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NEXT ISSUE

Yildiz shotguns from Turkey are steadily gaining market share here and we've tested their Pro Sporter 20-gauge with 30" barrels which our reviewer says "appears every bit as good as many of their Italian rivals . . . and actually superior to some".

Con Kapralos has hit the range with some of the new Aguila rimfire ammunition from Mexico and has plenty of good things to say about their specialty subsonic .22LR loads in the 38-grain Subsonic Hollow Point, 20-grain Super Colibri and unique Sniper Subsonic with 60-grain lead bullet.

In the second of our three-part series on custom-building a rifle in partnership with Beretta Australia, Mark van den Boogaart has put in some series range time and reports "all and all the rifle was shooting as good as it looked and ready for the real test - hunting red deer in the Brisbane Valley".



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EDITORIAL POLICY

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

EDITORIAL INQUIRIES

PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

Email: edit@ssaa.org.au Web: ssaa.org.au

ABN 95 050 209 688

209,153

 members strong
as of March 2022

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

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National News

Peace of mind firearms cover with SSAA Mutual

SSSAA Mutual Members Firearms Protection is replacing the long-standing SSAA Members Firearms Insurance and is the same secure and affordable long-term cover for your firearms and fixed accessories, just with a new name. This expansion of the Association's in-house services will ensure you have a dependable cover option into the future without relying on the fluctuating insurance industry to protect your most valued assets.

In a world reeling from the pandemic, bushfires, floods and cyclones in recent years, insurance companies are now more risk-averse than ever amid the most unpredictable insurance market in 20 years. Policy costs are skyrocketing and many organisations simply can't secure insurance at any price. Caravan parks, amusement ride operators, building inspectors, riding schools, adventure holidays and even the security sector are examples of industries now struggling to insure themselves.

SSAA National President Lance Miller said it was a natural progression for the Association as Australia's largest sports and recreational shooting body to shore up a vital service for its members. "Over the years SSAA has paid millions of dollars for insurance cover to service our members' needs," Lance said. "Shooting in particular has one of the best safety records of any sport out there, yet negotiating a cost-effective policy with realistic terms and conditions is no longer viable."

The SSAA Mutual Members Firearms Protection service began in April through a newly-formed company (SSAA Mutual Limited) which is operating as a discretionary mutual fund (DMF). This fund, regulated by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), will involve the same \$35 annual fee for \$25,000 cover on firearms and fixed accessories and the same claims process. The SSAA Mutual Board will oversee claim approvals and payment under this new firearms cover and in turn will be advised by the experts at SSAA General Insurance Brokers on the recommended outcome of any claim.

SSAA Mutual Members Firearms Protection will be on offer to members due for renewal and form part of the existing online renewal process as an option for all members. "We're joining the ranks of a worldwide network of mutual funds where organisations have stepped away from insurers to manage their own risk," Lance said. "Mutual fund operators reallocate insurance premiums to a central mutual fund and manage the cover on behalf of members. With our unique cover needs and knowledge of firearms and accessories, no-one is better placed to manage firearms cover than the new SSAA Mutual."

For more information on SSAA Mutual Members Firearms Protection, call our friendly staff at the SSAA Membership office on (02) 8805 3900, SSAA General Insurance Brokers on (08) 8332 0281 or visit www.ssaainb.com.au

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Can you help trace rifle?

MY FAMILY IS seeking help from SSAA members in the possible location of a .303 Sniper rifle, serial number 28442. My father, Leslie Thomas Wright VX123028, served as a Section 9 sniper in the 2/4th Australian Commando Regiment in the taking of Tarakan Island, Borneo during the Second World War.

We know it's a long shot but it's believed his actual rifle is in New South Wales somewhere. I've included a 1945 photograph of dad with his rifle on an LST (tank landing ship) heading for Borneo before landing on Tarakan Island. Any help, no matter how trivial it might seem, would be greatly appreciated by my family.

Leon Wright, via email

• If you can help, email edit@ssaa.org.au and we'll pass on the info.

Tikka right on target

I WAS MOST interested to read the Top Shots question from Craig McKee (*Shooter*, October 2021) concerning his Tikka T3x TAC A1, to give it its full title, and his experience at 1000m. As a recent owner of the same model rifle also chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor it's good to read about the experiences of others with the same equipment.

I had great success recently at our club range, shooting at 900m and scoring 98/100. Following the guidance of my armourer I was using Lapua cases charged with 42.8gr of AR2209 with CCI 450 small rifle primers and Nosler RDF 140gr projectiles seated .005" off the lands - absolutely no signs of over pressure.

This set-up chronographed at 2741fps average (five-shot) with an ES of 9.2 and SD of 24. Maybe it still needs a little work but I was extremely pleased with the score on target as I've only been shooting long range for 14 months and the Tikka is just four months old and has fired less than 250 rounds to date. Out of the box it was impressive. I worked the load up from 40gr where it chronographed at 2345fps and when I reached 42.8gr I was so impressed with the result it became my 'new' load. I still have to experiment with seating depth but so far I'm happy.

At 42gr AR2209 I achieved 2680fps average (five-shot) with an ES of 3.6 and SD of 10. On-target score not so good -

maybe it's me, maybe it's the ammo - so still plenty of learning to do together with refinement of case preparation processes. Thanks for a great magazine.

John Roche, WA

A great place to start

MANY THANKS FOR Dave Pearce's 'Introduce a friend to shooting' article (*Shooter*, November 2021). Having obtained my licence in a rare, brief gap in Victoria's endless lockdowns, I was reduced to Google to try and work out where to start. Dave's first gun checklist and common cartridges table was the best and most succinct starters guides I've seen so far. Keep up the great educational work.

Lee Jones, Vic.

Worth writing home about

I'D LIKE TO thank the SSAA for the beautiful engraved 30 cal. bolt-action bullet pen with rosewood case crafted by Laser Engraving & Handmade Gifts which I won in the monthly competition. I'm very impressed by the quality of both pen and case and the mechanical function of the pen. The amount of professional workmanship which has gone into creating this exquisite product shows their passion for this work of art. The pen serves as both functional and decorative and having it personally engraved makes it a treasured piece.

Alexander Lytwynenko, via email

Insurance Q&A

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Send questions to: insurance@ssaains.com.au



Q I'm really into hiking when I go hunting and usually go quite remote but always have concerns in the back of my mind about what would happen if I picked up an injury and how that would affect my income. How can I be certain the SSAA Personal Accident Insurance we receive automatically with membership will cover my income if something puts me out of work long-term?
Max Schulz, via email

A The SSAA member benefit does cover you automatically for loss of income based on 85 per cent of your average weekly earnings to a maximum of \$750 a week for up to 104 weeks. This covers members if they're injured while involved in the act of lawful recreational shooting activities (it excludes direct travel to and from the activities).

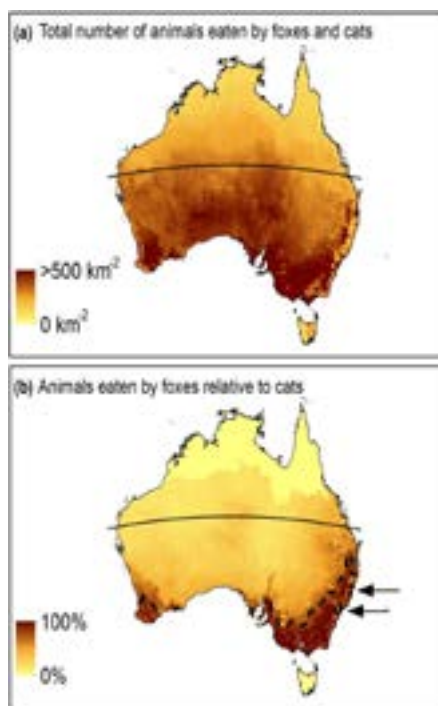
However, there's an option of paying an extra fee to increase this cover. The new

benefit which costs \$15 a year will increase your cover to \$2000 a week (\$104,000 year) and that way you can feel more secure knowing your income is adequately protected while still being able to enjoy your hunting trips. If you have other questions or would like a quote for any insurance needs, visit our website at ssaab.com.au or call us on 08 8332 0281.

Counting the bodies: Wildlife killed by foxes and cats

A new report published in the journal *Diversity and Distributions* has attempted to estimate the number and spatial variation of Australian wildlife killed by feral cats and European foxes. By drawing on information found in published reports, researchers outlined the spatial variation of tallies of reptiles, birds and mammals killed by cats and generated tallies of fox predation from data sources which included modelling of continental-scale spatial variations of fox density and the frequency of occurrence of prey groups in fox diet. They also analysed the number of prey individuals found within dietary samples but made sure they discounted animals taken as carrion, point estimates then derived of the number of individuals killed by foxes and by cats.

The key results of the report found foxes do indeed kill more reptiles, birds and mammals than cats across most of the unmodified temperate and forested areas of mainland Australia which reflected the general higher density of foxes than cats in these environments. Across most of the continent, in particularly the arid central and tropical northern regions (and on most Australian islands), cats would kill more wildlife. It was estimated foxes and cats kill more than 697 million reptiles a year across Australia, 510 million birds and 1435 million mammals.



(a) The estimated total number of animals (reptiles, birds and mammals) eaten by foxes and cats combined each year throughout Australia, and (b) the proportion of this total attributable to fox predation. Broken line (arrowed) shows where the number of animals eaten by foxes versus cats is relatively equal (50 per cent), solid black line indicates the Tropic of Capricorn.

The fox population kills fewer individual animals than cats do with the main reason for this being cats occur over a greater area resulting in a larger total population of feral cats. An additional component of the Australian cat population is pet cats which if unrestrained will also hunt and kill wildlife. Foxes have much of their dietary intake derived from carrion so don't need to make as many kills as cats and while vertebrates are staples in fox diet, they are indeed omnivores so supplement their diets with more plant material and invertebrates than cats which are obligated carnivores. Foxes also tend to take larger prey so obtain more food with fewer kills.

Foxes and feral cats have a major impact on our unique wildlife and we're continuing to see more and more studies getting closer to illustrating their true effect on that wildlife. This is not a nice story to tell and that's why when you're out in the field hunting and one of these lethal predators presents itself, you should do an environmental service and despatch it. To view the full report go to <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ddi.13497>

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A cartridge for the ages - the 6.5 x 55 Swedish Mauser

Given the current interest in the 6.5 Creedmoor cartridges, perhaps it would be of interest to some shooters to have a look at a similar cartridge that's been around a lot longer. Although the 6.5 x 55mm Swedish Mauser was developed more than 120 years ago it's arguably as popular now as it's ever been.

It was developed by a joint Swedish/Norwegian commission in 1893 for use by the military and was adopted the following year as the military cartridge for Sweden (in Mauser Models 38, 94 and 96) and for Norway (Krag-Jorgensen Models 1894 and 1912) and remains a very popular hunting cartridge in both those countries. Initially due to different interpretations of the manufacturing standards, some of the ammunition produced in Norway required a heavy push on the bolt handle to chamber the round in the Swedish rifle.

But after examining the ammunition in 1900 the Swedish military said the difference was insignificant and declared both the Swedish and Norwegian ammo within the specifications laid down. The original ammunition used a 156-grain long, round-nosed projectile with muzzle velocity of about 2300fps which was later changed to a lighter 139-grain spitzer projectile travelling at higher velocities of up to about 2850fps.

Its popularity in Australia is no doubt due to the influx of military surplus rifles shipped into the country after World War Two and many thousands had their woodwork 'sporterised' to be used as hunting firearms alongside the modified .303 Enfields which were very popular at that time. The cartridge itself was inherently accurate and those surplus Mauser rifles were strong and of good quality, so even though cheap imported loaded ammunition was available, the range of projectile weights was limited which meant hand-loading to achieve better performance became essential.

The cartridge is extremely versatile and can be loaded with a wide range of projectile weights, with bullets ranging from 85 to 160-grain available from the larger manufacturers like Sierra and Hornady. All of which virtually means this one cartridge could replace a whole range of others including the popular .243 Winchester, .25-06 Remington and .270 Winchester, not to mention another couple with a small but avid following - the .257 Roberts and .264 Winchester Magnum.

For hunting in Australia the 6.5 x 55mm is ideal and when using lighter projectiles its superb accuracy and high energy retention at long range make it perfect on our smaller animals like rabbits and foxes,

while also taking care of heavier game like kangaroos and goats with medium weight 90 to 120-grain projectiles. If even larger game is targeted, projectiles weighing in the 130 to 160-grain range can be used to put down humanely almost anything found in this country.

To obtain this versatility it's essential to handload the cartridge and new, good quality brass for reloading is available from Lapua, Norma and Winchester. New factory-made ammunition from Norma, Winchester and Remington is mainly available with those heavier 140 and 160-grain projectiles and this should not be used in older military rifles, as many were designed for pressures not exceeding 45,000 psi.

Regardless, care must always be taken when reloading for any rifle and the old safety first rule of starting with the suggested load then working up while checking for pressure signs in the cartridge case always applies.



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Q I remember a few years back you mentioned you'd only buy and use an Italian shotgun. Do you still feel this way as I'm considering a German-made Krieghoff sporting clays gun and wonder if you still wouldn't recommend this purchase?

Garry Cole, Vic.

A I don't deny I said that but, in my defence, I can't recall the circumstances. In my competition days the International Shooting Sports Federation events I competed in were largely dominated by two Italian brands of shotgun. This was the case because both of those companies made shotguns with models specifically designed for use in these events - well balanced, reasonably light and responsive to use and above all else they were very well made with brilliant back-up service for those competing internationally.

I understand that for 99 per cent of the shooting population, 'back-up service at international competitions' is not a selling point that'll even be considered when buying a new or second-hand shotgun, but the fact these companies offer this feature and go to great lengths to show off their customer service doesn't hurt in the long term.

