au out of Victoria asked us to review one of their new trigger locks which use fingerprint recognition technology rather than the more traditional key system. Selling for \$129 this offers a uniquely personal means of securing your guns as, while people lose keys every day, your finger is usually more difficult to misplace. It should be made clear from the outset though that any form of trigger lock in no way obviates the need for storing firearms unloaded and in a secure safe, as required by local legislation.

The idea of safely disabling a firearm so others can't fire it can add a level of confidence to your gun security whether

at home, on the range, while the gun is in the car or even off on a hunting trip when guns are nearby but unattended in camp. It should also be understood that this is a trigger lock - it merely locks the trigger. No form of lock should ever be applied to a firearm that's ready to fire (ie, loaded and cocked), since immobilising the trigger offers no guarantee that a discharge won't occur if the gun is knocked or dropped.

Mechanically the fingerprint lock works in the same way as the conventional keyed style, by having two interlocking pieces which click together, oyster shell-style, over the triggerguard of the firearm. This prevents the trigger from being accessed, thereby rendering the firearm inoperable.

The side with the electronic sensor has

a socket into which the pin on the opposite side locks when they're pushed together around the triggerguard. The internal pieces each have a rubber escutcheon with small projecting fingers, while the pin side has six spring-loaded projecting metal pins of 4.5mm diameter that protrude through holes in the gasket, firmly against the other side when engaged to ensure secure lockup.

Using an internal 300 mAh polymer lithium battery, the lock features a 360-degree fingerprint recognition window which can store up to 10 different fingerprint profiles. Battery stand-by time is claimed to be three months and the device can operate 1000 times from a single charge before requiring recharging from a USB port. The lock itself has a micro-USB socket and comes with a 300mm charging cable as well as a manual key and 2mm diameter metal setting probe used for programming the system.

The fingerprint recognition window is 10mm square and is claimed to distinguish previously registered fingerprints in less than 0.3 seconds, its internal sensor electronics drawing a current of just 2 microamps on standby and 20 milliamps when in operation. The initial set-up instructions must be followed exactly and some repetition may be needed to 'teach' the unit to



The manual key is required to open the lock prior to setting up.



The recognition window.

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recognise each fingerprint. Straight out of the box the device will be locked so must firstly be unlocked into its two halves using the manual key. The rubber escutcheon on the fingerprint panel half is carefully pulled off to reveal the socket into which the lock pin on the other half engages and the tiny 'set' hole into which the programming probe is inserted.

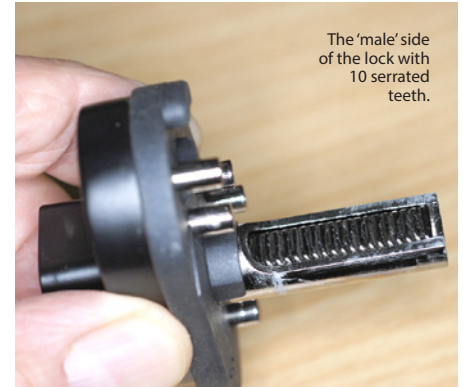
The 12mm-diameter locking pin features a miniature rack with about 20 teeth and at the mouth of the socket is a similar-looking rack with its seven teeth facing the opposite direction. This is spring-loaded so when the locking pin enters the socket it's fastened in. When the appropriate fingerprint is pressed on to the recognition window, a tiny buzzing sound is heard and the internal solenoid pulls the seven-toothed rack outwards to unlock the device.

On the side opposite the seven-toothed locking rack is a tiny hole marked 'set' into which the 2mm setting probe is pushed in order to 'teach' the unit to recognise various fingerprints. The first procedure involves setting up the 'administrator profile' (for most users this will be the only person able to open the lock due to legislative requirements in most states).

Pressing the 'set' button for one second



The 'female' side showing the internal seven-tooth section that's pulled back to release the other half when the solenoid operates in response to the appropriate fingerprint.



The 'male' side of the lock with 10 serrated teeth.

causes a blue light to flash and the user must place a finger on the window then release it, this step repeated six times after which the first fingerprint is registered. Each of these six operations should involve shifting the finger slightly so the system memory recognises that fingerprint from different angles. If a red light comes on the whole process must be repeated.

Up to nine more users can then be recorded which may be useful for, say, club or security use with a shared firearm. For this the administrator presses their finger

on the window, the blue light comes on and the new fingerprint is itemised within six seconds, likewise repeated six times to permit the second and subsequent prints to operate the lock.

I found the setting-up process a bit tedious, perhaps because my skin is relatively dry and my fingerprints worn down through my regular work, nevertheless I was able to 'teach' the device to recognise two of my prints. The lock will easily fit rifles, shotguns and both revolvers and self-loading handguns, although it probably wouldn't be of much use with certain lever-action firearms. More at Xhunter.com.au ●



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Keep your powder dry

the ADI production and supply riddle

Australian Munitions, operator of the Mulwala Explosives factory on the NSW-Victoria border, have faced the usual COVID 19-related issues along with multiple manufacturing industries. Unfortunately the repercussions for shooters who reload their own ammunition have been significant, just obtaining ADI powders over the past 12-18 months being 'nigh impossible' according to recent postings on their own website. As Senior Correspondent Rod Pascoe reports, these deficiencies come despite Australian Munitions' pledge the factory continues to run at maximum capacity, supplying as much propellant to the market as possible.

In a series of posts on the ADI website in March and April, the company attempted to explain how the challenges of producing powder during the pandemic is not just about keeping the disease out of the facility and managing staff movements across a border that's opening and closing at the drop of a hat, but dealing with the flow-on effects of supply and demand.

Under normal circumstances Australian Munitions keeps propellant stock on hand so their distributors, OSA and Winchester Australia, can place orders at any time. But there have been times when some orders have exceeded the stock available and deliveries have been delayed for a number of internal and external factors - more on that later. Over the past 12 months and as far back as mid-2019 for some propellants, ADI admits they "haven't been keeping up with demand from the market."

The amount of propellant the facility can produce has an upper limit and there's a limit on the amount of explosive products it can store on-site once produced. While 'popular' propellants are made several

times a year, the less popular powders are made only every one or two years or so. Combine this with the length of time it takes to manufacture a single batch of any type of propellant - roughly six months - and sudden increases in market demand can affect availability. And, according to ADI, the pandemic led to a higher than normal demand for powder: "In 2020 the level of demand was so unprecedented we required an additional 40 per cent of our typical annual volumes to maintain adequate supply."

While stories of panic buying and stock-piling of goods like toilet paper and pasta appeared on the nightly news, it seems a similar thing was going on across the domestic firearms industry. I can attest to that and while I didn't panic-buy, I did ensure I'd enough components to keep me busy during any potential extended lock-down. And I wasn't alone as the ADI news post stated: "... resulted in a level of demand for our products we haven't experienced in at least six years."

Because of the lead time needed to plan and produce a batch of powder, ADI have



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Keep your powder dry - the ADI production and supply riddle

implemented some new strategies with OSA and Winchester Australia to better predict market demand, which must be difficult without a crystal ball. As I understand it, distributors are asking retailers to anticipate their future requirements which in turn gives distributors an estimate of overall demand on which Australian Munitions can manage its production schedule.

Earlier I mentioned the internal and external factors that have led to powder delivery delays. An issue not necessarily a fault of COVID itself - and one that's plagued the industry for some time - is distribution of propellant around the country as well as between, and within, the states and territories. One of the news stories on ADI's website explains the rules and regulations involving transportation of dangerous goods from manufacture to end user.

This makes for interesting reading and helps explain how storage and transportation requirements vary from state-to-state and to quote a piece directly from that article: "For example, Western Australia has restrictions on who can legally move propellant around within the state and is limited to a list of 'authorised' carriers as dictated by WA Police." Further:

"Deliveries occur approximately three times per year, however steps are being taken to increase this number. The additional cost of moving dangerous goods to WA, combined with the difficulties in moving it around the state, make it the hardest location in Australia to manage distribution effectively."

By releasing these news items, Australian Munitions has taken the brave step of confronting the ongoing manufacturing, storage and distribution issues surrounding their products. I say brave because Australian Munitions and parent company Thales have not normally been forthcoming with information and doubtless it's harder to front-up when it's not necessarily 'good' news.

People like to know what's going on and Australian Munitions should realise that not communicating vital and timely information leaves individuals to speculate. As they admit in their own web post: "This isn't some big conspiracy designed to short-change our Australian customers and, contrary to the rumours we hear all the time, no, we don't ship propellant offshore to the USA to the detriment of Australian hand-loaders."

There's also been a bit of a shake-up in production and packaging of the AR and Benchmark series of rifle powders in that some are being released in different-sized bottles and others are not being manufactured at all this year. The so-called 'popular' rifle powders AR2206(H), AR2208, AR2209 and AR2213SC which are produced routinely and regularly haven't been affected by any change, these propellants still available in both 1kg and 4kg bottles and produced continually throughout the year.