Kriehoff make fine shotguns and in some disciplines of clay target shooting are world leaders. American Skeet is dominated by Krieghoff K80 users and has been for years but in the ISSF disciplines this brand, until very recently, has hardly been

seen. So why can one particular brand of shotgun dominate one discipline and be virtually extinct in another you may ask? In American Skeet, heavier shotguns are favoured for a variety of reasons such as recoil consumption and better balance if heavier barrels are used. The slower targets offered in American Skeet make these features advantageous whereas in the ISSF disciplines where fast and explosive movements are needed, using a bigger shotgun can be more problematic.

Things have certainly changed as far as being able to produce lighter-weight responsive shotguns and as steel technology has progressed, so has the ability to make lighter and longer barrels without compromising the balance of the shotgun. These days Krieghoff and many others produce models more than capable of handling any of the ISSF disciplines while still offering guns which are heavier and perfectly suited to the tamer targets offered in the domestic disciplines of Trap, Skeet and Sporting Clays.

Blaser is another quality German shotgun worth considering, well made with plenty of features on offer. German shotguns are like German cars - quality and made to last but in saying that, always take into account the after-sales service you'll eventually need. We all like to think that paying extra dollars will mean you'll never need to talk to a gunsmith ever again but that's just not the case, as sooner or later all firearms need servicing and repairs. There are few things

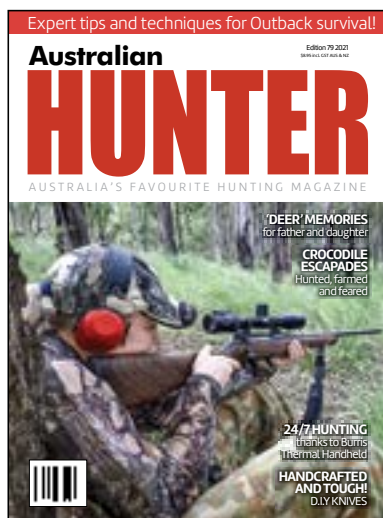
sadder than seeing a \$10,000 shotgun sitting in a gun case with a broken firing pin because nobody knows how to take the side plate off the mechanism or there are no spare parts available nationwide, so in my opinion consider this point when buying any brand of shotgun.

Q I enjoyed the video you made about the comparison of steel and lead shot. If I only use small shot sizes, will it really make a difference what choke I use in my barrel?

Ken Tang, Vic.

A Yes it will! Stop whatever you're doing, put the shotgun down and back off until you receive further instructions. If you have a choke size greater than half choke (modified) then many of the big manufacturers will strongly advise not to use steel shot regardless of size and in some cases you'll void any warranty on the shotgun. If you blow a barrel apart you may not only hurt yourself but anyone standing nearby. I've no idea what shotgun you have or what shot size you consider 'small' but I strongly suggest you seek advice from a reputable gunsmith or contact the agent for the brand of shotgun you're using.

Questions to:
Russell@GoShooting.com.au



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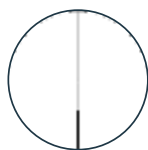
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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS?

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

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Q I have a hammerless box-lock double-barrel 12-gauge shotgun which may have been part of a mine manager's package in the Victorian goldfields during the 19th century - 'Made expressly for H.W. Irvine & Co Bendigo' is stamped on the barrel. Could you help me identify who made this gun and when, as I've not been able to find much information so far (I enclose a photo of the proof marks). The gun also has 417 engraved on it and stamped on the underside of each barrel are the numbers 184 and below this the number 3 which I assume is the choke and cartridge length.

Peter, Vic.

A Your gun looks in very nice condition and certainly has 'history'. Firstly the proof marks show the gun is a 12-gauge with 65mm chambers made in Liege, Belgium probably by the consortium which mass-produced guns 'for the world'. The date code 'g' means it was made in 1928, 'star over AE' is the inspector's code and the 'lion over PV' shows the gun passed proof for smokeless powder and the '1kg 470g' is the weight of the barrels. While I couldn't see the other numbers in your photo, the 184 probably has a small dot between the 8 and the 4 as 18.4 is the diameter of the barrel in millimetres.

Perhaps a more interesting detail is who

the gun was made 'expressly' for. Melbourne-born Hans William Henry Irvine (1856-1922) was an extremely important businessman in early Victoria. Starting out as a printer, he moved into winemaking (particularly Great Western Champagne) and became a highly prominent personality. Although your gun was made after his death it's possible his wineries had your gun (and perhaps others) specifically made for use in bird control back then. I've sent you a biography of H.W. Irvine which is too extensive to include here.

Geoff Smith

Q I have 85gr and 90gr (.312) projectiles. Is it possible to duplicate 32/20 and 32 H&R magazines in a .303 British (the rifle is a Ruger No.1) and if so, could you recommend a suitable load.

Derek Ryan, via email

A There's not much information around regarding duplicating 32/20 Winchester cartridge performance using the .303 case with those light 85-90 grain projectiles. But as the Ruger No.1 rifle has a strong action, from what I've been able to find I believe you can use low velocity 'squib' loads with around three or four grains of either Red Dot, Bullseye, Trail Boss or Unique powder.

Higher velocities could be obtained using slightly more of the powders mentioned and the use of a chronograph to determine velocities obtained would be helpful, always playing it safe by looking out for pressure signs during the process.

Barry Wilmot

Q I've recently been gifted an old Model 2 Brno .22 rimfire rifle by a family friend. It's fitted with a 4x28 scope which has seen better days so I'd like to replace the scope as the rifle is still in quite good condition, even if it hasn't been fired for years. I'll be using it to hunt rabbits, feral

cats and foxes and would appreciate some advice on what sort of scope I should buy.

Vince, NSW

A The Model 2 Brno is an excellent small game rifle so as a starting point I'd take it down and give it a thorough clean, especially the barrel. There's no point spending money on a new scope if the barrel isn't in good condition and, given it's a Brno, I'd be surprised if it isn't.

If you're only going to hunt with this rifle I suggest you don't need any more than a 4x or perhaps a 6x scope with a duplex reticule and 40mm objective lens. Anything more than that will be too big and aesthetically out of place on the gun, quite apart from the fact that higher magnification isn't necessary at rimfire hunting ranges. Buy the best scope you can afford as even in this day and age you only get what you pay for. The same applies to mounts and your local gun dealer should be able to advise you on both.

After the scope is set up, buy a variety of ammunition types to find which one provides the best accuracy as while high-speed ammo delivers good energy levels, that sometimes comes at the cost of accuracy. I've been using Winchester subsonic hollow-point ammunition in my rabbit rifle for years and recommend you try it (I have my rifle sighted in at 50m). Enjoy your new rifle, look after it properly and it'll give you years of good service.

John Dunn

Q I'm just back from a hunting trip where the scope cut my eyebrow as I fired my new rifle, very painful and there was lots of blood. Can anyone tell me how to avoid this in future as it's almost enough to put me off shooting my 375 Ruger ever again!

Mick, ACT

A Mick, that's what's called 'scope eyebrow' and is very painful as you say. I've never experienced it myself but a few

years ago I was with a friend on a conservation hunt in the Northern Territory culling pigs when it happened to him. Coincidentally, he was also using a brand new Ruger 375! Luckily he didn't need stitches but went into shock immediately. We had to mop up a lot of blood, clean the wound and apply sticking plaster to hold the skin together temporarily. We laughed about it after the event but it was very unnerving for all three of us at the time.

It's easy to see why you might be reluctant to fire the gun again and it could certainly be a potential cause of flinching with that rifle in the future. To set your mind straight and give you back some confidence, it'll help to understand the causes of this accident and how to resolve them.

You're shooting a potent cartridge with considerable recoil which throws the rifle back into your shoulder very quickly and over quite a distance compared to milder cartridges. If you don't have enough 'eye relief' - the distance between the rear of the scope and your eye - then you'll suffer scope eyebrow. This can be resolved by increasing eye relief as much as possible, adjusting the scope and making the stock a little longer subject to your build. You need to work on your confidence - and holding the rifle firmly and properly bedded in your shoulder will help reduce that rearward movement.

Easy for me to say but don't let this incident spoil your shooting. There will be a bit of mind over matter involved so try the fixes I've mentioned and you'll be shooting positively again in the very near future. Good luck.

Paul Miller

Q I'm wondering if you can identify this old military projectile given to me. It has a brass or copper body (hard to tell under the patina though there are copperish overtones in spots) with a steel tip and possibly a steel disc (as indicated by oxidization) inserted into the somewhat concave base. It weighs 7.25oz, average

25.25mm main body diameter and diameter behind the rearmost line averages around 25.7mm though is a bit harder to measure due to deformity.

F. Park, via email

A What you have is indeed an old military projectile that belongs to the 1" Nordenfelt cartridge developed in the 1870s for the Royal Navy as an anti-torpedo boat round. Its construction is unusual and what you see is just the tip of a solid steel core protruding above a thin brass jacket. The rear section is, as you say, larger in diameter than the rest of the body and acts as a gas-check and driving (or rotation) band.

Your photo is of an unfired bullet as there's no inscription on the rear band caused by the rifling. There's a picture on the Australian War Memorial website which shows a fired example revealing the inner steel core. Just as interesting is the gun that fired the Nordenfelt cartridge as it was normally deck-mounted on a pedestal and operated by two people - one aiming and the other firing - and four shots were fired from individual barrels in a volley. Its method of operation is too complicated to describe here but there's plenty of information available on both gun and cartridge.

Single and two-barrelled version are also known and Nordenfelt multi-barrel quick-firing guns were adopted by several Australian Colonial forces during the 1880s for use as ship-mounted armaments, shore



batteries and horse-drawn field carriages for artillery or infantry. Nordenfelt guns and ammunition remained in service until the early 1900s and examples of the gun can still be seen in military museums and on display in town parks and gardens.

Rod Pascoe





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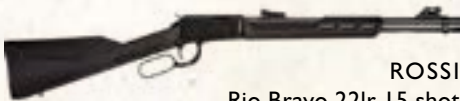
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PDP full-size frame of reviewed gun with Holosun reflex sight.

Gotta hand it to 'em

Walther's PDP is their best effort yet, says Rod Pascoe

In the mid-1990s German arms manufacturer Walther was one of the first of the established European gunmakers to embrace the technological changes made across the border by a relative newcomer to the firearms industry - Glock.

Very little had changed in pistol design and operation until the 1980s when Gaston Glock, an Austrian, made a giant departure from the traditional handgun manufacturing process and introduced injection-moulded polymer pistol frames, a striker-fired mechanism with multiple internal safety devices without the need for a manual safety catch and a nitride treatment to metal parts to resist corrosion. He also reintroduced the polygonal barrel first seen years earlier in firearms such as the Lee-Metford and Arisaka rifles.

Walther began developing the P99 in the 1990s to cash in on the extraordinary success of the Glock pistol, especially for military and police applications, a market in which Walther had a reputation. They'd

previously used aluminium alloys in the P1 and PPK pistols as a way of lightening the frame but with the P99 went for injection-moulded glass fibre reinforced polymer instead. Apart from the design and mechanical technologies, the other thing built into these new firearms was a lower production cost without sacrificing reliability and safety.

Glock went on to secure several substantial military and police contracts



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Walther's PPD

while Walther's P99 also had success in the security, concealed and open-carry self-defence and home-protection markets for years, though we didn't see much of it in Australia because of its short barrel. The PPQ followed the P99 in 2011 by enhancing features which worked so well in its predecessor and removing those that didn't (considerable time and energy was spent mainly on improving the trigger and ergonomics). Walther also added a 5" barrelled version to extend to markets where barrel length was an issue and to attract the target shooting community, the steel frame version of the PPQ launched later in 2019.

Walther's designers and engineers continued working overtime too, not only to improve their current models but to adapt to customers' changing demands, at the same time remaining viable in the market by being competitively priced. Last year Walther released another advancement on the popular PPQ model, the Performance Duty Pistol (PDP) now available to Australian shooters in 9mm Luger with 125mm barrel, 10-shot magazine and a choice of two grip lengths. Essentially Walther stuck to the striker-fired, polymer-framed, polygonal-barrelled concept but incorporated a new trigger - the Performance Duty Trigger (PDT) - along with changes to grip design and texture that resembles the style introduced on the PPQ Steel Frame grip.

This is the first time Walther has made a full-size polymer-framed gun as until now their pistols were only available in 'compact' dimensions, light weight and concealment being the priority. Australian distributor Frontier Arms offered *Australian Shooter* the chance to put a 'full-size' PDP to the test, the difference between the two essentially just in the height of the grip - 8mm longer in full-size and therefore the length of the magazine (the compact model takes the same magazine as the PPQ).

While we're limited to 10-shot magazines here, our consideration is not one of magazine capacity but of comfortable gripping especially for those with larger hands, three replaceable backstraps offering a choice not only of grip comfort but trigger finger and mag release thumb reach. The finger grooves on the PPQ polymer-framed pistol have been 'ironed out' to more subtle humps just on the side of the grip and deep chequering on the frontstrap, matching that on the front of the triggerguard.

Comparing the compact-sized grip of a PPQ Steel Frame to the full-size PDP, I like the way the longer grip curved to



PDP compact frame.



Slide-release lever and large chequered magazine release.

fit my hand. It put the little finger of my supporting hand at the bottom of the grip rather than under it, giving more feeling of control. The magazine release is reversible while the long slide release levers are on both sides of the frame. The PDP barrel is essentially the same as the PPQ at 127mm with polygonal rifling and a step in the chamber to reduce the gas blowing back towards the breech which provides extra accuracy and more velocity. The recoil spring and guide rod assembly is one unit and because Walther wanted this gun to be as modular as possible, spring assembly and barrel in the compact are the same as in the full-size model so it's easy to swap barrels and slides between frame sizes.