While AR2217 is outside the popular range it's still made several times a year but will only be offered in 4kg bottles in 2021 as will AR2225 and AR2218. Benchmark 1 and AR2205 propellants will not be manufactured this year but there is stock of AR2205 for OSA and Winchester to access as required. AR2207, AR2219, Benchmark 2 and Benchmark 8208 will continue to be produced in 2021 but only in 1kg bottles for the foreseeable future.

Problems developing and producing the APS range of pistol and shotgun powders have been an ongoing concern from the start, this despite the upbeat press release of December 2017 trumpeting the





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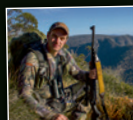
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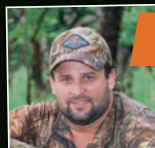
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Keep your powder dry - the ADI production and supply riddle

achievements and future expectations of the new government-funded propellant plant. It reads in part: "Australian Munitions is excited to introduce the first of our new single-based flake Australian Pistol Shotgun (APS) propellants. It has been manufactured from the new Mulwala propellant facility for use in the civilian market - ADI World Class Powders APS350 and APS450. These new APS products will become available in Australian dealerships for you to try from March 2018. It's an exciting time to be an ADI customer!"

But in less than four years of the initial euphoria there's a very different story. The September 2018 issue of Australian Shooter ran the story of the rebuilding of the Mulwala Explosives Factory from its 1940s technology to a modern, environmentally friendly, safe and efficient facility, part of that transition being to manufacture new propellants to replace the AP and AS pistol and shotgun range of powders. This is because the AS and AP powders were a double-based formulation containing both nitrocellulose and nitroglycerine chemistry,

so it was decided the new plant produce only single-based powder containing just the nitrocellulose component.

The new range of powders therefore had to be produced from scratch using the single-base technology. Initially APS 350 and APS 450 would replace AS30 and AP/S50 and more recently APS950 was being made to replace AP100 (AP70 was to be replaced by APS650 but this product never made it to fruition). The delayed release of the full range of APS powders didn't go down well with shooters who were quickly running out of AP and AS stockpiles. But worse news was to follow and after releasing the first bottles of the APS range in 2018, production of these has come to a standstill and development of APS650 has also ground to a halt. Needless to say this came as very disappointing news to shooters who reload their pistol and shotgun ammunition.

In the business of manufacturing propellant, 'keeping your powder dry' is more than just a saying. Apparently the unusual weather patterns of late 2020 and early

2021 played a major part in ADI's decision that was to prove the final nail in the coffin for APS products. According to an earlier post on ADI's website, when there's high humidity or it's wetter and colder, it's not possible to make these propellants as the individual propellant grains effectively absorb moisture which has to be expelled to achieve the correct burn rate. The popular Trail Boss product is also caught up in this situation and, as such, it too is unlikely to be produced this year, although research is ongoing to find a way of manufacturing a replacement for this powder.

And a final word from Australian Munitions: "We would like to assure you the factory continues to run at maximum capacity, 24 hours a day, and we're supplying as much propellant to the market as possible. In fact, any difficulty in accessing our propellants is due to unprecedented demand and not a reduction in manufacturing or supply to the Australia market." We await developments. ●



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Shooters use Olympic delay to hone technique

Australia's Olympic shooting team was on final countdown to the 2020 Tokyo Games when the showpiece event was postponed amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, with fingers crossed the Games go ahead this month, Media Officer Rachael Oxborrow caught up with two athletes to hear how they coped with the year-long wait.

It had been 12 months between competitive events when Skeet shooter Laura Coles took to the range in March this year, marking the start of her delayed countdown to the Tokyo Olympics. The SSAA member knew of her selection and was mentally preparing for the usual few months of training ahead of an international competition when Australia went into lockdown as COVID cases began to rise.

The Western Australian's debut was put on the back burner as she took a 10-week break from shooting, her longest in 19 years, before starting work on a new Olympic timeline. "Initially, not knowing when I was going to be able to train again had me a little anxious and when I came back I basically had to learn to shoot again," she said. "I'm a bit of a high maintenance shooter and need to train quite often to keep myself at my best - I'm not a natural, I have to train."

Coles said it was a unique opportunity away from the pressure of high-level shooting to work on technical aspects of the sport which get pushed aside during a hectic competitive schedule. "We've been lucky in Perth since COVID arrived in Australia, I haven't really been impacted by way of lockdowns so have been able

to focus on my shooting," she said. "That said, I've been anxious to get back into competitive shooting to really prepare at that level."

Coles travelled east in March to train in Victoria and New South Wales and compete at the Yarra Valley Grand Prix in Melbourne, the NSW ISSF Shotgun State Championships in Newcastle and Victorian ISSF Shotgun Championships in Echuca. The Yarra Valley event started shakily for Coles who admitted to being "a little rusty" until some fierce competition from Victorian shooter Brittany Melbourne reconnected her with her love of competing.

In Newcastle, Coles overcame trying conditions to hit 50 from 60 targets and defeat Bridget McKinnon (40/60) and NSW's Suzy Balogh (32/60) and also recorded the highest qualifying score in the men's and women's competitions with 114 out of 125. She followed that up with another win at Echuca against her rival Melbourne and said: "It was really good for me to have that intense competition, it's exactly what I needed."

With those wins under her belt, Coles headed for one final interstate training and competition trip to the Queensland Clay

Debut: Katarina Kowplos is ready for her first Olympics.



On target: Laura Coles has hit form recently.



Shooters use Olympic delay to hone technique

Target Association State Championships in Belmont at the beginning of June, then returned home briefly before spending her final weeks in Australia at an Olympic quarantine camp at the Gold Coast Clay Target Club.

While hardly the ideal lead-up to an event of that magnitude, Coles said she was now feeling more prepared for Tokyo. "We had hoped to compete in South Korea in the months leading up to the Games but things were too uncertain for that to go ahead," she said. Coles has been a regular on the international shooting scene, having competed at World Cup and Oceania events since 2011 and also represented Australia at two Commonwealth Games, winning gold at Glasgow 2014.

Also competing in her first Olympics is South Australian SSAA member Katarina Kowplos who, aged just 19, is relatively new to the international shooting scene. The past 12 months have been a mind game for the debutant, who counts herself lucky to have had access to a SCATT machine to practise dry firing and the ability to attend her home range at SSAA Para for outside practise late last year.

"I've definitely struggled with preparation over the past year," she said. "At the beginning we thought the Olympics were just two months away, then suddenly they were more than 12 months away and we didn't know what was ahead. It's been a real whirlwind - I didn't expect to qualify, especially as I was using a borrowed rifle

and only had one buttplate and one set of sights. Since then I've bought a new rifle and had that rifle break and the replacement part delays because of COVID slowed down my training."

The 3-Position shooter has hit form recently though, when she registered a personal best and won the Open 10m Air Rifle title at the Target Rifle South Australia Championships at Wingfield in May. She scored 251.0 and defeated fellow Olympic team members Dane Sampson and Elise Collier in the process.

Kowplos said the lead-up to leaving for Tokyo would see her focus on the technical side of shooting while also readjusting to travelling and packing the right gear. "I'm concentrating on technique now and making sure I can consistently shoot at my best, which includes how to change my rifle and ensure it's perfect on the day," she said. "We're also having to get used to the process of going to another range and remembering how we pack to travel and what we'll need in Tokyo, as we're not sure which companies will be supplying parts at the Olympics because of restrictions."

With strict controls around attending the Games, Kowplos is disappointed she won't be able to enjoy the full Olympic experience by watching other events or seeing the host city. However, her shooting career plans already have her aiming for the Paris 2024 Olympics and returning to Tokyo as a tourist when travel restrictions are lifted. "Paris was my original goal when I started

the qualifying matches in the lead-up to Tokyo selection," she said. "I was mainly shooting to see how I would go over a really intense period of competition - I wasn't expecting to be selected."

Australia has named a team of 15 shooters for Tokyo and a further six for the Paralympics. As the final series of competitions ramped up for our Olympians earlier this year, some quality performances leave us with much to be hopeful about. SSAA (NSW) member James Willett took gold in the Men's Trap at the Victorian ISSF Shotgun Championships in Echuca in May, hitting 45 of 50 targets, while the SSAA's Elise Collier partnered with Sampson for gold in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Teams event at the Target Rifle South Australia Championships.

The Australian Olympic Committee announced plans for athlete safety earlier this year, including COVID-19 vaccinations for the team and support crew, quarantine and testing requirements and shortened arrival and departure windows. At time of publication the International Olympic Committee has indicated the Games will be going ahead as planned. The IOC controls the delivery of the Olympic Games and it alone is responsible for any decisions around delays or cancellation. The Tokyo Games are scheduled to run from July 23 to August 8 and Paralympics from August 24 to September 5. ●



One of the Olympic shooting venues at Asaka.



Australian Olympic squad for Tokyo 2021

Pistol

Sergei Evglevski: Rapid Fire Men; Daniel Repacholi: Air Pistol Men, Air Pistol Mixed Teams; Elena Galiabovitch: Sport Pistol Women; Dina Aspandiyarova: Air Pistol Women, Air Pistol Mixed Teams.