Performance Duty Trigger (PDT).

It's fair to say the major improvement to the whole system over Walther's previous models is the trigger and to a pistol shooter this is the centre of the universe and the first thing tested for appraisal. The Performance Duty Trigger and firing mechanism have been refined to where the take-up has been shortened to produce a crisp and precise break and a shorter and smoother than expected trigger reset, all this still weighing just under 5lb. I believe the trigger is backwards compatible with the PPQ as well as the square-faced Dynamic Performance Trigger on the new line of custom shop PPQ Steel Frame models.

The slide of the PDP is almost the same as the PPQ internally but externally is a

different story. Walther calls the slide serrations 'SuperTerrain' and are on both front and rear and deep, providing an excellent surface for working the slide while offering a wider platform for mounting a red dot. This makes the slide slightly wider than the PPQ which means your PDP won't fit a PPQ holster though Walther has been working with manufacturers and, by the time you read this, several of them will have holsters available.

Talking of after-market parts and accessories Walther has standardised, for want of a better word, many PDP parts such as springs and sights used in other pistol brands. Of note is Glock pattern sights fit the PDP meaning choice of sights is huge from aftermarket traders. The slide has been cut to accept a wide range of reflex dot sights, a feature that's become almost mandatory on today's pistols. Unlike the PPQ and some other brands, Walther has elected to keep the open rear sight on the frame when the optic cover plate is removed and dot sight added. While the dot and open sights are not co-witnessed, the front sight is clearly visible in the bottom of the sight picture which means you can install taller iron sights to co-witness with a dot if desired.

Mounting plates are available for almost every reflex optical sight and can be ordered individually at time of purchase. The plate is attached to the slide with screws and optic then attached to the plate (if you prefer to run iron sights, just keep the slide cover in place). This plate also has serrations which match those on the slide, offering enhanced grip when racking the slide. Frontier also supplied a Holosun HE507C open reflex sight for review with the PDP, this having the added feature of a solar cell to give the battery a break when the sun's out. It also sports a green 10 Minute of Angle (MOA) inverted chevron or arrowhead as opposed to a dot. I didn't mind this feature but, as with anything, it's something you must get used to. There's also the option to switch on a green 250 MOA circle which surrounds the arrowhead, offering a way of quickly locating the centre of the sight.

I found that with some practice of drawing the gun or bringing it to the firing position from below, it was easy to find the arrowhead and align it on target without needing the illuminated circle. As with any such reflex sight it's parallel-free and has unlimited eye relief, making it suitable for barrel mounting on rifles or shotguns for instance. There are 10 daylight and two night-vision compatible brightness settings adjustable by the plus and minus buttons on

Accessory rail and deep-cut slide serrations.



Almost seamless texture between main grip and replaceable backstrap.



The Holosun with supplied adaptor plate - adjustable rear sight remains part of the slide.

Walther's PPD

the side, the same buttons also controlling the 250 MOA circle as well as the whole unit. If there's no movement of the gun for 10 minutes the unit will power down and wake up when movement's detected.

On the range

Starting with a clean bore and dab of oil on the metal-to-metal contact points, I loaded the magazine without the supplied tool, easy enough when only loading five rounds at a time. Sadly, during a pandemic there wasn't much factory ammunition available but what there was worked flawlessly in the PDP, though results varied. Best performer by far was the 150-grain lead Syntech from Federal, this round also reducing muzzle flip which is handy in a polymer-framed gun.

A close second was the PPU 124-grain jacketed hollow-point which not only produced a 57mm group but printed all shots in the 10 and X-ring of a standard Service Pistol target, fired from a barricade at 25 yards. Strangely the worst performer was the 115-grain version of the Federal Syntech, yet all but one shot landed in the 10-ring at 25 yards. Other brands tested included Geco, Winchester and Sellier & Bellot in various bullet weights and shapes. I found the grip angle suited my natural aiming position with both open and reflex sights, probably because I've grown familiar with the PPQ's grip angle over time.

Summary

Walther's use of 'Duty' in the PDP title and advertising - 'It's your duty to be ready' - makes clear its target audience but the PDP will attract much wider appeal. This

An impressive option.



is Walther's best effort yet to not only deliver an overall superior firearm but build a pistol incorporating all the features for an accurate shooting club gun. For years we've treated most polymer-framed striker-fired pistols as just another Glock - not any more as the market has decided price isn't the only criteria. The PDP is ahead in terms of accuracy with factory-loaded ammunition but for the money it fits in with other polymer-framed pistols.

It's hard to say which version of the PDP will be most popular in Australia. In the US the choice comes down to better concealment with the compact model versus extended magazine capacity (18) in the full-size, neither of which are considerations here, so it'll probably be a matter of which feels best in the hand in terms of fit and

balance. On a final note, the Walther PDP received the much-coveted 'Handgun of the Year 2021' award from renowned US magazine *Guns & Ammo* after numerous newly-released handguns were tested according to strict criteria.

Only the most innovative, reliable and durable products were admitted to the months-long practical testing and as summarised in the *Guns & Ammo* press release: "While many brands shifted the focus to developing micro-compact pistols, Walther reinvented its polymer-framed, striker-fired full-size and compact offerings. There were many new handguns introduced in 2021 and the fact several qualified and were considered for this award makes this win a particularly significant achievement for Walther." ●

Groups shot from 25 yards on WA1500 targets.



Specifications:

PDP Full-Size (reviewed)

Magazine capacity: 10

Barrel length: 127mm

Overall dimensions (L/W/H):

215/34/143mm (compact 135mm)

Weight with empty mag: 780g (compact 775g)

Sight radius: 188mm

Barrel, twist rate: Polygonal rifling, one in 250mm (19.9") right-hand twist

System operation: Short recoil modified Browning locked breech, striker-fired

Trigger weight and travel: 5lb/9mm (identical for every round)

Safeties: Trigger, striker, disconnect safety, loaded chamber indicator

Slide and barrel: Tenifer-treated carbon steel

Frame: High-strength polymer

RRP: \$1495

Distributor: Frontier Arms, Adelaide

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Bella Twin with her Cooley Ace 1 and the skin of the record grizzly in 1953. Photo: Bruno Engler.



Small rifle **BIG BEAR**

Ben Gregory is a fan of the little Cooley Ace 1 single-shot rifle

It was barely above freezing as Bella Twin moved silently along the oil exploration cut line and luckily she saw the grizzly before he saw her. Backing herself into the undergrowth she silently pulled back the cocking piece on her little rifle and waited. As a Cree woman hunter she'd seen dozens of bears but this was the biggest grizzly she'd ever encountered. He was massive.

Given the wind direction she hoped he'd bypass her and she could slink back the other way but as he moved level with her less than three yards away, the grizzly caught her scent and suddenly turned. Bella realised she'd no other option but to shoot and in an instant saw the vulnerable spot behind his shaggy ear and pulled the trigger. Amazingly the grizzly dropped like a stone and didn't make another move.

This event unfolded in May 1953 near the southern shore of Lesser Slave Lake in Alberta, Canada with the grizzly that 63-year-old, five foot tall Bella bagged that day turning out to be the largest ever recorded at the time - nine feet tall with a skull measuring 42.3cm long and 25.2cm wide.

Bella's battered firearm was tiny like her, a Cooley Ace 1 bolt-action single-shot. Made in Canada the Cooley was a low-cost, very simple and compact rifle with an overall



length of 34" (86cm) and a 17" (43cm) almost straight-profile barrel. Chambered for the .22LR cartridge it would also shoot .22 Short and .22 Long cartridges and one source claims Bella actually bagged the giant grizzly with feeble .22 Long ammunition delivering barely 100 ft-lb of energy.

H.W. Cooley Machine and Arms Company started in Toronto in 1903 but only began firearms manufacture in 1919 and when it comes to firearms Cooley is a household name in Canada, similar to Lithgow here in Australia. Founder Herbert Cooley was a machinist and inventor whose only two listed patents were granted prior to WWI and related to petrol engines and a portable lifebuoy. It's claimed that despite a large

range of different longarms produced by the company during his lifetime, Herbert saw no value in patents as he felt they offered little true protection to the inventor.

The company's first production rifle was the Cooley Canuck, a simple bolt-action single-shot .22LR which sold well and led to a broader range of (mainly rimfire) rifles and shotguns. During the Great Depression all the major firearm manufacturers identified demand for a low-cost, single-shot .22 rifle which served many struggling families as a means of harvesting small game for the pot.

New models appeared accordingly and were sold in almost every sporting goods, hardware and outfitter store in rural towns.

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Gunco	St Albans	VIC	Gawler Fishing & Outdoors	Gawler	SA	In Season Hunting & Fishing	Warragul	VIC
H & S Firearms	Sale	VIC	Fisher Firearms Wholesale	Norwood	SA	Nyati Hunting Supplies	Bundall	QLD
Alpine Country	Morwell	VIC	Cleaver Firearms	Margate	QLD	GC Firearm Supplies	Sunbury	VIC
Holts Gunshop	Colac	VIC	The Barn	Oakey	QLD	My Mates Outdoors	Melton	VIC
Melbourne Gun Works	Tullamarine	VIC	The Outpost	Park Avenue	QLD	Smiths Outdoors	Bendigo	VIC
Wild Outdoors	North Shore	VIC	Horsley Park Gunshop	Horsley Park	NSW	Belmont Guns & Ammo	Belmont	WA
Northern Vic Ammo Supplies	Tungamah	VIC	Magnum Sports	Roseville	NSW			
The Sports Hut	Invermay	TAS	Safari Firearms	Bexley	NSW			
			Elks Hunting & Fishing	Albury	NSW			

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Small rifle - big bear

For the Canadian market Cooley produced the Ace 1 which, at the height of the Depression in 1933, sold to wholesalers for \$2.90 (Canadian) and was shipped in a cardboard box along with a cleaning rod. By this point the Cooley company had outgrown its original plant in Toronto and moved manufacturing to Cobourg, Ontario.

The Cooley Ace 1 uses a simple solid 12.5mm diameter cylindrical bolt which locks to the 4mm tubular steel receiver at the root of the sturdy bolt handle, the top of this root stamped 'Proof Tested Made in Canada'. A knurled and waisted cocking piece at the back of the bolt has to be manually pulled back 14mm to full cock after loading the chamber and closing the bolt. This and the sturdy half cock notch on the striker make for a very safe design and was one of the gun's main selling points. The firing pin is flat-faced and 3.3mm wide and coupled with the strong striker spring makes for utterly reliable ignition by virtue of the fact that roughly a fifth of the circumference of the .22 rimfire case rim is flattened on firing.

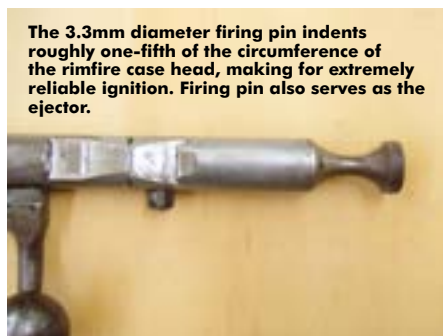
If slipshod ammunition manufacture has resulted in missed spots when priming mixture is spun into the rim, the Cooley's design lessens the chance of a misfire. Having fired many thousands of rounds of different brands through my Ace 1, I don't ever recall a misfire, something I can't say for other .22s I've owned with tiny, nail-like firing pins. The spring-loaded firing pin also serves as the ejector, throwing fired cases positively to the right on opening the bolt.

Sights are very simple and consist of a simple fixed U-notch rear sight mounted in a dovetail milled into the receiver ring and a half-circle blade front sight 1.3mm thick, windage adjustments made by drifting the rear sight in its dovetail. This is a rifle set up for small game hunting at ranges less than 50m, the stock being a decent piece of American black walnut with a semi-pistol grip and no buttplate. The fore-end is very short and projects just 9cm beyond the front of the receiver ring.

The rifle is technically a take-down design and removal of a single screw 10cm to the rear of the fore-end tip allows separation of the stock and barrelled action, forming a compact 1.45kg package that's 54cm long (it would easily fit into a typical field backpack). Although small, the Ace 1 has a 35cm length of pull and is comfortable for an adult to shoot, trigger pull measured at 550 grams (1.2lb) and smooth, though with a hint of creep. My example has no factory serial number, apparently a common thing with Depression-era rifles where licensing and registration weren't required.



Detail of the open action showing stout steel spring extractor and large diameter combined firing pin and ejector. Bolt locking surface can be seen at the back of the ejection opening.



The 3.3mm diameter firing pin indents roughly one-fifth of the circumference of the rimfire case head, making for extremely reliable ignition. Firing pin also serves as the ejector.



The heavy non-rotating striker portion of the bolt assembly incorporates a cocking knob and half cock safety notch.



The Cooley Ace 1 taken down for easy stowage as a package less than 55cm long and weighing 1.45kg.

The end of Cooley Arms as an independent manufacturer came with a take-over by Olin-Winchester in 1961. Later Canadian-made single-shot .22 rifles, such as the Lakefield Mossberg Mark 1 manufactured up until the 1990s, feature an almost identical action design as the old Ace 1 and were aimed at a similar market. Second-hand Cooley rifles are not rare on the Australian market and as well as being collectible are a good choice for training youngsters in the basics of safe shooting and small game hunting. ●



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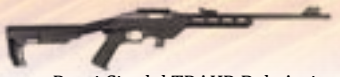
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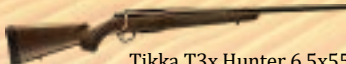
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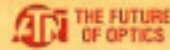
Nikko Stirling Clearance



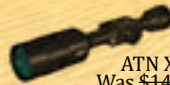
Nikko Stirling Octa 3-24x56
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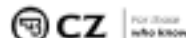
Vortex Venom 5-25x56 FFP
EBR7C Reticle in MRAD or MOA
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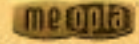
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PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Walking on air

Remington's Express Hunter is fun on a budget, says Con Kapralos

Air rifles have come a long way since my youth. I can recall the days when sporting goods shops and department stores would sell budget brands that could be bought without any form of licensing, though admittedly these rifles (or 'slug guns' as we called them) were only suited to plinking at inanimate objects and certainly wouldn't be considered for hunting.