Rifle

Dane Sampson: 3-Position Men, Air Rifle Men, Air Rifle Mixed Pairs; Alex Hoberg: 3-Position Men, Air Rifle Men; Jack Rossiter: 3-Position Men; Katarina Kowplos: 3-Position Women; Elise Collier: Air Rifle Women, Air Rifle Mixed Pairs.

Shotgun

James Willett: Trap Men, Mixed Pairs; Tom Grice: Trap Men, Mixed Pairs; Penny Smith: Trap Women, Mixed Pairs; Laetishia Scanlan: Trap Women, Mixed Pairs; Paul Adams: Skeet Men; Laura Coles: Skeet Women.

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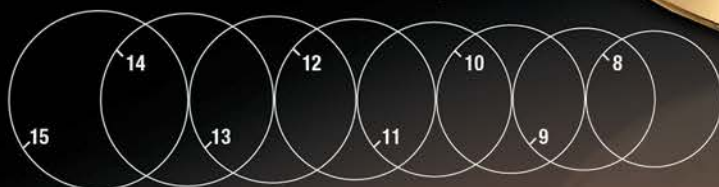
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Transitional ballistics and muzzle brakes

Steve Hurt

In the four main areas of ballistic research - internal, transitional, trajectory and terminal - muzzle brakes are primarily the subject of transitional ballistic studies but before we discuss muzzle brakes, it's important to understand what happens when a bullet leaves the muzzle in this relatively short transitional zone. This is where erupting gas forces have the potential to influence bullet behaviour as it starts its journey and when we understand what's happening here, we're in a position to make adjustments if necessary.

This area of study has traditionally been the most difficult to scientifically assess and has seen a great many breakthroughs, thanks mostly to high-speed photography which allows us to observe and to some extent measure what was previously impossible.

When a projectile unplugs the barrel, the high pressure propellant gases are now free to accelerate within the constraints of Boyle's Law and can do so at a rate of somewhere in the vicinity of three to four times the velocity of the bullet for approximately 100mm. Depending on bullet shape and quality of the crown, this can apply a destabilising force - a flat-based bullet tends to deflect gases away from the front while boat-tailed is a high ballistic coefficient (BC) bullet.

Boat-tailed bullets are longer (assuming same calibre, material and weight) allowing greater gas leverage on the bullet. Further, the aerodynamic boat-tail enables the gases to overtake the bullet, resulting in it having to fly through its own gas cloud. This, in conjunction with the principle of rotational stability, explains why boat-tailed bullets

may not be as accurate at shorter ranges as flat-based.

Given ever-increasing demands for higher BC bullets for longer effective range and the larger cartridges required to drive them, we introduce another challenge - recoil. All recoil tolerance is a personal issue and while we can do many things to manage it, it's something we'd all prefer to have less of. Excessive recoil can cause physical discomfort, loss of sight picture and increased shot placement dispersion through minor handling changes. It's the culmination of Newton's Law (every action has an equal and opposite reaction) where two violent collisions take place, one being the bullet striking the atmosphere and the other those propellant gases.

There's little we can do regarding the bullet other than to reduce its weight or velocity, which many are reluctant to do, so this leaves us with managing the gas collision. If we again apply Newton's Law and divert the gases so they oppose one another, the perception of recoil can be substantially reduced and this diversion also allows us to prevent the possibly

destabilising gas cloud from overtaking our bullet.

For this to happen the bullet must pass through a 'blast plate', where the bullet largely but temporarily blocks the hole (with minimal clearance) forcing most of the gases to the side, and there are three important principles for this to work effectively. The first is the gap from the muzzle to the first and subsequent blast plates should not be more than the shank length of the bullet, otherwise gases can overtake the bullet inside the chamber, one of our avoidance objectives.

Secondly, bullet clearance is critically important. Half a millimetre per side is about right, with greater clearance allowing more gas blow-by and less having the undesirable capacity to produce an air cushion between the plate and the bullet. Unevenly applied, this can reintroduce dispersion and the thicker the plate and tighter the tolerance, the more likely this is to happen.

The next issue to bear in mind for efficiency is the diameter rather than number of ports in the brake. Consider the blast plate as a parachute. The size of the plate



has greater influence over the catch area and is far more important than putting another parachute behind it. Our testing suggests a properly proportioned brake rarely needs more than two ports, with three being the effective maximum. After all, how many ports do you see on a tank brake? Rarely more than two and if they don't need more . . .

For calibres up to and including the .308 Winchester, brakes between 24 and 28mm in diameter appear to be within the optimal range, with larger diameter brakes offering no demonstrable advantage. Yet with the big 300 magnums and larger calibres, a 33mm diameter brake demonstrates a distinct and observable improvement but

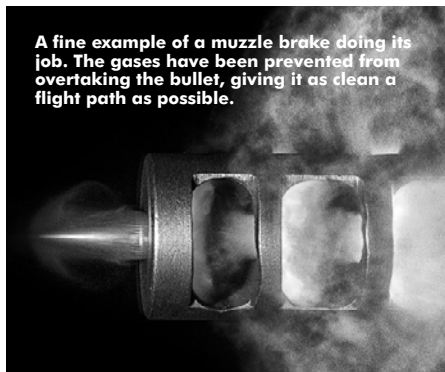
of course with increased diameter comes a weight penalty. Nothing is free.

Another potential gain of a properly designed brake in testing done by others (Precision Rifle blog) seems to suggest there may be additional ballistic benefits in the area of reducing velocity in Extreme Spread (ES) and Standard Deviation (SD) and while the evidence is anecdotal, we at Outer Edge Projectiles haven't been able to prove it wrong. The potential plus appears to grow with increases in calibre and cartridge size, with experience of a 300 Norma and 50 BMG both consistently producing single digit ES and SD figures over 15-shot strings. Only minor improvements were achieved in calibres smaller than 7mm.



This is one of Jeff Borg's excellent competition brakes. Performance in this 6.5 x 284 was truly impressive, with great sight picture maintenance and recoil control - a delicate balance.

A fine example of a muzzle brake doing its job. The gases have been prevented from overtaking the bullet, giving it as clean a flight path as possible.



A clear representation of a bullet flying through its own gas cloud, having been overtaken by the propellant gases.



The downside: Few would argue a muzzle brake increases the shooter's perception of noise and it's a major drag. No-one should be using a firearm without suitable ear and eye protection but a muzzle brake elevates this need significantly. Good earmuffs and eye protection are absolutely essential.

The last critical issue is muzzle thread diameter. The larger the diameter the better with $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 24 threads per inch (TPI) the preferred minimum for a centrefire. In the 30-calibre and above class I prefer 18 x 1mm or larger wherever possible to prevent the possibility of muzzle belling, particularly in softer-pull button barrels. Hammer forged barrels have greater latitude. ●



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A knife-long journey - fixed blade.

A knife-long companion

Chas Harding

Turnip crop knee-high, heavy frost, midnight, no moon. My dog's working the scent after the shot, torch beam shadowing her run.

After a brief zig-zag she stops, head down, tail wagging and bright eyes looking back - got him! We walk over to find a nice fat spikey with cull tag on.

I'm with my brother and a good mate who stand nonchalantly with cold hands in jacket pockets and look at me as I pull the knife from its pouch and bend to the deer with a wry smile. By consent and unspoken agreement I've been the designated blade man - as my brother often says "you come from a long line of butchers".

My journey with knives has been interesting. Like many young fellows in the '60s my first was the ubiquitous Joseph Rodgers pocket knife. Made in England, one or two-bladed with various handles available, it was used to skin an amazing number of rabbits, whittled any and all woods, prepared points on arrows and spears, made buttons for snares, peeled fruit etc.

We were taught at a young age the do's and don'ts that went with knife ownership and the weight of that small item ever-present in the pocket was the proud weight



Big blade means big off-cuts.

of responsibility earned and bestowed by the old man, uncle or elder brother. With employment came the first big blade and I recall in the early '70s seeing the first advertisement for this new knife from America called Gerber, all flashy stainless with a high-cut cowhide holster - to my impressionable eyes it was magnificent. Man, I loved that knife.

My chosen model was the 'Shorty', from memory a 5" blade, razor sharp and it handled untold numbers of game. My association with that Shorty ended in tears and a snapped blade when I tried to pry a reluctant tusk from a boar taken on our first trip to the channel country near Barcardine in Queensland. During the ensuing 40 years my knife choices have waxed and waned



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A knife-long companion



The beloved silver Gerber Shorty in 1978, minutes before its demise.

and at one point I went down the small knife track remembering the ease of pocket carry with the Joseph Rodgers.

At other times big blades dominated - drop-points, clip-points and various permutations in between all evaluated. I'd always preferred drop-point blades on the theory it prevents the likelihood of penetrating the entrails when gutting animals. Then came an enlightening night with a professional butcher and roo shooter who always gutted freshly-shot animals on their back on the ground, gravity keeping the innards

towards the backbone and leaving the belly skin loose for the long blow from crutch to throat. His clip-point worked fine and clip-points are definitely better with their sharp point for the hock cut which enables the animal to go on the hooks for skinning.