Those were the days

Current air rifles are powerful and well suited to plinking as well as taking small game species and pests at ranges up to 50m. While premium makes which embrace pneumatic propulsion systems can cost upwards of \$1500, the mainstay of air rifle design is the spring-operated mode of pellet propulsion.

But now Remington Arms has released a new air rifle, the Express Hunter, which is of a break-barrel design but incorporates a new format in pellet propulsion - the Nitro Mag gas piston system. The Express Hunter is a full-size rifle and comes in .177 and .22 calibre models complete with fibre-optic front/rear sights, a 4x32 scope and rings.

Raytrade, Australian distributor of Remington firearms, sent *Australian*

Shooter the Express Hunter Air Rifle in .177 calibre for review. The rifle arrived in a traditional green carton with Big Green's logo on the front and sides as well as the features of the rifle which is made under licence for Remington by the Crosman Corporation, world-renowned for air rifle design and manufacture.

At a glance.

The rifle on review is of full-sized dimensions, measuring 1130mm and weighing 3.15kg. The circular receiver which houses the Nitro Mag gas piston is quite substantial at 348mm long and mates up to the 475mm barrel in .177 calibre, the one-piece polymer stock with hard rubber recoil pad completing the package.

Barrelled action

This consists of the 348mm circular tubed steel receiver mated up to the 475mm steel barrel via a break-open design synonymous with air rifles. The receiver is quite plain, having only a $\frac{3}{8}$ " dovetail on top which gives a 180mm length for attaching rifle-scope mounts. A small hole in the receiver top between the two dovetail rails serves as a means to accept a recoil stop for the supplied scope rings, this being mandatory as the recoil and vibrations encountered on

an air rifle will easily cause them to move on the dovetail.

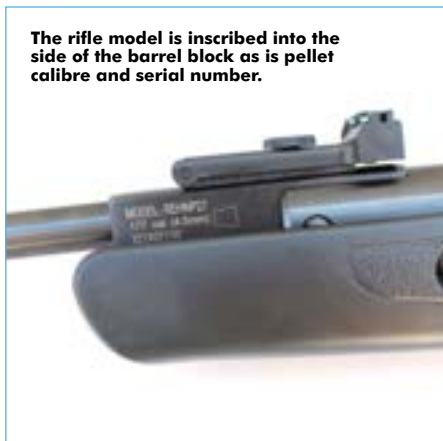
The rear of the receiver tube is enclosed by a circular cap which offers an even surface to bear against the head of the stock, the only other adornment on the receiver being the manufacturer's name and model on the right and a warning statement on the left. The front of the receiver tube is secured in place by two screws either side of the fore-end which are easily accessed, while the rear is held by a single screw which also fastens the triggerguard.

The steel barrel is sufficient in length at 475mm and is dominated by a 150mm polymer cocking shroud at the muzzle end, giving the user a way to grip the end of the barrel when cocking the rifle. The polymer barrel shroud also has a front optical sight incorporated and this is used in conjunction with the rear sight at the back of the barrel. Both front and rear optical sights use fibre-optic inserts to assist in positive alignment with the dominant eye and the rear sight is fully adaptable for windage and elevation simply by turning the adjustment dials on the body.

The Nitro Mag gas piston is cocked by the break-barrel nature of the design. Two cocking arms underneath the receiver act in tandem to compress the gas piston



The rear sight is easy to adjust for elevation and windage.



The rifle model is inscribed into the side of the barrel block as is pellet calibre and serial number.



The trigger and safety blade arrangement is a neat design.

as well as resetting the trigger sear in the process. The trigger is flexible with a small hex-head screw behind the trigger blade allowing any tweaks to be carried out. A blade safety in front of the trigger acts directly to block the trigger sear when pushed to the rear, and when thrust fully forward away from the trigger blade permits the rifle to be fired. Both receiver and barrel have a satin black finish which complements the polymer stock.

The stock

This is surprisingly good. Being made of polymer it's extremely tough, solid and devoid of any 'hollow' elements which seem to plague injection-moulded synthetic stocks. The buttstock has an ambidextrous cheekpiece and the grip is open, allowing easy reach of the trigger blade.

The triggerguard is a separate unit fitted to the underside of the stock by two screws, one of which also secures the stock to the receiver. Embossed panels adorn the pistol grip area either side of the fore-end and give good grip as well as being aesthetic in their look. A solid rubber recoil pad helps stop the stock slipping when the rifle is shouldered, as recoil of the .177 calibre pellet travelling at 1200fps is negligible.

At the range

The rifle is supplied with a Centrepont 4x32 scope and matching rings as well as the open fibre-optic sights. The rifle was tested at a distance of 25m, shooting paper targets along with inanimate targets such as metallic spinners and empty 12-gauge shotshell hulls, a variety of .177 air rifle pellets all performing well. While the open sights were easy to set up and adjust, the riflescope gave an extra edge when it came to shooting accurately though the supplied scope was a tad inadequate as the image, even at 25m, was hazy and lacked any positive adjustments.

I'd certainly recommend acquiring a quality scope made specifically for high-powered air rifles, something with more magnification than the 4x32 Centrepont which would allow precise shooting out to 50m with a degree of confidence and would be critical if using the rifle for small game or pest control.

Summary

This rifle is available in .177 and .22 calibres and comes with a five-year warranty. It's thoroughly modern in design and function with the Nitro Mag gas piston being 70 per cent quieter and 25 per cent more accurate than conventional coil-spring

air rifles. This is a great way to practise shooting without the huge expense of metallic cartridges, a container of 500 air rifle pellets being fairly cheap. It's perfect for plinking at the range or the farm and with a decent optic fitted makes for a potent small game or pest control outfit out to 50m. The Remington Express Hunter retails for \$450 and is available from your authorised Raytrade dealer. ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Remington Arms (made under licence by Crosman Corporation)

Model: Express Hunter

Action: Break-barrel, Nitro Mag gas piston

Calibres: .177 (up to 1200fps), .22 (up to 900fps)

Sights: Fibre-optic front and rear, adjustable for windage and elevation, $\frac{3}{8}$ " dovetail on receiver top for scope mounting hardware. 4x32 Centrepont scope and rings included with rifle

Trigger: Adjustable for pull-weight

Stock: Polymer, ambidextrous Monte Carlo cheekpiece, rubber recoil pad

Length: 1130mm

Weight: 3.15kg

RRP: \$450

Distributor: Raytrade

Crank it up

This simple innovation will boost your scope's capabilities, writes Chris Redlich

Have you ever encountered a product that catches your attention and has you asking: "Why hasn't this been thought of before?" Well, one that fits this description is the new ScopeX2 Zoom Adapter patented by Sector Optics. Simple by design, it's an engineered attachment which fits on and over the objective end of a straight tube scope, enabling an increase of two-times magnification to the scope's fixed or variable range.

If another product like the ScopeX2 is available I certainly wasn't aware of it and I was super-keen to put this one to the test. The ScopeX2 is available in two sizes - 30mm and 34mm - and supplied for review by Australian distributor Dolos Tactical was the popular 30mm adapter.

Most straight tube scopes generally have a limited magnification range and field of view (FOV) due to their small objective lens but the ScopeX2 is essentially a state-of-the-art optical upgrade, serving as an add-on larger objective lens which boosts the host scope's FOV, zoom capabilities and lowlight performance. Furthermore, Sector Optics provides a ScopeX4 (four-times magnification upgrade) adapter in two size variants also for 30mm and 34mm scope tubes.



The X2 unscrewed from the clamp section of the adapter.

The ScopeX2 came protected by a cloth drawstring sack and was packaged in a tidy cylindrical box. Plastic caps cover the precious glass lens surfaces and also supplied with the all-important user manual are Allen keys. Adding a touch of patriotic class to this all-American made product is a US 1c coin, required for elevation and windage adjustments.

The ScopeX2 has a 40mm objective lens housed in a shockproof adapter body that's purged for fog and water resistance. This is solidly made from aircraft-grade aluminium

which fits snugly to a 30mm scope tube and at just 227 grams is comparable to the objective bell of most quality scopes housing 40mm lenses.

For fitment to one-inch scope tubes a nylon bush is supplied which slips over the tube, taking up the remaining tolerance down from 30mm. There's absolutely no need to realign your existing scope's adjustments though the ScopeX2 must be aligned to your scope and, once done, can be easily removed from the host scope and refitted without resighting.



The one-inch tube aims to combat recoil.



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Crank it up

Field testing the ScopeX2 adapter

Thankfully I had two scopes to enable a thorough field test of the ScopeX2. The original Sector Optics scope supplied for my September 2021 *Australian Shooter* review of the G1T2 thermal imager has a 30mm straight tube and was my first option as host scope for the X2 adapter. I mounted the G1 scope using 30mm mounts to my Remington 22-250 and sighted it in as per any other scope. Once satisfied I'd achieved zero, the ScopeX2 was slipped over the objective of the G1 and pushed on far as it would go.

The close machine fit was evident, reinforcing my opinion of quality manufacture. A white indicator strip on top of the adapter identifies top dead centre and I aligned it accordingly. The user manual states correct fastening torque of 15in-lb for the 4x 3/32 hex clamp screws though I used the supplied Allen key and tightened the four screws each diagonal at a time until firm. When not using a torque wrench ensure you don't overtighten screws - finger-tight is sufficient.

Wholly practical by design though perhaps not the best look for your scope, the ScopeX2 lens body, once attached, can be uncrewed from the threaded clamp section of the adapter to allow for re-using the original scope lenses. To align the ScopeX2 to my zeroed G1 scope I simply fired a shot at close range to the target and, not surprisingly, my first sighter was slightly off but within easy adjustment of finding zero. Both elevation and windage graduated marks are calibrated for four inches of adjustment at 100 yards (4 MOA).

Interestingly the adjustment dials have no rotation indicators marked, so by following the host scope's turret indicators I found they corresponded and before adjusting the dials I loosened the lock screw (on the left of the adapter) with one of the Allen keys. The 1c coin mated perfectly to the windage and elevation adjustment slots and with a couple of tweaks after a few shots the ScopeX2 was perfectly aligned to my rifle and ready for hunting. Satisfied with finding zero I tightened the hex lock screw.

Before too long I was making my way round a hunting property I'd used before with the aid of a spotlight and the Sector Optics T3 thermal monocular (see review on Page 78), my first challenge arising when a cottontail revealed itself and the ScopeX2 didn't disappoint. Shortly after I spotted a trotting fox quartering away from me at some distance but he couldn't outrun the 22-250 Rem once I had a good sight picture through the ScopeX2.

Unfortunately the night fell quiet thereafter but to say I was happy with the results would be an understatement. Shooting a predatory redcoat never seems to lose its appeal and at no stage did I feel handicapped by having the ScopeX2 adapter fitted, the sight picture clear in lowlight and G1 reticle precise on target.

Now the ScopeX2 had proved itself on a rifle of varmint pedigree I was keen to see how it fared atop a big gun. As mentioned I had at my disposal two scopes of straight-tube design and the other one worth testing the ScopeX2 on was a Leupold VX-3 1.5-5x20 with one-inch tube, my dilemma being the small Leupold is mounted to a rather heavy-recoiling Ruger No.1 in .375. The rifle is no pussycat and when shooting 300-grain projectiles at close to 2700fps there are no discounts in the recoil department, a perfect way to test whether the ScopeX2 could handle a heavy kicker.

Using the nylon spacer ring for the Leupold's one-inch tube I slipped on the ScopeX2 and, anticipating a rough ride, tightened the screws with my torque wrench 2lb over the recommended setting. Sadly the ScopeX2 didn't pass the hard recoil test as after five shots the adapter decided to jettison the host scope and landed beside me on the bench. The adapter's lenses and internals were fine but the



A 1c coin for windage and elevation adjustments adds a touch of US-made class.



ScopeX2 simply slides on to the objective end of a straight-tube Sector Optics G1 30mm scope.



ScopeX2 mounted to a one-inch tube on the hard-recoiling .375 Ruger.



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(Medium calibres are 560mm long and magnum calibres are 610mm long unless chosen otherwise)

Barrel muzzle diameter: 15mm, 17mm, 19mm, 22mm, 25mm

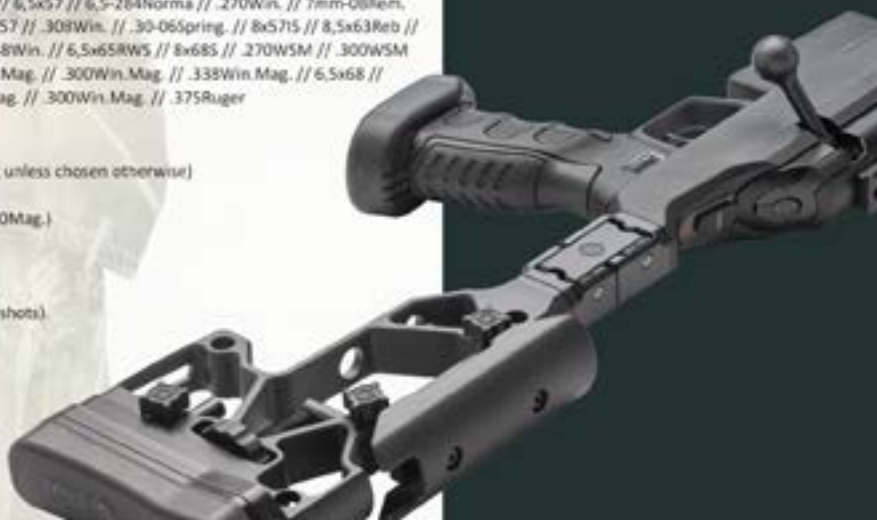
Action: 6 lug bolt (3 lug bolt Cal. .300Whisper | .222Rem. | .223Rem. | 5,6x50Mag.)