For a time matched pairs of fixed and folding blades were the go, while another concept tried and tested was the single 'do it all' knife. And through all of this I developed these two serious dislikes:

- Knives carried vertically on a belt, either fixed or folding, were a no-go. Regardless of size they're uncomfortable when sitting in a car (inevitably sticking into the short rib), were often in the way of rifle slings etc and at times not a socially acceptable look. Horizontal knife carry on the belt was the only mode for me and if the knife was too big for that, it was in the back-pack or car.

- Any blade edge which had a nok where it met the bolster/handle was a no-go, especially in a short blade. On a long skinning blow where the pelt covered the entire blade length (foot to brisket blow, front leg of deer) the skin invariably caught in this nok and the smoothness of the blow was interrupted and lost (I believe the nok's official title is the choil).

More recently in a minimalist moment possibly sparked by a young bloke at the gun club who called me 'Pop' - and realising I'd never use them all - I began culling my collection of more than 30 knives. At



Buck 110 and Buck 500 - horizontal carry.



Matched pairs were tried - Gerber Gator fixed and folder.



Short-bladed knives with nok (choil) are a no-go.



A knife-long journey.



Buck 500 - perfect horizontal carry.

present I'm down to four along with the non-negotiable Puma collection and sentimental items. For me, a chosen knife must do everything from cutting vegetables for the camp oven, to totally preparing all game (including fish and birds) to paring a toothpick etc.

The first two are the everyday/all day carry - a Buck 500 in horizontal belt pouch, unobtrusive and compact with 2¾" drop-point blade, easy to sharpen and the perfect companion which handles all chores, even the brisket cut on deer.

For those with a preference for something larger, the classic clip-point Buck 110 with 3½" blade ticks all the boxes

admirably when carried horizontally, with the possible exception of being a bit too big and borderline for social acceptance. My third is a Puma Hunter's Pal which I carry all the time in the back-pack when hunting. Drop-point, no nok, strong full length 4" blade, light and relatively small with a near-perfect blade shape. Possibly the only negative comment I'd make is that for hocking animals for the hooks, its point is not as good as a clip-point.



My final four knives.

The last go-to item in my now severely depleted knife roll is one I never thought I'd need but have come to enjoy and use a lot. It's a Puma Bowie knife with clip-point 6" blade, gifted to me by a friend who felt it was too big. He'd carefully ground the point so it wasn't as severe which, to me, has improved the classic design. This knife stays in the car and if I'm near it's always my preferred option.

There's something about a big knife. It keeps your hand away from the blood and entrails, it's powerful, cuts with authority and is great around the camp and cook pot. The only downside is it can be too big and



Horizontal belt carry - unobtrusive, low signature.

cumbersome, is socially unacceptable for the belt and too bulky for the day pack.

I'm a firm believer that a knife should be with you at all times, like a watch and box of matches and if I had to choose one for all occasions it would be the Buck 500, horizontally belt-pouch mounted. Kept razor sharp it will do it all. ●



The single 'do it all' concept - highly rated Gerber Gator folder.



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Local grip on a Broomhandle

Henri Lach

There are small arms which have made an indelible mark in the annals of history because of their part in conflicts between nations and that never-ending fight against the bad guys. As a result of those involvements their descriptive common names today are focal items in mountains of pages of literature, both fact and fiction. So even to the uninitiated firearms person in the street, many of these names will raise a smile of recognition. Mention a Walther PPK and you're likely to get: "That's a James Bond gun." As for Luger, Smith & Wesson and Colt, not to mention Webley & Scott, they all appear from time to time in recreational 'whodunnit' reading.

Possibly further down the immediate recognition ladder among the man or woman in the street is the Broomhandle Mauser 7.63mm pistol, although its history is probably the most varied and exciting of any handgun ever made since the invention of smokeless powder.

Now call me aesthetically short-sighted if you must, but when I first came into actual ownership of one of these due to some necessary horse trading in another life, I considered it the ugliest and most cumbersome handgun ever devised, in fact I couldn't get rid of it quick enough. I made a deal on it for a .25 Browning pocket pistol which became my vermin and wounded game despatch tool for quite a few years.

My originally jaundiced view of the Broomhandle Mauser certainly wasn't shared by handgun enthusiasts worldwide.

They cite the legend that Winston Churchill carried this sidearm during his army days in South Africa and that he may have despatched a number of his enemies with it. Modern day reality is this breed of pistol is highly sought after by American collectors and in good condition in the US, a Broomhandle Mauser could command dollars that would almost wipe out your mortgage. Here in Australia there are collectors who'd part with substantial coin from their war chests if they could only find one.

The thing is, Broomhandle Mausers were never originally a common item among handguns in this country as war trophies. They were far outnumbered by Lugers and, post-WWII, by Walther P38s if unofficial records can be relied on. Subsequently of course, whatever number of Broomhandle pistols there were lying around attics and basement cupboards fell victim to

successive amnesties, fuelled by ignorance on the part of both owners and instigators. So tragically, many of those pistols which were on our landscape at the time ended up in crushing machines to appease a lunatic fringe of gun-haters.

Now I'm not going to take up space going into the history of this pistol, other than to say it was made in Germany from 1896 to 1937. You can spend many happy hours rummaging online for all sorts of other esoteric information and I assure you it's quite interesting and even exciting if you're into firearms history.

My story for your entertainment is set in present-day Australia and features a Broomhandle Mauser in the hands of an enthusiastic Queensland collector. Naturally some history must figure in the detail of this individual piece, over and above the general mantra of the species. Our subject is owned by a licensed Queensland



File picture of a Broomhandle Mauser with shoulder stock fitted.



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Local grip on a Broomhandle



Our Broomhandle in its various moods.

handgun lover, protective of his identity for what he sees as security reasons. While I sometimes have a problem wrapping my head around the difference between such concerns about security and paranoia, I respect his wish for anonymity and will always be grateful to him for allowing me a peek into the window of his collection.

This time round he's happy for me to take a look at his recently acquired Broomhandle Mauser and was equally happy to chat about what he knows of its providence.

First of all, it apparently barely escaped the crushing mill in the Queensland firearms amnesty of 2017. Now how often have we heard what follows? In this case however, my collector friend swears it's the absolute truth - a little old lady found it among the remnants of a deceased relative's chattels in his former abode.

To find a Broomhandle Mauser among someone's junk is a stroke of luck approaching a Lotto win but to find one with all its original accretions is nothing short of winning it twice! Yet so it was in this case - the wooden holster which doubles as a shoulder stock, the cleaning gear, it was all there. Fortunately a neighbour convinced her not to immediately call the authorities but take it to a licensed firearms dealer for assessment which she did, and no doubt accepted a tidy financial reward for her astute course of action.

Fast-forward to my collector friend's workshop where his newly-acquired piece

underwent some serious scrutiny - and it seems this pistol has a bad codicil to its story. Apparently, apart from its period of rest in the closet heap, it was at some stage subjected to an amateurish attempt to decommission it as a hole had been drilled through the breech (what mentally challenged individual did this we'll never know). Suffice to say anyone who does this sort of thing to a valued handgun is up there with the idiot vandal who'd paint a beard on the Mona Lisa.

Anyway, my mate has put many hours of time and effort into research and restoration and the result is a pistol which is now capable of its originally intended function. In other words, it works and shoots well. He also discovered it was probably part of a contract to the Turkish Army at the turn

of the last century. A very limited amount were involved and the low serial number on his pistol adds weight to this proposition. Whatever, he's like a kid with a Christmas present and considers the Broomhandle Mauser the new jewel in his impressive handgun collection.

His enthusiasm has rubbed off on me which I guess is merely a case of perception. As a 25-year old buck, that lady whom I'd never have considered a suitable companion for a night on the tiles would probably now present as a most desirable option indeed. What I'm saying is maybe I never should have swapped my mature Broomhandle antique for a flighty young .25 Browning pocket pistol. But of course, we can all be smart in hindsight. ●



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Senior Correspondent
John Dunn

Ugly but elegant

Model 1866 Tranter rook rifle

Tranter M1866 rook and rabbit rifle in .360 No.5 centrefire.

Like many others with more than a passing interest in old firearms I associate the name of William Tranter with revolvers, especially the 'two-trigger' percussion version used by combatants on both sides during the bushranging era. But Tranter also made revolving rifles, one of which was being carried by John Gilbert - a member of the Ben Hall Gang - when he was shot and killed by police near Binalong, NSW in May 1865. Somewhat lesser known are Tranter's rook and rabbit rifles, produced in various models until the early 1920s, so when I had the chance to buy one several years ago I wasn't about to let it pass.

A brief history

William Tranter (1816-1890) was a key player in the 19th century Birmingham gun trade. During his lifetime he was holder of 15 firearms patents, a respected gunmaker and founder, shareholder and director of the Birmingham Small Arms Company. He retired in 1885 at the age of 69 and was succeeded by his son, W.G. Tranter, who joined with Thomas and Walter Tranter to form Tranter Brothers around 1900. Tranter Brothers continued in business as gun furniture makers until about 1950.