Recoil bed: Embedded in the stock

Safety: 3 position safety

Magazine: Detachable magazine, 3 shots (Magnum calibre 2 shots).

Accessories: Extended detachable magazine, 5 shots (Magnum calibres 4 shots).



Crank it up

advised clamping strength by Sector Optics will have to be revised. Possibly the nylon spacer arrangement could be to blame but I'll leave that to the experts.

Summary

All in all I was rapt with the concept of the ScopeX2. The ability to double your straight tube scope magnification and widening the FOV is a novel yet simple design and not without merit. As stated the ScopeX2 clamping strength was unable to handle the recoil of my .375 Ruger and accordingly I wouldn't recommend it for rifles of a hard-kicking nature.

But I will endorse it for rifles chambered in low to moderate recoiling cartridges such as a .223 Rem, .22-250 Rem or .243 Win. Personal field experience in removing ferals on a night's spotlighting trip left me impressed by the added flexibility the ScopeX2 gave the G1 on my 22-250 Rem. The sight picture was crystal clear and I could be forgiven for thinking I was using a standard high magnification scope.

The ScopeX2 (30mm) adapter as tested retails for an affordable \$448.70 at time of writing and, as with all Sector Optics products, is covered by a five-year warranty. Recommended retail prices for the other zoom adapters by Sector Optics are: ScopeX2 (34mm) \$463.10; ScopeX4 (30mm) \$1162.95 and ScopeX4 (34mm) price on application. All after-sales service



ScopeX2 had success in the field mounted to the 22-250 Rem, bagging a cottontail and fox.

is handled by Dolos Tactical, sole Australian distributor of Sector Optics who can be contacted at sales@dolostactical.com. More at www.dolostactical.com ●

• Dolos Tactical have generously added an attractive 11 per cent discount, exclusive to SSAA members on presentation of a code available by contacting them.



ScopeX2 kit as supplied with protective cloth sack, US 1c coin and nylon spacer for one-inch tubes.



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Comparison of lengths of the three .577 calibre muskets.

Fully loaded

Parker-Hale replicas a gracious nod to history, writes Paul Heiser

In 1971 Roger Hale of Parker-Hale in Birmingham, England started production of what would be exact replicas of the Pattern 1853 .577 calibre Enfield musket and its derivatives. I doubt Hale could've imagined that more than 50 years later his muzzleloaders would still be appreciated for their shooting qualities and faithfulness to the original firearms they were based on.

Alfred Gray Parker was a Birmingham gunmaker and excellent shot who specialised in making sights and accessories for target shooters. His nephew Arthur Parker, another keen target shooter, joined his uncle Alfred and in 1904 formed a limited liability company owned by the Parker and Hale families.

Several generations later Roger Hale was running the company. Roger not surprisingly was a keen target shooter and for whatever underlying motivation decided to release a historically accurate facsimile

of the Enfield Pattern 1861 muzzleloading artillery musketoon (carbine). In managing a firearm manufacturing firm, Hale obviously sensed that an accurate reproduction of a service muzzleloader would be a commercial success and fortuitously had contacts which allowed him access to the Ministry of Defence Pattern Room, where all the original gauges used for making Enfield muzzleloaders has been preserved.

In 1972 the Pattern 1861 Artillery Musketoon was released and became an instant success buoyed by strong export sales. Here in Australia the musketoon (more commonly known as carbine) was well received despite its higher retail price than that of US and European muzzleloaders. Having a total length of 39" and a barrel measuring 24" they were an ideal introduction to muzzleloading and were a convenient size to take pig shooting. The rifle, like the rest of the series, came in an attractive box with lots of accessories.

In 1974 and '75 the Pattern 1853 Rifled Musket (1974) with a 39" barrel and overall length of 55" and the Pattern 1858 (1975) with a 33" barrel and total length of 49" were released. A perusal of 'for sale' adverts show the Parker-Hale Pattern 1853 was not as popular in Australia as the Pattern 1858 and 1861 which I attribute to two factors - firstly it's an extremely long firearm and doesn't have the utility of the Pattern 1861 and secondly it's not as accurate as the Pattern 1858 Naval Musket.

The original Pattern 1853 and several of its derivatives had 1:72 rifling which was perfectly adequate for what it was intended but unsuitable for competitive target shooting, while the Pattern 1858 Naval Musket had one obvious and one not so obvious feature which made it a more accurate rifle. Firstly it had 1:48 rifling which better stabilised projectiles and secondly it was designed to be used with a cutlass in lieu of a standard bayonet.



Close up of the Pattern 1861
Musketoon lock plate.



View of the of Volunteer lock plate.



The Royal Navy decided a stiffer barrel would be required when the rifle was used with a cutlass and the combination of better rifling and a stiffer barrel made the Pattern 1858 a more accurate firearm. It should be noted the Royal Marines, who come under the control of the Royal Navy, would have used the Pattern 1858 and were issued a superior rifle to that afforded to the infantry in the army. The Parker-Hale Pattern 1858 was and still is an exceedingly popular rifle in both the UK and Australia for competitive shooting.

The Parker-Hales were also popular in the US for re-enacting and competitive shooting. Both the Federal and Confederate governments bought large quantities of Pattern 1853s and the Confederates also issued various Enfield short rifles and some .451 calibre Whitworths to their best marksmen. Re-enactors were excited to be able to source a copy of the Pattern 1853 that was the substitute standard longarm in the conflict. Parker-Hale also manufactured for the US market a non-historical Pattern 1853 with 1:48 rifling for use by competitive shooters.

Following the success of the three .577 calibre rifle muskets, in 1976 Parker-Hale issued the .451 calibre Volunteer Rifle followed closely by the .451 calibre

Whitworth Rifle, both premium quality and only intended for target shooting. They're representative of typical target rifles of the era as there was no fixed patterns nor were they official issue, the Parker-Hale Volunteer Rifle being a representation of what a member of the Volunteers would've used for competitive target shooting (the Volunteers were established as a body of men sufficiently well trained they could be mobilised if the need arose).

Initially target grade .577 calibre barrels were retailed that could replace standard issue barrels in Volunteer rifles but this was no optimum solution. The .451 calibre was found to offer better results for competitive shooting and rifles specifically made in this calibre for target shooting were introduced. The first production of Parker-Hale Volunteer rifles had Rigby rifling which from 1983 was replaced with Henry rifling.

The Parker-Hale Whitworth like its Volunteer stablemate is representative of a civilian target rifle, the main difference being that unlike the Volunteer with a traditional round bore and rifling, the Whitworth has a hexagonal bore designed by Sir Joseph Whitworth. This came about when the British government commissioned Whitworth to design a new service rifle to replace the Pattern 1853 with two

Close-up monitoring of
Whitworth hexagonal bore.



Full length view of the Whitworth.



Full length look at the Patt 1853 Musket.



Fully loaded

stipulations - the new rifle must retain the same barrel length and overall dimensions and the projectile must be the same weight as the current service projectile.

Whitworth finally settled on a hexagonal bore of .451 calibre with corresponding hexagonal projectile. The new rifle was extremely accurate and advanced for its time but was very slow to load, fire and clean. Both the Volunteer and Whitworth have what's known as patent breeches - the breech rather than .451 calibre being closer to .30 - which raises the pressure when fired, giving more velocity to the projectile but at the cost of greater fouling and the need for thorough cleaning after every shot.

Though declined for service use it quickly claimed its niche as a first-class target rifle as it was found cylindrical projectiles worked as well as hexagonal ones, the round projectiles to use the technical term

'upset' under extreme pressure to become hexagonal and thereby form an effective gas seal. Though not issued by the British government, as previously mentioned a small number of Whitworths were bought and issued by the Confederate government. Both the Parker-Hale Volunteer and Whitworth rifles were offered with 33" and 36" barrels and came with a .451" hand sizer, wad punch, niggler wrench, Lyman mould, extra rear sight blades, brushes and copper beryllium nipples.

Ordinary steel and even stainless steel nipples rapidly burn out under high pressure due to the patent breeches as mentioned, a typical 530-grain projectile over 70 grains of 3F powder being no slouch (these days platinum-lined nipples are used and while not cheap they give sterling service). The stocks featured good chequering and the only item not supplied

was a Vernier sight suitable for target shooting, though sights are personal preference and whatever would've been supplied wouldn't suit everyone.

Parker-Hale in production of these rifles only took a couple of shortcuts. Apart from the Pattern 1861 musketoon stock they used two pieces of wood for the stock, finger joints are hidden under the barrel bands and the sling swivels were said to be surplus No.4 SMLE swivels made between 1939 and 1945. In the early 1990s Parker-Hale was wound up, a victim of changing social attitudes and government indifference and sadly most of its records were thrown into a skip, meaning the complete story of the company and its production of firearms, sights and accessories is most likely lost forever. ●



Brushes and wool mops, nipple wrench common to Volunteer and Whitworth models.



Serjeants Tool/Multi common to .577 calibre muskets.



Copper beryllium nipple and interchangeable blades for rear sights common to Volunteer and Whitworth.



.585 calibre Lyman mould in Parker-Hale packaging for .577 calibre muskets.



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Take a brake

Shooting the .300 Blk offhand with the Eliminator installed virtually removed muzzle jump, making accurate follow-up shots much quicker.

Grizzly Eliminators, as Brad Allen discovered, really tame that recoil

In this day and age it's an unfortunate but true fact that few gun-related items are actually designed and manufactured in Australia. Consequently, I'm always pleased when I find quality Australian-owned and made products on offer. Some time ago I met Paul Stathis, owner and operator of Grizzly Precision Muzzle Brakes, when I tested two of his brakes on my son's Remington Long Range .300 Win Mag. As luck would have it I'd actually been looking for just such a muzzle brake as, under recoil, the .300's muzzle would jump up and left, causing total loss of sight of the target.

In a walkabout hunting rifle this may be acceptable but in a varmint-hunting

or target situation it was less than ideal, causing the shooter to stray on most occasions. After fitting the muzzle brake, recoil of the big .300 Win Mag was eased to about that of a .243 shooting 100gr bullets with phenomenal reduction in muzzle jump, rifle torque and felt recoil. We've had a Grizzly muzzle brake fitted to that rifle ever since.

When Paul contacted me recently to advise he had several models of his new Grizzly Eliminator muzzle brake in production, I was keen to take a closer look. He sent me his latest offerings in two calibres, one in 30-cal I intended to test on a little Ruger Ranch .300 Blk and a 22-cal brake I'd try out on my Ruger American Predator .223.

The GE58x24 as supplied suits calibres 'up to 30-cal' with a standard $\frac{5}{8}$ x24tpi thread. There are many current factory centrefire rifles furnished from the factory with that particular thread size including Ruger Precision, Tikka CTR and Tac A1, Howa Varmint, Remington Varmint, Kimber Varmint, some Savage and Bergara rifles as well as most other rifles with muzzle thread shoulders no larger than 23mm OD.

The GE12x28 model suits calibres 'up to .224-cal' with a standard $\frac{1}{2}$ x28 thread. Current factory rifles supplied with barrels threaded accordingly are CZ 515, Ruger Precision and Savage .22 cal rifles and any other firearm with a $\frac{1}{2}$ x28tpi thread and shoulder no larger than 21mm OD.



Grizzly Eliminator muzzle brakes, both stainless and blued, side profile.

GRYPHON

GQ50L | CQ35L | CH35L | GH25L | CQ35 | GH35 | GH25



The HIKMICRO GRYPHON takes center stage with many unique features including its revolutionary bi-spectrum Fusion technology which engages the thermal sensor alongside a conventional optical camera to deliver an incredibly super-detailed thermal image.

The new chassis design has been developed with practicality in mind and easily operated with one hand with all the features easily accessible. New features include a jog wheel which allows you to scroll the magnification as you would a conventional optical scope, an optional Laser Range Finder and the convenience of a removable battery to extend your observation times. The large 1024x768 OLED display gives you a bright and crisp view of your surroundings.

At the heart of the Gryphon is the highly accurate sub-35mk NETD 12um Thermal Sensor which is capable of detecting the smallest of temperature differences, building an incredibly detailed image, even in the harshest of conditions. The thermal lens system also has a high specification F1.0 / F1.2 aperture which means all of the available thermal signal reaches the sensor. This combined with the highly accurate thermal sensor guarantees excellent thermal performance.

The WiFi and dedicated app allows you to take complete control of the unit's settings and features from your smartphone. The LYNX thermal imaging scope can capture snapshots, record videos, and set parameters via the **HIKMICRO Sight App** once connected to your phone via hotspot. Search **HIKMICRO Sight App** on the App Store (iOS System) or Google Play™ (Android System) to download.

SPECIFICATIONS

	MODEL	SENSOR	FOCAL	MAG	FOV	RANGE	MEMORY	BATTERY	WEIGHT
GRYPHON	GQ50L	640 x 512, 12um, NETD < 35mK	50mm, F1.2	2.9 - 23.0, x8	8.78° x 7.03°	2600m	16GB (460,000 Images)	Up to 4.5h	510g
	CQ35L		35mm, F1.0	2.0 - 16, x8	10.97° x 8.82°	1800m		Up to 4.5h	
	CH35L	384 x 288, 12um, NETD < 35mK		3.35 - 26.8, x8	7.5° x 9.7°	1800m		Up to 6h	
	GH25L		25mm, F1.0	2.39 - 19.12, x8	10.53° x 7.9°	1200m			
	CQ35	640 x 512, 12um, NETD < 35mK	35mm, F1.0	2.0 - 16, x8	10.97° x 8.82°	1800m		Up to 4.5h	480g
	GH35	384 x 288, 12um, NETD < 35mK		3.35 - 26.8, x8	7.5° x 9.7°	1800m		Up to 6h	
	GH25		25mm, F1.0	2.39 - 19.12, x8	10.53° x 7.9°	1200m			

FEATURES

Pixel interval: 12 μm
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Take a brake

Grizzly Eliminators come in both stainless and blued steel models with the 30-cal brakes having five vents and the 22-cal brakes three. The 30-cal is 71.45mm long and weighs 118 grams with the mini brake coming in at only 50.6mm in length and a mere 77 grams. All Grizzly muzzle brakes are self-timing so don't require fitting by a gunsmith and have easy-to-follow instructions on the pack.

The need for a muzzle brake on a .30-cal rifle may be understandable but a muzzle brake on a .223? Well when you think about it, .223s still produce a certain amount of recoil as do all rifles regardless of calibre and I believe that in some cases, the recoil generated by a .224 centrefire rifle could be enough for the shooter to momentarily lose the sight picture of the usually small animal/targets associated with .224 centrefire hunting or shooting.

Field testing the Grizzly Eliminators came with no real surprises and I was suitably impressed by their performance. The light Ruger Ranch .300 Blk, although not at all uncomfortable to shoot from the bench without a muzzle brake, could best be described as lively but with the GE58x24 fitted, recoil and muzzle jump were tamed substantially.

Shooting off the bipod the little .300 Blk behaved well, with greatly reduced muzzle jump and felt recoil and it was a simple task to keep the target in view through the scope for the duration of the shot. Addition of the muzzle brake has also made the little Ruger far more aesthetically pleasing.

To simulate offhand shots at multiple targets I fired several strings with the Grizzly muzzle brake installed and also without. It was significantly easier to maintain a good sight picture during the strings having the brake installed, with no noticeable muzzle jump. The addition of an Eliminator on any rifle used for offhand shooting, like fleeing pigs in close cover, would be of immense benefit and give the hunter an edge with those quick follow-up shots.

The GE12x28 .22-cal brake was the eye-opener of the pair. To make the test parallel with that of the .300 Blk, I first shot a few groups with the .223 over the bench with a Spartan bipod and no muzzle device. As expected there was the usual mild recoil and a small but annoying amount of muzzle jump and after fitting the Grizzly Eliminator I repeated the process.

The Ruger .223 behaved like a well-trained hunting dog, sitting still on the bench during the shots with no perceptible muzzle jump at all and only a hint of recoil - it was easy to maintain full sight of the target under the minimal amount of felt



Old and new (from left): Grizzly Tactical, traditional Grizzly Round, five-port Grizzly Eliminator and three-port Eliminator.

recoil. There was a feeling of complete control over the .223 which seemed to perform in a totally submissive manner while being fired. Again, the three-port model on the .223 has an attractive look.

My immediate thought was this would be an excellent addition to any .224 centrefire used for kangaroo culling work or similar. Bearing in mind most hunters and shooters use suitable hearing protection these days (as all muzzle brakes do tend to throw the muzzle blast back at the shooter), the advantage of virtually eliminating muzzle jump with any of the .224 centrefires used for this purpose would be a definite advantage in the field. It maximises accuracy and lethality as the extra control obtained with the Grizzly Eliminator made my .223 a genuine pleasure to shoot.

Paul advised these muzzle brakes are still manufactured in Sydney on their Axis CNC

machines and are an addition to his product line-up, with earlier models still available. Current thread sizes include 1/2x28tpi, 5/8x28tpi, M14x1p and M15x1p with other sizes to be introduced depending on customer demand. Grizzly Eliminators have been around for three years now and are sleek and trim in appearance with a muted style that's not out of place on any target, tactical or hunting rifle.

The Grizzly Eliminators certainly live up to their name and if recoil or excessive muzzle jump is a problem with your rifles, the addition of a muzzle brake may be just what the doctor ordered. At time of writing the recommended retail prices were \$179.95 for the three-port .22-cal mini and \$290 for the .30-cal five-port model. Grizzly Eliminator muzzle brakes are distributed by Winchester Australia so check them out on the website. ●



Three-port Grizzly Eliminator fitted to Brad's Ruger Predator .223 for field testing.

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That sinking feeling

As seasoned hunter Sam Garro discovered, it pays to prepare for anything

Kangaroos bounding through floodwater.

Hunting in company has generally been the norm for me over the years but there are times when I prefer to go out alone. This is in order to fully focus on the game pursued, be in tune with the bush surroundings and better observe wildlife activities and behaviours while at the same time appreciating the whole experience.

Then there are certain hunts which prove challenging due to their nature, whether that's rugged or swampy terrain, inclement weather, degree of fitness or the adventurous determination to venture into new territory which can be a deterrent and not for everyone.

During my hunting life I've faced a few testing solo outings but there's one above all others I'll always remember which stretched my physical capabilities, bush experience and mental fortitude to get myself out of a potentially uncomfortable and embarrassing situation where I could've spent a night alone under the stars.

Flooded forest

On the year in question excess rainfall resulted in much of the land, including the area hunted in the past, being inundated with floodwater, mostly a foot high around the lower contours of the land. In some parts it was knee-high with patches of dry land like islands which enabled wildlife and stock to feed and remain as the water gradually subsided. Fortunately the elevated track in the flood-prone area enabled us to reach the campsite without too much trouble, though how much hunting we could actually do under the conditions was yet to be determined.

Ready for the hunt

Early the following morning while my mates chose to spend a restful day in camp, I decided to explore the flooded forest on my own and see how far in I could venture in search of game, primarily a representative billy goat sporting a nice set of horns. To prepare for an all-day hunt, apart from my rifle and ammo I took a backpack with a few snack bars, water bottle, compass, small medical/survival kit, some cord, skinning knife and film camera (pre-digital days).

As my hunting buddies were aware of my bush experience and familiarity with the terrain they weren't too concerned at me heading out alone, but to cover any unforeseen situation I still informed them of the general area I'd be hunting along a fence line extending from camp in an easterly direction for several kilometres.

Wildlife and livestock

Around 7am I left camp with backpack and rifle, awakening swarms of tiny insects which meant progress was slow as I cautiously felt my way underfoot so as not to stumble over any hidden branch or debris in the tannin-coloured water. Not surprisingly, both animal and birdlife seemed to relish the lush and abundant food conditions while clear skies and warming sun reflecting off the water felt good on the body - I was in my element in these unique surroundings.

A few hundred metres in and a solitary well-conditioned boar not more than 80m away casually foraged forward through the tallish green grass in my direction, the top of his black back and head just visible. I crouched to observe this fine specimen with its glistening coat close to within



A fine mature boar with glistening coat in the long grass.



The property with goats in normal conditions.

five metres before I snapped some great shots and while it was a mature boar, his ivories had yet to develop so I let him go to grow, as they say. Livestock, predominantly cattle, had no problem navigating the watery conditions as did the occasional mob of kangaroos bounding across one dry section of ground to another.

Goat sighting

Stalking through the forest I periodically paused for water and a snack, all the while glassing my surrounds which offered plenty of wildlife but no sign of goats. The area certainly held them - but where were they? The stalking took me well into the afternoon before I grudgingly accepted it was pointless continuing and with nightfall less than a couple of hours away I should start heading back.

No sooner had the thought entered my mind than movement between two distant trees on dry land caught my attention. Peering through my Leupold 3-9x40mm scope I spied a white billy with a reasonable set of horns accompanied by two other goats, one being half-grown and from about 150m I harvested both the billy and the youngster with the Schultz & Larsen 6mm rifle using Sierra 87gr bullets.

I took time to savour the moment before taking a few snaps and an hour or so later the billy's horns and thick, long-haired hide and all the meat I could carry from both animals was stowed in the backpack. Shouldering what was now a heavy load, I turned towards the sinking sun in the western sky for the long haul back to camp.

Accidents will happen

Leaving the dry ground, I'd only gone a few paces in a flooded patch next to a large gumtree when I suddenly sank into a depression I hadn't detected below the water, submerging myself up to my shoulders. Somehow I managed to stay upright and hold the rifle above my head but everything else including my camera, gear and backpack was drenched. Caught totally unaware and somewhat startled I knew I had to ignore the cold, wet discomfort and any concerns that might enter my mind, just pick myself up and make a beeline for the fence to my left a few hundred metres away that would take me back to camp.

As I hauled myself out of the water I noticed a greenish fluid seeping from a roll of film inside the camera and oddly enough I was more distraught at losing the photos I'd taken that day than anything else. But a few moments later to my sheer relief I remembered changing the roll after loading the backpack.

I reached the fence with only minutes of daylight remaining but there was no time for reflection as my mates by now would be concerned. In a worse-case scenario I'd have stayed put on dry land and started a fire to keep warm and as a beacon for the others to find me. Wandering aimlessly in the conditions would've been foolhardy but luckily I hadn't injured myself and didn't need to take that path. As I slowly slogged my way back on mostly dry ground next to the fence, composure set in with the camp and a hot cuppa not too far away.



Trophy billy goat spotted between distant trees on dry ground.

That sinking feeling

Back in the dark

As I neared camp an hour or so later the distant light and occasional honking of vehicle horns lifted my spirits as I trudged into camp just after 7pm, tired and wet but relieved to have made it back. One of the boys struggled to lift the weighty backpack from my shoulders as I explained the reason for my tardy return. Talking away I suddenly realised I'd no feeling in my arms so immediately lay down on the camp stretcher, hoping it was nothing serious or lasting. Half an hour later I was back to normal - the backpack straps around my shoulders supporting the heavy weight had restricted blood flow to my arms, causing the temporary paralysing effect. Another sigh of relief.

State of mind

It's the type of situation you try to prepare for and hope never arrives but, as in my case, events can sometimes take over and create their own consequences. The late goat sighting, time taken to retrieve the horns, skin and meat, stepping into a water-hole and the fading light all contributed to the situation I found myself in. Fortunately I had the presence of mind not to panic and focus on what I had to do to overcome the predicament.

Conclusion

Planning for a safe return to camp, letting others know where you're going and carrying a survival kit can make all the difference. I still pack a similar kit with new additions including a Bushnell BackTrack GPS, headlamp and Lifestraw water filter. While I was much younger back then and considered myself a fairly experienced hunter, I learned a valuable lesson that day and have never stopped adding to my knowledge of the outdoors. ●



Sam in later years on the property in normal conditions with a goat taken for meat.



Sam with the representative billy goat.



Sam in present day with trophy billy goat horns and survival kit.

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Pointer

pulls no punches

As Ben Unten discovered, this straight-pull shotgun has several applications

I was looking forward to reviewing the Pointer straight-pull shotgun and it didn't disappoint, impressing me as soon as I opened the box. It's not at all what a traditional shotgun looks like with its synthetic stock, adjustable cheekpiece and enlarged thumbhole - but I couldn't wait to put it through its paces.

The gun

The Model WS500 is a Turkish-made 12-gauge shotgun with a 4+1 tubular magazine which features a red follower to indicate when the magazine is empty. It has a 76mm (3") chamber behind a 508mm (20") barrel, comes with a fibre optic-type red front sight and a ghost ring on a Picatinny rail at the rear. While this isn't traditional for shotguns, as a long-time rifle shooter I found acquiring the sight picture extremely easy with this set-up. The green anodised action is slotted to accommodate the black straight-pull bolt handle which features a Z-type offset, allowing it to be more easily reached by the shooter (the bolt handle is removable and can be reinstalled for left-handed use).

The supplied choke is an interesting configuration. The Pointer is equipped with a cylinder ported choke and what that means is it's an extended choke with integral muzzle brake fixed to the front end. The Pointer muzzle has a Beretta Mobil

choke thread pattern, making it easy to find a variety of alternative chokes that will also fit. This shotgun has a two-position safety and the butt comes fitted with a recoil pad with four spacers which can be individually removed if required to shorten the length of pull. The Pointer weighs approximately 3.2kg unloaded.

In the field

This shotgun swings easily due to its shorter barrel length and the straight-pull bolt-action comfortably handled all number

of shells during field testing as the ejectors spat out spent shells smoothly. The Z-type bolt handle is easily accessible without having to remove the shotgun from your shoulder meaning that, depending on how good you are, your sight picture can be more or less maintained while the action is cycled for rapid follow-up shots.

For my two-bob's worth the bolt handle design delicately rides the line between being large enough to ensure positive grip and comfortable to use, without being oversized and likely to 'catch' on things. It's also



Z-type offset for the bolt handle.

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UPFITTER

Pointer pulls no punches

easy to check the firearm is unloaded once off your shoulder by inverting your right hand to grasp the bolt and pull the action open. A further benefit of being able to change the bolt handle side without needing tools is shooters can configure the shotgun to work the action with either their trigger (rearward) hand or forward hand, depending on preference.

The muzzle brake does reduce recoil by a small-to-moderate degree and increases muzzle blast by a similar percentage. The adjustable cheekpiece means it's quick and easy to set up for individual shooters but also comes with a brilliant additional feature: this type of shotgun really lends itself to a simple red-dot or low-powered scope for a variety of hunting applications. The Picatinny rail means the scope can be mounted via the rail and adjustable cheekpiece set to the correct height to allow for the adjusted eyeline. However, the genius of this set-up is that if something was to go wrong with the scope it could be removed, the cheekpiece lowered and open sights used with a minimum of fuss.