According to Colin Greenwood in *The Classic British Rook and Rabbit Rifle* (Crowood Press, 2006) Tranter produced about 58,000 rook rifles, many of which would have been sold with someone else's name stamped on the barrel, E. Whistler and Co., Charles Golden and Army and Navy being three names known to have been stamped on those rook rifles.

Model 1866 rook and rabbit rifle

The rifle I have is a model 1866. It's chambered for the .360 No.5 cartridge and its serial number indicates it was probably made around 1880. Weighing just 2.3kg it's not an overly large firearm, much as you'd expect for a rifle designed to be used primarily on small game.

The action

The Model 1866 uses a simple tip-up boxlock action with a centrally-hung hammer, essentially an early variant of the single-barrel shotgun actions and the way it was put together is deserving of a bit more detail. The flat-sided steel receiver looks to be forged, the external metal finish and inner surfaces carefully machined to accept and contain the working parts of the action.

The forward section houses the barrel release lever and its spring as well as a hole for the barrel pivot screw. The barrel release lever protrudes through the bottom of the frame, its semi-circular edge striated to provide a level of grip for the thumb and in the absence of any other attachment,

this section also acts as a forearm for the rifle. The hammer and trigger both pivot on through screws running from left to right along the frame behind the standing breech.

The hammer has a knurled thumb spur and integral firing pin, has both half and full-cock notches for the trigger sear and is powered by a V-spring secured to the integral lower tang of the receiver. The top tang is removable, held in place by a single through screw. The trigger pivots on a through screw below and slightly behind the hammer, a small internal spring keeping the trigger and hammer sears in close contact.

A blued circular steel triggerguard with simple line engraving is attached to the bottom edge of the frame and a hint of



Right side of the receiver showing parallel lines engraved around the edges and flower engraving around the hammer pivot screw.



Tranter action open and ready to be loaded - note the hammer in half-cock or safe position.

colour case hardening remains on each side of the receiver under a faded brown patina, decoration consisting of two parallel lines around the edge of the receiver on both sides. 'Tranter's Patent' and the rifle's serial number are stamped on the left side just behind the barrel pivot hole.

The head of the hammer pivot screw carries an engraved flower with the same decoration used around the tail of the screw on the right of the receiver, the tail of the barrel pivot screw surrounded by a radial zig-zag line inside a concentric circle.

The barrel

The gently tapered octagonal barrel is 61.6cm (24.25") long, measuring 21.9mm (.860") across the flats at the breech and 18.5mm (.723") at the uncrowned muzzle, this one having a brown finish which appears to have been gently restored at some point as it covers some slight pitting on the exterior surfaces. Both front and rear sights are dovetailed to the barrel, the front sight a so-called 'barleycorn' - presenting as a small bead on a post. The rear sight has a fixed stand with a V-notch and two additional folding leaves of different heights and a sling eye is mounted on the bottom flat of the barrel, 15cm behind the front sight.

The underside of the barrel at the breech is squared for the length of the forward section of the receiver, the calibre stamped on the bottom flat of the barrel just forward of the receiver (as are the Birmingham proof marks). There are two lumps on the underside of the barrel, the front lump below the rear sight accommodating the hole for the barrel pivot screw. The rear lump directly below the breech end of the barrel serves a number of purposes, the hook on its front edge engaging with



The 'barleycorn' fore sight presents to the shooter as a bead on a post.

the barrel release lever to lock the action closed. In that position the bottom of the lump sits level with the bottom edge of the receiver.

The rear edge of the lump houses the extractor which has ears protruding on either side of the breech. When the action is opened the extractor swings back from the breech as the hook at the bottom rear edge of the lump contacts the top of a slot in the standing breech. That contact also serves to stop the action opening too far and any cartridge or spent case in the chamber is then extracted by hand.

Woodwork

The buttstock is made from a piece of walnut with a good figure and what appears to be an oil finish and, given the age of this rifle, it's in remarkably good condition with only some minor usage dings. The straight grip has a full wrap-around panel of chequering cut at 20 lines per inch.

The butt is fitted with a brown steel buttplate secured by a pair of woodscrews with lightly engraved heads to match the concentric circles engraved around screw holes in the plate itself. The butt attaches to the receiver between the top and bottom



Walnut buttstock with straight chequered grip, steel buttplate and swivel eye just forward of the toe.

tangs and is secured by two wood screws - one from the top the other from the bottom - both having engraved heads. The underside of the butt is fitted with a screw-in sling eye 7.5cm up from the toe, this rifle made and sold without a forearm.

Loading the rifle

The hammer is first pulled back to half or safe-cock, the barrel release lever (a circa 1866 Tranter pamphlet calls it a 'lever bolt') then pressed forward and up. This causes the breech of the barrel to rise, exposing the chamber and at the same time extracting any cartridge or case in the chamber. The empty case is removed by



Breech end of the barrel is squared on the bottom, the lump under the rear sight housing the barrel pivot screw. The lump under the breech holds the extractor which is activated when the rear bite connects with the top of a slot in the standing breech.

Ugly but elegant - Model 1866 Tranter rook rifle



Right-hand side of the receiver.

hand or replaced and the action snapped shut, the hammer then thumbed back to full-cock and the rifle's ready to fire. Period advertising described the rifle as 'for sporting purposes and amusement, handy to use and capable of being fired Ten Shots in One minute', though I expect the front of the receiver and barrel would be a little hot to hang on to after a workout like that.

Cartridge

The .360 No.5 was hardly a powerhouse round, similar to the .38 Long Colt. Introduced around 1875-1880 it saw use as both a rifle and revolver cartridge, the rifle load firing a 134gr bullet in front of 14gr of black powder, the pistol load firing a 125gr lead bullet with 16gr of black powder. Eley loaded the cartridge with black powder from 1885 to 1919.

A 1955 I.C.I. catalogue I have lists a load of 5gr of smokeless powder with a 145gr-round-nosed solid or hollow-point bullet producing 1075fps from a 26" barrel (no ballistic data given). Like other and sometimes larger rook rifle calibres, it was made redundant by the popularity of the .22 rimfire cartridge which was cheaper to use and probably more effective.



Rear sight has a fixed stand dovetailed to the barrel and two folding leaf sights.

Overview

It seems English-made rook and rabbit rifles were never as popular in Australia as their American counterparts and I'm sure supply and demand had a lot to do with that (and the US offerings were generally cheaper). Rook rifles are still much harder to find than other single-shots and when they

do become available, prices are generally correspondingly higher. The Tranter is what one of my friends calls an 'ugly rifle', the lack of a forearm giving it an unfinished look though personally I think it's more elegant than ugly, a good example of its genre with unique appeal to a single-shot tragic like me. May that ever be the case. ●



Eley Brothers .360 No.5 cartridge with round-nose hollow-point bullet (centre), similar .38 Long Colt (right) and .22LR for comparison (left).

SSAA a target as anti-gun lobby calls for funding

Rachael Oxborrow

Licensed and law-abiding firearm owners remain the anti-gun lobby's scapegoat when drumming up media support for their cause, but insinuations the National Firearms Agreement inadvertently funds our Association are now part of their message. Australians remembered the victims of the 1996 Port Arthur mass shooting 25 years ago back in April and the anti-gun catch-cry revealed their true agenda - a funding stream for their endeavours.

The SSAA participated in several interviews where we were given right of reply to claims the legislation changes following Port Arthur, while introducing 'positive protections' had increased memberships in target shooting clubs, created monetary incentives for clubs to be opened and consequently the number of clubs in Australia increased.

It was also claimed these flow-on effects of the NFA, namely making membership of a target shooting club a genuine reason for licensing and ownership, had made the SSAA larger and more effective in attempts to lobby firearm laws. The explanation for these claims came during a University of Sydney webinar event entitled Public Health at the Forefront of Social Change: 25 Years of Gun Control since Port Arthur when Gun Control Australia's Rebecca Peters called for public funding for her work in the interests of 'public safety'.

"Somehow the spirit of a bipartisan approach to get the best outcome for firearm regulation hasn't carried on (since the NFA) and so the imbalance between the resources available to the people who want to reduce the strength of the laws is disproportionate," Ms Peters said.

"There's no-one clearly identified in government working on understanding and making recommendations (to legislators) whose primary commitment is to public safety. At least the amount of money going to the gun lobby could be balanced out if similar funds were being provided to people working to maintain the laws."

Also participating in the University of Sydney event was fellow anti-gun commentator Philip Alpers who effectively called on the government to abolish the need

for target shooting club membership as a genuine reason for firearm ownership. He suggested the genuine reason for ownership had created a controlled market situation similar to compulsory university student union membership in Australia before it was made voluntary in 2005.

Let's take a step back from what is clearly a cry for taxpayer funding by self-appointed anti-gun lobbyists, as it's universally known that owning a target shooting club isn't the get-rich-quick scheme it's being made out to be. We also need to acknowledge there are many other approved genuine reasons for firearm ownership including primary production, hunting, occupation and recreational hunting.

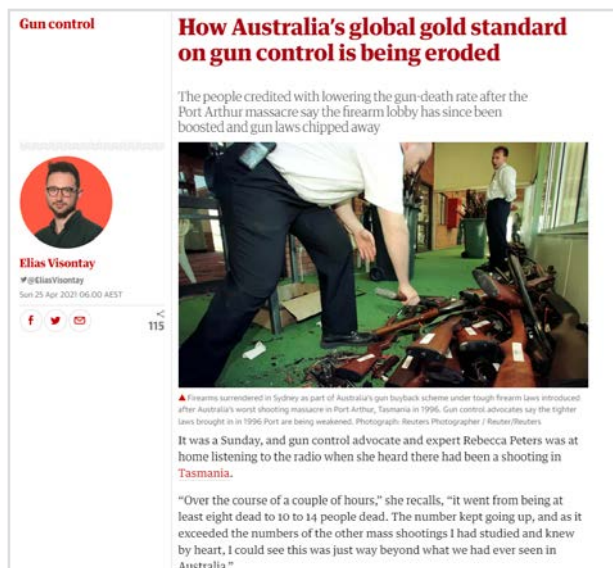
It is reasonable to assume SSAA membership numbers have increased due to the genuine reason of ownership status tied to target shooting club membership in some States and Territories. The SSAA national body is self-funded with membership fees and income from a wide range of publications and initiatives contributing to the Association's finances.

"The SSAA manages more than 18 shooting competitions - commonly referred to as 'disciplines' - at local, state, national and international level. We cater to many different types of firearms including shotguns, pistols, revolvers and rifles in rimfire, centrefire, air and black powder configurations. There are more than 400 SSAA clubs and affiliated branches across Australia.

"The SSAA has a lobbying and advocacy function brought about by our endeavours to promote the shooting sports and protect firearm owners' interests. We do not ask for the 'weakening' of firearm laws in Australia as is suggested by anti-firearm ownership groups. We seek out effective and non-intrusive firearm laws which don't have unforeseen consequences for law-abiding firearm owners. The SSAA is often sought out to provide advisory counselling on regulations and policy to various levels of government and has now done so for around 20 years.

"Gun Control Australia and the Australia Institute, with support of the Australian Greens Party which has a long-held ideological hatred of firearms, uses fear to sensationalise the reality of Australia's firearm laws. The SSAA will always support measures which genuinely contribute to public safety. Regulation efforts should always focus on the illegal market rather than law-abiding firearm owners who are some of Australia's most highly regulated citizens."

If the anti-gun lobby were to receive public money to fund its lobbying, this would seriously undermine democracy at work and drown out public debate which includes the opinions of all Australians. The SSAA's target shooting clubs are no more funded by Australia's firearm legislation and the NFA than is Gun Control Australia. ●



From *The Guardian*, April 25, 2021.

In a response provided to a journalist from *The Guardian* newspaper, we detailed thus: "Following the National Firearms Agreement in 1996, some Australian States and Territories changed their laws to include membership of a target shooting club as a genuine reason to own a firearm and have a firearm licence. The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA) is one of several shooting sports associations that qualifies firearm owners for a genuine reason of ownership under this category.

"SSAA membership has increased from around 30,000 members in 1996 to more than 200,000 in 2021. According to latest figures, there are around one million licensed firearm owners in Australia. It



Are you a hot shot?

here's the acid test

Daniel O'Dea

The GlowShot Double Action Self-Healing Knockdown gong can be screwed to a board or log.

When it comes to what we shoot at, targets come in all shapes and sizes and are made from many different materials. They can be technical examples of modern manufacture or simply something improvised in the field such as a rock, knot in a tree or just a cardboard box with a circle drawn on it. Targets can be uniform in design for use in serious sporting or even Olympic competition or abstract of shape and made more for fun and entertainment. So whether you punch paper, roll pins, smash clay or ring steel, targets are an integral part of the shooting sports.

In recent years I've covered the GlowShot array of targets so just to recap, GlowShot are best known for their assortment of reactive paper targets. These are the ones that, when shot, expose the point of impact in different bright fluoro colours dependant on the scoring ring impacted. Available in adhesive and non-adhesive versions they make accessing target impact, especially at distance, a lot easier to observe and identify.

Other GlowShot products include their caltrop-shaped .22 Flipping Jack reactive steel target which jumps and rolls when shot, always landing with one paddle upright and providing hours of fun if you have a pair to race over a paddock against a mate using .22 rifles. They also make handy clay target hangers - metal strips which clip over the edge of a clay target

to allow you to string them from a wire or whatever's practical and safe.

The last GlowShot item I reviewed for *Australian Shooter* was their Last Stand Target Stand Kit, a system which turns six lengths of rebar into a stand to support a gong, paper targets or anything else you care to hang off it. All GlowShot items I've used have been innovative options which add practicality and enjoyment to the shooting experience, so I'm always interested to see what's new when their latest offering lands.

This time round I was sent some new Double Action Self-Healing Target Gongs which, similar to GlowShot target hangers I've used previously, are made from self-healing ballistic rubber polymer. With this material, as suggested, once a bullet passes through, the hole closes in on itself and appears to heal, though I'd note it's advised that hollow-point projectiles should be avoided.

The big difference with this creation is not only does it self-heal, it's also somehow thermally active in that it changes colour when exposed to heat. As bullets are red hot, this means the colour changes at point of impact to leave a tell-tale sign at the bullet strike and this fades once point of impact cools. It works like this - below 29C the targets appear black and bullet hits show as red or yellow, above that temperature targets appear red and bullet hits yellow.

I received two gongs - 100mm and 150mm in diameter (4" and 6") - and to check the thermal colour change effect

I hung one over the other on the black tailgate of my truck in full sun and, within minutes, both faces turned red. Removing the top gong revealed the smaller outline remained black. Placing the smaller gong back over the larger one, I then left both targets exposed for a further half-hour. It was so hot at that stage the larger had started to turn orange heading towards yellow but again, removing the smaller gong revealed its shadow stayed red.

This wasn't a scientific experiment by any means and I didn't have a thermometer on hand, so can't say at what temperature the target would actually turn yellow, but this exercise clearly proved the colour change effect. In practical terms, in use these targets would be hanging and not lying flat



Again, removal of the top target reveals its silhouette on the lower still displaying red.



splatter coming off the target, so I imagine these would be ideal on ranges where steel targets are prohibited for safety reasons. Of course bullets pass straight through so, as with any form of shooting, an appropriate backstop is essential. The self-healing gongs have a long hang tag or tab incorporated into the moulding to secure the target off whatever you're using as a frame and, depending what that frame's made of, can simply be screwed to it with a single screw or tied on.

For testing under fire I dug out the GlowShot Last Stand Target Stand frame from my previous review and, rather than the heavy steel gong, after setting up the frame I just used a couple of tie straps and zipped the targets on with them. As fate would have it, the temperature that morning as I set up on my range was hovering around 15C, though I guess that's one bonus of your property sitting around 800-900m in elevation.

It did warm up but a moderate breeze ensured that while the targets were within operating temperature they were never going to show as red that day. Even so, when struck the point of impact registered and was clearly visible, likewise the targets swung back and forth with the force of impact providing both an immediate and lasting strike indicator.

In similar vein is the GlowShot Double Action Self-Healing Knockdown Gong. Made from the same material, this one's a 150mm (6") gong mounted in its own adjustable knockdown bracket which itself is made from self-healing ballistic rubber. This one can be screwed on to a board as a free-standing knockdown gong or you could secure a series of them along an old plank, log or piece of 4x2 timber to create an effective plate rack.

In this capacity it would be ideal on ranges which prohibit steel targets or where engagement ranges would generally make shooting steel problematic, such as with high-powered rifles under 100m. Hung upside down they behave exactly like standard double action self-healing target gongs but without the need to reset after each successful strike, so there are several options for use.

GlowShot have a variety of interactive targets to suit just about any application, available from dealers and GlowShot's online store. There are also plenty of videos on YouTube if you'd like to see the targets in action.

More at glowshottargets.com.au ●



In cooler weather on day of testing, impacts displayed as yellow with a pinkish outline before fading back to black.

on an exposed hot surface so I doubt you'd ever see them become so hot you'd lose the colour change effect. However, the makers list an operating scale of 15-40C.

The advantage of this system is you can place the target at distance and, when shot, not only do you have the visual effect of the strike as the target wobbles and swings, the point of impact is immediately identifiable as it appears red or yellow. As mentioned, the impacts remain visible before eventually slowly fading, so you can shoot a group and unless you take an excessively long time to do so, should still be able to see previous hits. The marketing blurb says this means you spend more time shooting and less time changing or resetting targets.

Another advantage of the ballistic rubber polymer is it can be used at any range without the risk of either ricochet or lead



Targets both started off black (or very dark brown).



After several minutes both are turning red as they heat up to more than 29C.



Half an hour later the lower target is turning yellow as it nears its maximum 40C maximum operating temperature.



Setting up for field testing.

Range time with The Rock

Mark van den Boogaart

So first things first. I've been sighting in rifles, practising, experimenting and generally having a lot of fun at the SSAA Belmont range in Queensland for about 35 years, during which time I've bought all manner of gear - with the exception of a shooting rest. You've never owned a rest? Nope, never needed one. They hire them at the range and when I've checked a rifle in the field I've just made do with a backpack or something similar.