Although I love timber, if I'm being honest I actually prefer synthetic stocks on my field guns (let criticism from the purists begin) as their durability in all types of weather speaks for itself. There's something about the oversized thumbhole and pistol grip which, aside from looking cool, is comfortable and intuitive to use. It did take a little while to become accustomed to the loading sequence for the 4+1 magazine but any glitches during loading were directly attributable to operator-error.

The ghost ring sight is clearly labelled and was quick and easy to adjust so I had the Pointer patterning spot-on at 25m. This turned out to be lucky for me as I had the Pointer close by when the family yelled: "Fox in the front paddock!" I grabbed the shotgun and a handful of shells and headed out front where I was fortunate enough to manoeuvre in to around 25m of the prowling cub. Confident of the distance and the Pointer's ability I shouldered the shotgun, aligned the sights and pulled the trigger. The Pointer barked as the cub spun once and went down for the count - extremely satisfying.

Cons

There's little not to like about this shotgun. Not that I ever rely on them but the safety is tucked just in front of the pistol grip and is fiddly to use. Also, it does have a red tell-tale indicator but this can only be seen if you roll the gun over so I'd prefer it to be more visible, making it easier to confirm the safety has been engaged. The Pointer doesn't come with a rear swivel but I'm confident an after-market one could be fitted.

Summary

Like me, the Pointer WS500 straight-pull is unlikely to win any beauty contests. Also like me, it's unlikely to care one bit. This firearm is impressive to use in the field and whether chasing pigs in the thick stuff or maximising feral pest control, the rapid follow-up shot capabilities of this shotgun, coupled with its reasonable price point, should suit you down to the ground. The Pointer straight-pull retails for around \$700, comes with a five-year warranty and is available from most good gunshops. Visit www.osaaustralia.com.au for more. ●



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Never-ending quest

Over the years Samuel B. Mann has enjoyed numerous firearms but the search goes on

Have you ever wondered why rich Britishers have double rifles made in small deer-stalking calibres? My guess is they regard shooting as a dynamic sport like tennis or cricket where success comes from good form through practised shots. As teenagers they'd be sent to a shooting school and, when grown, fitted for a best gun and when deerstalking came up the favoured rifle would be one which functioned exactly like their shotgun to minimise stuff-ups. This may seem a bit twee . . . until a hunt in Africa or India was planned, then assured handling became deadly serious.

So what should mere mortals do? Have their guns fitted, if possible, yes but sometimes life doesn't go that smoothly, at least it hasn't for me. I grew up on a farm and my father had been a keen shot as a boy and bought his £4/10 Belgian Double at age 14 from selling the skins of foxes he'd trapped. Though he trapped a lot of foxes that gun may not have needed too many as he sold the silver skin of one for £3 in the Great Depression. After the war he became a soldier-settler, shooting just for pest control.

He did like to shoot ducks, though, and one of my earliest memories is him fishing at twilight on the banks of the Eumeralla. His gun lay beside him and when a flock of ducks came over he grabbed it and fired - I'll never forget those tongues of flame in the dark blue sky. At nine I shot my first quail with that old hammer gun and remember the long push of its recoil which didn't hurt but pushed me way back. The gun didn't fit me and was pretty loose, possibly why it often misfired with ICI Grand Prix shells though not the Maximums we used for foxes.

One day I shot some rabbits in the back paddock and came back to where my father was drafting sheep in rudimentary yards. It was a hot morning so I put the rabbits and gun under the trailer and went to help with the sheep. Later, dad moved the tractor without knowing that and ran over the gun, bending the barrels banana-like. Never say die he took the barrels off at home and belted them 'straight' against a bag of superphosphate - it never missed a rising quail again.



Still used to double triggers after his African trip, Samuel found them again on a borrowed gun for pheasant shooting in NZ. Photo: Michael Carey

Then he decided to buy another gun. I'd have loved a little High Standard .410 pump for quail but it was only seen in US magazines. I used to haunt Hal Pedrina's gunshop whenever we went to Hamilton and fancied a Savage 12-gauge on his wall as that would be the shot, I thought, for everything including ducks and foxes but dad was a farmer so bought a farmer's gun, an American bolt-action. He probably thought a pump gun would cost too much ammo in my hands. I hated that ugly gun with its high comb for bashing your cheekbone and muzzle venting to make my ears

ring. It had a screw-choke, often set on American author and environmentalist Aldo Leopold's 'infinity' and did deliver eternity to a few foxes.

I opened the choke up one night though as a fox had been taking our lambs so we sneaked out, dad carrying the light and heavy battery, yours truly the Mossberg. Finally we saw red eyes among the green ones of the flock and could hear the fox which had killed one of twin lambs and was crunching on its bones. The Merino mother had cleared off, leaving the other lamb to orbit the fox as though it was mum.

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Never-ending quest

I walked around the light and was remarkably close, the fox otherwise engaged and, whenever the second lamb came close, he made a half-hearted snap before returning to the job at hand. From about 10m I stopped, aimed at his chest and fired. The animal was mangy and no loss to the garage door but that lack of fur made the hole all too obvious.

Though I scored an airgun then a pea rifle for my 16th birthday, I was 22 before another shotgun came along. My wife worked at Target and told me they were ditching their guns and ammo so I snapped up a Bentley 200 SxS discounted to \$90. Though the patterns crossed and the extractor cammed against cases, I shot some ducks and the odd fox with it then sold it two years later when we moved to London and that \$120 covered most of a Pentax SLR camera. A few years on I bought a new Nikko Stirling Miroku O/U for \$350, a step up though it used to stick a bit when opening. Being of old-time average build, I find standard dimensions generally fit me and the gun was good in that regard.

Around 1983 a friend offered to sell me a Beretta 57E for the same price and I thought that might be an improvement. I always thought of Beretta as the poor man's Woodward-Purdey due to their high lock-up and shallow profile - this one had 30" barrels and the pull was about 15", maybe both too long for me. Worse, the comb seemed a bit thick and, with no appreciable cast off, caused me to shoot to the left and while I liked the selector better than the Miroku's, the single trigger failed a few times.

On my second honeymoon (I'm no romantic) I bought a Winchester double rifle for \$1000 as a speculation, knowing the new price was five times that. For some reason the maker hadn't regulated it but smart buyers were still interested. Jack Millar offered to swap it for a sleeved Beretta SO2 but, as I promised my wife I'd make some money from it, I had to pass that one up. One interested party put up a Nikko skeet gun, a Brno Model 2 and 17 Ackley Hornet on a Ruger No.3 plus \$500 and reasoning this represented at least a 60 per cent profit, I accepted.

So I moved to a second-hand Winchester 101 XTR (my first gun with screw-in

chokes) which fitted me well but the Schnabel fore-end checked my linear relationship with the barrels. One problem I've noticed with all three guns on the basic Browning pattern has been a tendency for the safety to jam if you flick it off but fail to take the shot and return it to safe without setting the selector to one side or the other. I never experienced a problem like that with the separate selector on Berettas.

My cousin mentioned selling his Beretta 686 (with no Schnabel) so I bought that and gave my eldest son the Winchester. This 'new' gun fits and has served well for the past 23 years, the spring-loaded ejectors making more sense to me than the



Double guns long gone from the cupboard - the Greener Forester, Beretta 57E and Winchester Grand European .30-06.



Young Samuel with his first hammerless shotgun and a fox caught coming home one morning in 1973.



Samuel as a hairy youth outside a famous gunmaker's in 1975 - lacking 'leather-bound pounds' he didn't go in.

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Never-ending quest



The doubles still in the family 'vault', from Samuel's father's Belgian John Lloyd shotgun to a Heym double rifle.

little 'kickers' of the Southgate type but the hooks on the ends can wear and I had to have mine repaired. There have been other side-by-sides along the way and when licensing came in a friend gave me his old Greener Forester with Damascus-look barrels though my gunsmith said I could use it with light nitro loads. I took it out for ducks and cocked both barrels as a flock came along but despite a doubling ba-boom and extra-long push, no birds came down.

I'd given my father a new AyA 117 with detachable sidelocks about 1980 but he had trouble with its ejectors. The dealer had it 'repaired' but not well enough so I asked if he'd cover the cost if I had it seen to. He agreed to that and I had Dick Sharp fix it but when I took the receipt to the dealer he initially refused to pay but coughed up eventually.

Towards the end of my father's life he gave his guns to me and I'll keep three of them until stumps. I like that AyA very much for itself and its associations and though the buttstock could be fancier, the gun handles well and its engraving is handsome in my opinion. The year before I went to Africa it was the only shotgun I used, looking to get back into double triggers to practise for my new double rifle. I bought another AyA about 20 years ago, a 20-gauge boxlock for the kids to learn with, shortened the stock

A study in contrasts. The Spanish AyA 117 with detachable sidelocks looks English but is much more affordable. The Heym 88B PH .450/.400 rifle has good wood and chequering but the metalwork is Germanic funeral grade.



and barrels slightly and made a lighter fore-end to fix the balance and to lessen recoil I reduced the weight of shot in the available cartridges to that of a 28-gauge.

So what've I learned from all this chopping and changing? If I could have my shooting life over I'd hope to find Beretta-type O/Us to fit me as I grew but always with double triggers. I like the Beretta single-trigger set up well enough, especially the selector, but double triggers give instant choke selection without needing to change anything back next time.

As in riflescopes I want reliability most of all. Double triggers give the ultimate assurance and, if you later go to DB rifles for dangerous-game hunting, it could be a matter of life and death. Not only do double triggers eliminate complicated mechanisms but even if one lock does malfunction, they give you another to go on with. Sadly I can't find a single Beretta or ATA O/U with double triggers in the latest catalogues.

Going back to those rich Brits, they generally prefer double triggers for the reasons explained, yet automatic safeties

are often chosen. This, I believe, is because with a pair of guns and a loader it helps to know the safety is on when a gun is handed to you, so you develop the habit of always slipping the safety as you raise a gun to shoot. US big-game hunters often advocate manual safeties but I'm not so sure. On a couple of occasions I've released the safety

early, expecting imminent action but when it came a few moments later than expected, found myself pushing at the safety and wondering why it wouldn't move.

That may sound crazy but functions performed often may become consigned to the less-cerebral spinal cord, leading to such reactions. Therefore those rich

enough to use double barrels for everything may decide it's better to develop a habit of slipping the safety every time, even when shooting Trap or elephants. Though we all have favourite brands the main thing when looking for a gun is it fits and points where the shot goes, or a fraction below, and is of a weight suited to your purpose. ●



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Feral foursome

Anthony Puddicombe follows up his article which appeared last October

Bob and I were back at the same property - again as SSAA members operating under the Association's Farmer Assist program which helps farmers control pest animal numbers - and the trip turned out to be one we're unlikely to experience ever again.

We were driving along a well-formed track, working the spotlight and following a new fence with the intent of finding a gate which would give us access to the paddock. The fence was on my side when suddenly I spotted green eyes reflecting in the light and judging by their height I was pretty certain they belonged to a feral cat. I let Bob know so he slowed the vehicle and turned the spotlight on them.

I picked them up in the crystal clear optics of the Zeiss scope on my .223 and to my surprise there were two cats feasting on something on the ground. I lined up the one on the left and dropped him on the spot

as the other one took off to the right and through the fence. I followed it in my scope and, relaying the information to Bob, he gave a shriek on his predator caller which had proved deadly on the last trip and immediately the cat turned and looked at us. I was ready and 'bang' - second cat down.

I was ecstatic as feral cats in my book are public enemy number one when it comes to our native fauna and removing them is top priority. I was about to clear the rifle and retrieve them when Bob told me to hang on and he'd check for any more. As he blew on the caller and panned around with the light, not 10m from the first victim was another set of eyes looking at us. I quickly picked it up in the scope and in an instant cat number three was on the deck.

We kept looking and using the caller for another few minutes but there were no more predators to be seen so we cleared the rifles, grabbed a torch and camera and

headed over to the spot. The first cat was easily located and had been eating a lizard which had clearly been killed recently, then the other two were rounded up and brought back for a photo.

As I was placing them next to the lizard, Bob was looking around with his head torch and no more than six metres away spotted another cat lurking in the grass. I sprinted back to the car for the rifle and on my return it hadn't moved an inch. As I wound the scope down to its lowest power I could just make it out with the light from Bob's head torch and despatched it as well. Four feral cats downed in the same spot - unbelievable.

So this outing not only helped out the farmer, we were proud of the fact we'd removed four feral predators which had killed the last of our native wildlife. ●

Fab four: The feral quartet taken in exactly the same spot.



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Enough is enough

Make sure your rifle isn't over-scoped, advises John Hill

The first scope I ever owned was an ancient 2.5x 'Field' I never mounted on any rifle. It had a $\frac{3}{4}$ " tube and reticle adjustment moved the reticle, not the image. The scope was optically poor with a slightly blurred image and a few rainbows around the edges and I can't give one good reason why I bought it, apart from the fact it seemed a good idea at the time. My father managed to fabricate a side mount consisting of a number of bits and pieces, all silver, soldered together. He then fitted that old Field scope to his Stitz single-shot rifle and reckoned it was an improvement on the gun's original open sights so I was pleased someone found a use for my first riflescope.

My second scope was a little Bushnell 3-9 variable fitted to a new Krico .22LR and bought as a package. This particular scope had a special mounting rail underneath, both rail and scope enclosed in a pair of Zero mounts which eventually caused trouble as they were the wrong mounts and the scope worked loose. What's more, the scope had its reticle in the first focal plane where it became thicker as magnification was increased. On 3x the cross-hairs were

ultra-thin and on 9x were extremely thick so it was set permanently on 5x where the cross-hairs appeared about right for a .22 rabbit rifle.