Now normally my approach doesn't lend itself well to a product review, that is until COVID-19 came to town. COVID changed the rules - you can't rent a rest. I better start researching then and what I found was a great deal of choice and styles. After checking out a number of different models and seeking some wise counsel, I bought The Rock Deluxe Shooting Rest by Caldwell from the friendly team at On Target Sporting Arms in Brisbane, which just happens to be my local gunshop.

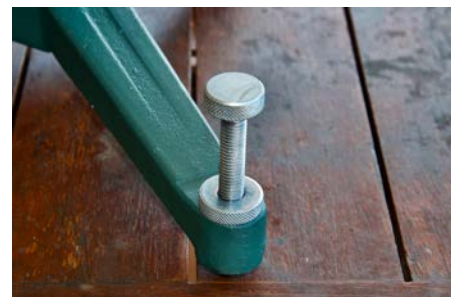
Caldwell have three offerings in The Rock range including The Rock Jr, Rock BR Competition Rest and Rock Deluxe. For me it was obvious as I wasn't intending to shoot competition and wanted something bigger than the Junior, so I bought The Deluxe. Out of the box The Rock Deluxe appears well constructed and finished, with assembly straightforward. Once together what you have is a three-point, cast iron

rest weighing roughly 3.9kg with a 330mm triangular footprint. Each point of the rest uses a lockable, independently adjustable, pointed levelling screw so you can level it up on just about any surface.

Your rifle rests on a cradle supported by a filled, front varmint-style bag. The bag also has two Velcro straps to keep it in place, while the cradle has two adjustable ears which allow you to secure different



Six-point elevation wheel and locking mechanism.



One of the independently adjustable levelling screws with locking ring.

style bags within the Caldwell arena to better suit your needs. The Deluxe has a vertical adjustment scale of 115 to 185mm, controlled via a 22mm threaded steel post (or ram as they call it) and six-point elevation wheel. I really like the elevation adjustment - it's quick and precise.

Now there's one feature I did need to refer to the instructions for. The Rock Deluxe has a fore-end stop, which is a threaded L-shaped rod with a rubber tip that's attached to the front of the cradle. The idea of the fore-end stop is it stops your rifle from moving too far forward, ensuring you reposition it in the same place after each shot. As the fore-end stop wasn't something I'd used in the past, I was keen to see how it performed along with the rest of The Deluxe set-up.

It was February and the red deer would soon be roaring so I took the Rock along with my other range gear on an afternoon scout. Arriving at the property I first caught up with the owner then went to work setting up my bench, establishing a clear and safe firing lane then ranging in a target. Adjusting the rest to my height and shooting style was easy, though I did struggle with the fore-end stop which just didn't seem to suit the shorter fore-end of the Scout rifle. To be honest, the Scout isn't a great rifle to shoot from the bench and can be a little unforgiving, which consequently makes it a great rifle to test equipment.

After firing a series of shots at the target I wondered why I hadn't bought a rest previously. Checking the zero was a breeze and as a part of my shooting kit, The Rock Deluxe proved its worth in making the whole process so much easier. It was really



The Rock Deluxe assembled and ready to go.

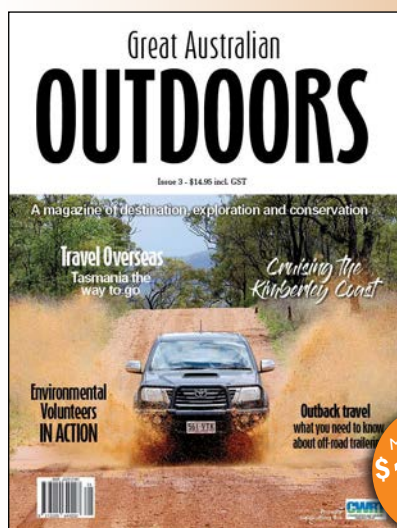
convenient to have a good quality rest on hand and I expect it'll be travelling with me to Belmont from now on. So it would seem an old dog can at least try a new trick or two and the Caldwell Rock Deluxe shooting rest gave me everything I was looking for - a quality build using solid componentry, stability on the bench, a level of fine adjustability to help me move on target and it even fitted in my range box.

If, like me, you're in the market for a shooting rest, check out the Rock series by Caldwell - they'll have one to suit your particular needs. As to the hunt, well that afternoon on my deer scout I managed to take a brute of a wild pig. Admittedly it wasn't a deer and while you could say my species identification might need some

work, there was no doubting my rifle was bang on target. The Caldwell Rock Deluxe is available at your local gunshop and retails for around \$269. ●



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National

Big Game Rifle National Postal Shoot

Jan 1-Nov 30, 2021
Participating Big Game Rifle clubs
See National website for event details.
Contact shoot captain at your local club.

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

March 1-July 21, 2021
All clubs and branches.
See National website for event details.
Contact: juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

June 1-October 31, 2021
All clubs and branches.
See National website for event details.
Contact: juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

Combined Services National Postal Shoot

June 1-Sept 19, 2021
All host clubs
See National website for event details.
Contact: Steve Knight 0428 876 991.

Muzzle Loading National Postal Match

July 1-Nov 30, 2021
All participating clubs.
Program: See National website for event details.

SSAA National Junior Challenge

July 8-11, 2021
Madden Range, Belmont, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Jon McCarthy 0438 756 622
jon@bendworx.com.au or (07) 3395 0911 bookings@ssaabris.org.au

SSAA Gallery Rifle National Championships

July 17-28, 2021
Para Branch, Greenwith, SA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Don Robinson 0428 986 070 or Dave McCarthy 0414 880 333.

SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships

July 23-26, 2021
SSAA Mackay, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: treasurerq17@outlook.com

Law Enforcement Activities APS 150 Challenge Match National Championship

July 31, 2021
Belmont Shooting Range, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: lawenforcementactivities@ssaa.org.au

Harry Madden Memorial & Barry Edgley Trophy Benchrest National Championships

August 13-15, 2021
Madden Range, Belmont, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: SSAA Brisbane 07 3395 0911

Benchrest Score National Championships

September 3-7, 2021
Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Ray Munro 0408 649 126 or email: r.munro@internode.on.net

Sporting Clays National Championships

September 11-12, 2021
Shepparton, Victoria
See National website for event details.
Contact: Brett Chambellant 0407 153 300.

5-Stand National Championships

September 18-19, 2021
Shepparton, Victoria
See National website for event details.
Contact: Brett Chambellant, 0407 153 300.

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

October 1-3, 2021
Central Qld Shooting Complex, Gladstone, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Shayne Smith: 0418 808 817.

IHMSA National Championships

October 1-8, 2021
Majura Shooting Complex, ACT
See National website for event details.
Contact: Russell Mowles
handgunsilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au or Cheyenne Fischer ihmsa.act@gmail.com

SSAA Lever Action National Championships

October 2-4, 2021
SSAA Alice Springs
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Brian Knapstein president@ssaalicesprings.com.au

SSAA Lever Action Silhouette National Championships

October 28-31, 2021
SSAA Majura Range, ACT
See National website for event details.
Contact: David 0423 043 663 or Mark 0401 867 839 or email mnl1@live.com.au

Law Enforcement Activities Police Service Match National Championship

October 9-10, 2021
Belmont Shooting Range, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: lawenforcementactivities@ssaa.org.au

NSW

SSAA (NSW) Big Game Rifle State Championship

July 16-18, 2021
Windamere Regional Shooting Complex
See National website for event details.
Contact: Ben Doherty 0409 831 258.

NSW Combined Services State Championships

September 17-19, 2021
Windamere Regional Shooting Complex
See National website for event details.
Contact: Anthony Gatti info@nswcd.com.au or 0499 987 899.

Qld

Qld IRB and Rimfire Benchrest Group National Championships

September 30-October 4, 2021
Springsure Sporting Shooters, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Gavin Marshal 0438 759 162.

SSAA (Qld) Junior Sports Shooting State Championships

July 2-4, 2021
Madden Range, Belmont, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Jon McCarthy 0438 756 622
jon@bendworx.com.au or Brisbane office 07 3395 0911 bookings@ssaabris.org.au

Queensland Field Rifle and 3 & 4P State Championships

August 21-22, 2021
SSAA Gladstone branch.
See National website for event details.
Contact: Jennifer Ingram 0418 259 269 or Leanne 0421 017 404 (after 5.30pm)

SA

SSAA (SA) Fly Shoot State Championships

July 17-18, 2021
Monarto Shooting Complex
See National website for event details.
Contact: Pat Kitschke whytiger49@hotmail.com or 0455 280 024.

SSAA (SA) Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

July 31-August 1, 2021
SSAA Para, Rifle Range Rd, Greenwith, SA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Russell Asser.

Vic

SSAA (Vic) Single Action Black Powder State Championships

July 10-11, 2021
Little River Raiders Single Action

Shooting Club

See National website for event details.
Contact: Tony Diablo 0419 187 980 or diablo6@bigpond.com

WA

SSAA (WA) Lever Action Silhouette State Championships

July 9-11, 2021
Hedland Sporting Shooters, Pippingarra, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Warren Goodfield 0407 440 431 claswa@iinet.net.au or Peter Nicolls secretary@hedlandssaa.org.au

SSAA (WA) Fly Shoot State Championships

July 11, 2021
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Stuart flyshoot@ssaawa.org.au

SSAA (WA) Sporting Clays State Championships

July 11, 2021
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Neil Cobb 0404 040 357 or neilcobb@bigpond.com

SSAA (WA) Scoped 3P & Field Rifle State Championships

September 25-27, 2021
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Matt 0439 092 686.

SSAA National Event Cancellation/Postponement Policy

SSAA National championship events may be subject to border controls and other COVID-19 impacts. In addition to general border closures, many states and territories may prohibit persons from known COVID hotspots. An event may be postponed or cancelled at any time by SSAA National, SSAA State Office or club directive.

It is recommended competitors consider any potential COVID-19 impacts on travel, accommodation plans and insurances etc. 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, including COVID-19. Competitors planning to attend an event should consider options for free cancellation or refund of travel and accommodation costs where available.

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SSAA Member Alert

Please be aware that state and territory police firearms registries regularly cross-check firearm licences and your member status. To support your genuine reason and keep your firearms licence and to make sure that SSAA can support you, make sure you renew your SSAA membership.



Sign up a JUNIOR

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.

ssaa.org.au



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The NEW SSAA Ka-Bar Agama Folder is a must have for you knife collection. Approximate measurements blade length: 9cm, handle length: 12cm. Visit our website for more information.

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SSAA Traditional logo belt buckle

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

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Glow-in-the-dark fishing knives

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The SICUT Fishing Knife Pack is designed in Australia for use in Australia's harsh conditions. The SICUT Fishing Knife Pack comes with a heavy-duty, four-pocket canvas wrap and contains:

- Pull sharpener, which is ergonomically designed to keep your knives sharp
- 6" curved boning knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle
- 8" semi flex curved fillet knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle
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See full details online



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You can use the Cobb as a barbecue, smoker or stove.

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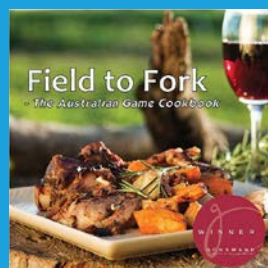
SSAA Cooks Companion



The SSAA Cooking Companion featuring member contributed meals of all your favourite outback recipes. Make sure you send in your favourite recipe for the next version.

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Field to Fork – The Australian Game Cookbook



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Membership No.

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

Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Miss Ms Mrs or Preferred SSAA Branch _____

First name _____

Middle name _____

Last name _____

Residential address _____

Town/suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Postal address _____

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(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

Phone (Mobile) _____ (Home) _____

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

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

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PLEASE READ AND SIGN

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

SIGNATURE: _____

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

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

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

Competitions close July 31, 2021

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Howard Leight Earmuffs
Fabrizio Macali, Vic

Junior - Sako Merchandise Pack
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May Best Shots Mug
Ian Grimmett, QLD

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**1 of 3 Warthog V-Sharp Classic II
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Robert Birdsall, NSW
Shane Johnson, Qld
Joseph Turrentine, NSW

Drover Bino Pack
Gregory Hoare, Qld

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Barking in the dark

In the pre-dawn gloom of a mid-April morning, the dog and I sat on a knoll overlooking an old cultivation paddock and waited for legal shooting light.

Leaning comfortably against me, Dixie swivelled her head, snorting softly as she tested the breeze. Finding nothing of interest she leaned a little harder, thumping her tail on the ground when I patted her head and told her she was a good girl.

We'd come up-river along a hard-packed, cow-trodden farm road through a morning gloom made darker by an overhanging canopy of trees. Despite the dark there was no need for a headlamp as this was a path I'd walked countless times before. I knew where I was going and as long as she was with me the dog didn't care - there was a rifle over my shoulder which meant we were going hunting.

Where the timber ended I stopped to glass the paddock on the top side of the road. The 10x50 Swarovski binoculars cut through the gloom and it was easy to pick out calves camped and feeding in the paddock, the closer ones with their heads turned towards me in the dark. There were no sambar-shaped bodies among them but another 50m along the road I stopped to double-check anyway.

The faintest trickle of a breeze drifted down the hill and a moment later a sambar barked softly in the scrub below the road, not a full-on warning bark, more of a 'hello, what have we here' enquiring gruff. Dixie turned and whined softly, her nose pointed at one of the darkest, thickest and most tangled patches of scrub you'd find anywhere along the river. I looked but there was nothing to see.

The deer barked again, a little louder this time and for a moment I thought I heard the subdued snapping of sticks as if something was moving away, but couldn't be sure. We waited a little longer hearing nothing more than the watery grumble of the river, not wanting to disturb the animal any further but pushed for time to



Would-be sambar hunters enjoy the sun after an unsuccessful early morning sit-and-wait hunt.

be somewhere else. A few more minutes disappeared and still we waited, our need to move growing like the light. In the end we could wait no longer and the deer barked softly again as we began to walk, a little further away I thought but hopefully nowhere near where we were heading.

Sitting on the knoll I thought about the last time almost 18 months ago and a hiatus imposed by bushfires, COVID and the changes they wrought. That morning I'd taken a good stag as he traipsed across the flat towards the river with a bellyful of lush spring grass. This morning all we needed was a meat animal so anything would do.

A wombat squeezed under the fence and shuffled across some open ground towards the bush, the dog growling a warning to tell me it was there and not for the first time I had to wonder just how much better her eyes were than mine, even without the aid of binocular magnification. The light improved as a flock of wood ducks mewed and cat-called to each other and made their

way down-river. Morning magpies carolled, the magic of the dawn sambar hour slipping away as sunlight began to paint the tops across the valley.

Today there were no deer and no real way of knowing why. Perhaps they'd left early, forewarned by the sentry barking in the dark. Maybe the marks we'd found along the river the previous afternoon hadn't been as fresh as the dog and I thought or they may have done nothing more than go elsewhere for a feed.

Whatever the reasons they were academic . . . we'd banked on a possibility which hadn't paid off and there was no room for self-recrimination as sambar hunting is like that, a lesson learned decades ago. Sometimes you're right, other times not - no-one gets it right every time but if you're not out there trying, you never will. ●



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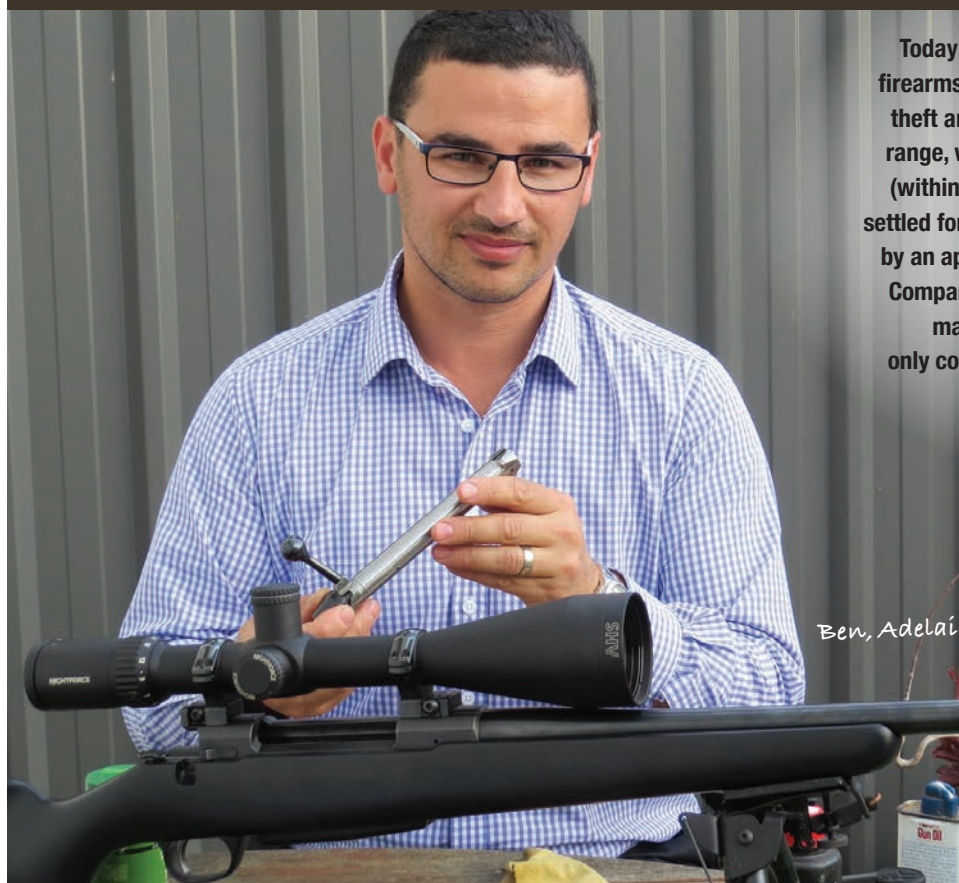
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