The variable didn't stay on the Krico for long before it was traded for a 4x32 fixed power Bushnell Banner which fitted the Zero mounts perfectly and stayed on the gun until it was sold many years later. The Krico/Bushnell was a good combination and, with suitable ammo, would keep most of its shots within a dollar coin at 70 paces. I was slowly finding out a few things about riflescopes and my third purchase was better than the first two, my point being that without previous experience, a shooter unfamiliar with scopes can make poor choices.

I've since owned numerous riflescopes of various makes and models which for a long time were all fixed power and it wasn't until the past 15 years or so I moved on to variables. In years gone-by you paid big money for a good reliable variable, while cheaper versions were a bit suspect. Most of my scopes were relatively low-powered apart from a 4-16x40 Tasco which some shooters

wouldn't consider high-powered anyway but just because a scope has a wide range of magnification doesn't mean it must be used on its highest setting. High magnification isn't necessary on a hunting rifle, particularly when used on medium or large game where a low-powered scope of 4x or less will do the job more than adequately. Such a scope offers its user a wide field of view which makes running game much easier to find.

I grew up in an era when open sights and to a lesser extent peep sights were common and I only started using scopes in my early 30s. A 4x was fitted to most rifles back then (either 4x32 or 4x40) and compared to open sights any 4x scope was a brilliant addition to your rifle. But today we seem to be stuck with the 'bigger is better' mindset, whereby most scopes have a large range of magnification and even larger objectives compared to anything from 50 years ago. Perhaps that can be filed under 'progress'.

To my eye some rifles look out of balance due to an overly-large scope mounted on them. A neat, lightweight rifle appears clumsy with a thumping great scope on top and such an addition not only adds to

This fixed-power 10x56 Lynx on a .308 Browning A-Bolt is inappropriate. A hunting rifle of that calibre is better suited to a scope of less power.



overall weight, it looks out of place from an aesthetic point of view - in other words it's top-heavy. A scope should be in proportion to the size and application of the rifle.

Large scopes usually have a large objective lens which means they must be mounted high so the objective bell doesn't foul on the barrel. High-mounted scopes

create a parallax problem between trajectory of the bullet and line of sight (scopes must be mounted as low as possible to reduce this). A high-mounted scope also upsets the



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Is your rifle overscoped?

relationship between the comb of the stock and the shooter's cheek which is necessary for shooting comfort and a firm hold. Fortunately, more rifle stocks are made today with adjustable combs which is a move in the right direction as far as I'm concerned. A small low-mounted scope is a far more suitable addition to a hunting rifle than something bigger and supposedly better.

It's time to mention 'tactical' scopes which have come into vogue in recent years yet are hardly appropriate for a hunting rifle. The reticle in some tactical sights can be so cluttered with dots and dashes you almost need to know Morse code to understand what it all means, so a simple duplex or similar reticle is all that's needed for hunting. Large unprotected reticle adjustments also have no place on hunting rifles where they're likely to be damaged in thick bush or if the gun's accidentally dropped, yet many shooters are buying tactical or target-type scopes with lots of magnification and large objectives to mount on hunting rifles.

On a number of occasions I've put myself to the test using scopes of varying powers and found there's little difference in group size between low and high-power ones (group sizes change very little when zooming from 4x to 12x). What you gain with low power you lose with high power

and vice-versa. With low power a shooter has an increased field of view and almost complete absence of mirage while high power results in a drastically reduced field of view, more perceived wobble and increased mirage, particularly in summer. High-power scopes emphasise rifle movement and unless the shooter has a very solid rest then less magnification can be an advantage - the rifle still wobbles the same amount but it's less noticeable and less of a distraction.

For years I used 6x scopes on my rifles and found that amount of magnification was fine even on small-game rifles (Hornets and .222s) allowing head shots on rabbits beyond 100m. Now in my old age, a 6x is about minimum magnification as increased image size and thicker cross-hairs are helpful to failing eyesight so most of my variables are set on 8x these days which seems about right.

Shooters new to the sport are often guided by salesmen on the gunshop counter and the reason for this is novices have no idea what they want and are open to suggestion from anyone with more knowledge. This is because they lack experience (as I did) to select a suitable scope for a particular rifle and from the salesman's point of view, if he sells a shooter an expensive scope with all the 'bells and whistles'

he's looked upon favourably by his boss regardless of whether the scope was appropriate for the rifle or not.

I knew a sports store where the guy in charge of the firearms department was an accomplished clay target shooter in all disciplines but what did he know about rifles and scopes, apart from what he learned behind the counter? If you're a newcomer to shooting it's advisable to ask at your local SSAA range for advice on rifles and scopes for either hunting or target shooting and even then you'll probably hear conflicting opinions as not all shooters think alike. Scopes for those two categories differ considerably but for a hunting rifle for use on either medium or large game, a 1.5-4x20 would be ideal as they're small, lightweight and can be mounted low (big animals don't require high levels of magnification).

A shooter I know is more than happy to use a 4x or 6x scope on any rifle, including those other shooters would mount scopes of much higher magnification on. He does as well with his low-powered scopes as anyone else though must have very good eyesight and this guy thinks as I do that sometimes less power can be better than more. But not everyone hunts medium or large game and a good many shooters pursue small game animals such as rabbits and foxes, using relatively long-range



Low-mounted scopes reduce parallax error between line of sight and the rifle's trajectory.

Is your rifle overscoped?

In the John Hill's opinion this Savage rifle and Tasco scope combination is well proportioned.



rifles. Under these circumstances greater magnification is required and a typical scope for that rifle should have a higher range, though keeping the size of the scope in proportion to the rifle still applies.

So if you're about to buy a scope for a hunting rifle remember that regardless of its size and weight, you're the one who has to carry it (and the rifle) for several hours through the bush and over hills. A hunting rifle should be in the lightweight category as should the scope so when selecting a good hunting outfit the rifle, scope and mounts should complement each other and their combined weight should match the physical capabilities of the hunter. And if in doubt, lighter is better. ●

Another rifle/scope combo in good proportion is this Brno Hornet with 3-9x40 Simmons.



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G'day Sport

Miroku's MK 10 'Black Edition' left Paul Miller well impressed

We've previously reviewed the Miroku MK 60 32" barrelled Grade V which proved an amazing gun, ideally designed for purpose but with no bells and whistles and I compared it to the fabulous B25 series of Brownings made in Belgium, very expensive but a joy to shoot. All Mirokus of current manufacture are based on this famous Browning design and perform perfectly irrespective of grade and this

review features the new Miroku MK 10 Sport with 'all the mod cons' including an adjustable comb. Like the MK 60, this one is also imported by Outdoor Sporting Agencies of Melbourne.

BC Miroku Manufacturing Company of Nangoku in the Kochi Prefecture of Japan has built a solid reputation over the years - it has been making firearms since the late 1800s on the small southern Japanese island of Shikoku. BC Miroku expanded

rapidly after World War Two when it was again allowed to make sporting arms and has grown to be one of the most successful firearms manufacturers in the world. As we'll see, the MK 10 has been further fine-tuned with the addition of an adjustable comb to make it a versatile competition shotgun.

Action

This MK 10 Sport AC has a silver nitride-finished action which increases

A highly effective and comfortable combination of Sporting stock and Trap-style beavertail fore-end.



its durability. It has fine futuristic laser engraving of concentric circles overlaying a clay target on both sides of the action and I found this modern engraving technique most appealing. The words 'BC Miroku MK 10 Sport' are equally tastefully engraved on the bottom of the action.

As noted previously, Miroku shotguns have a full width hinge pin which provides a substantial surface area for smooth opening and closing, lock-up achieved with a full width flat bolt which fits perfectly into a bite beneath the bottom chamber, an extremely strong method of locking up the action. The gun opens very smoothly and closes with typical Miroku crispness due to incredibly tight tolerances in the CNC manufacturing process.

The opening lever and trigger selector incorporated in the safety are equally precise. This trigger is also adjustable for 'length of finger' and the gun is provided with three trigger shoes of varying widths to allow further fine-tuning for trigger feel. This may seem like a small thing but can make a huge difference to how a gun feels in the hand and in trigger pull consistency.

The inertia operated triggers broke cleanly at around 4lb, the ejectors perfectly timed and worked very well with factory loads. The metal-to-wood fit of action to stock and fore-end iron is perfect and a consistent feature of Miroku quality construction. Very impressive.

Stock and fore-end

This MK 10 Sport has a nicely figured and oil finished Grade 3 walnut stock that's cast right-handed, cast at heel approximately 4mm and at toe about 8mm. The well-made adjustable comb worked perfectly and while I didn't need to adjust it for Skeet, it would certainly benefit anyone looking to establish a Trap-shooting setting to make the gun

shoot higher, something like 70/30 rather than its current 50/50. For fine-tuning your head and eye position the lateral adjustment to the comb will make for a perfect fit.

Stock measurements are a fine example of the higher range of Sporting/Skeet dimensions, the stock with 37mm (1.5") drop at comb and 50mm (2") drop at heel with a 375mm (14.75") length of pull with the comb fully retracted into the stock. The addition of an adjustable comb increases the MK 10's versatility enormously and allows further fine-tuning for perfect gun-fit and definitely facilitates crossing between disciplines for those prepared to stick with one gun and do some patterning to see what height and cast settings suit best.

The stock has a 15mm decelerator pad which soaks up recoil well. It's very comfortable when mounted in the shoulder pocket and the slightly rounded profiling on the top edge of the heel helps reduce the chance of catching on your shirt or shooting jacket as the gun is mounted. While the length of this stock is a good compromise, you could install a 25mm pad if you wanted a longer length of pull for taller or long-armed shooters and reinstalling the thinner pad in winter would allow for extra clothing and retain perfect gun-fit.

The generous pistol grip combines a substantial but comfortable palm swell for right-handed shooters and this model is also available with a left-handed stock, these very full grips designed to align your trigger finger perfectly so you have a straight line trigger pull. The fore-end is beavertail style as opposed to the typical Schnabel we see on many sporting guns and the jury's out for me on which is better - I like them both.

Beavertail fore-ends are usually associated with Trap guns where a precise and repeatable grip is an advantage but with the increasingly competitive nature of



Laser engraving of action and under pistol grip.

Miroku's MK 10 'Black Edition'

Sporting Clays worldwide, the feeling of precision in gun movement the beaver-tail provides is a worthy addition to this sporting gun, especially one designed to switch between disciplines. The fore-end is detached from the barrels with a single finger-operated lever attachment like all Miroku shotguns while hand-chequering on both stock and fore-end is well executed and gives a comfortable grip.

This stock has a pitch down measurement of 3" which helps account for it shooting flat and felt comfortable in my shoulder as it did for several right-handed mates who enjoyed it. Pitch is a bit of a mysterious stock dimension which some say alters pattern placement dramatically. While that hasn't been my experience, it does affect pattern placement slightly and it's interesting to note a lot of guns used for Trap shooting have virtually no pitch down in their stock construction. I think a 3" pitch down measurement like this also helps with fast mounting in guns used for Field

shooting or the gun down Sporting Clays disciplines. Some claim pitch adjustment is just about getting the gun to sit comfortably in the shoulder and is something to work on for comfort and reducing felt recoil.

Barrels and rib

The barrels are 30" with 3" chambers and bored for concealed screw-in Invector Plus chokes (four are supplied in Improved Cylinder, Modified (half), Three-quarters and Full). The rib between the barrels is ventilated with the top rib supported by 12 very short pillars and has a fine white centre bead and white front sight at the muzzle end. The rib tapers from 11mm to 8mm at the muzzle and draws the eye out to the target nicely.

Shooting impressions

A couple of my friends and I gave the MK 10 Sport a good workout on Skeet targets shot both gun up and gun down (in COVID times I was unable to try it on Sporting



Flush-mounted screw-in Invector chokes destroy targets with their high quality patterns.



Robust and accurate adjustable comb mechanism works perfectly for fine-tuning gun fit and comfort.



Miroku quality of manufacture and feel when shooting inspires confidence.



Clays but have no doubt it would be a fine performer). I can see someone buying this updated MK 10 as an all-round gun and using it for all Clay shooting due to the flexibility the adjustable comb provides though it would also perform well in the field.

My right-handed mates loved this gun, commenting on how comfortable it was to shoot and how well it smoked the targets. I also found it precise to shoot but lefties like me would obviously opt for the left-handed version available on request with 'cast-on' and a left-handed palm swell. I'm almost glad OSA didn't have one immediately available for review or I may have called my bank manager to extend the overdraft!

The MK 10 is expected to retail for around \$2950, excellent value for a well-designed and versatile shotgun and, like all Miroku guns, I believe it can be had with a basic plastic Negrini-style case for about another \$100 or combination lock case for \$160 but check with your gun dealer. A genuinely impressive crossover style sporting/all clays gun which comes highly recommended. ●

Full competition pistol grip feels very purposeful and is complemented by quality hand chequering.



Specifications:

Manufacturer: BC Miroku Japan

Model: MK 10 Sport AC (adjustable comb)

Gauge: 12-gauge.

Action: Boxlock inertia coking

Trigger: Single selective, tang safety, two spare trigger shoes

Barrel length: 30" with 3" chambers

Rib: Standard height pillar supported 10mm wide tapering to 7mm at muzzle. Mid white bead and white front sight

Chokes: Four Invector Plus, quarter, half, three-quarter, full

Stock and fore-end: Grade 3 walnut with oil finish, full pistol grip and beavertail fore-end

Stock dimensions: 37mm at comb and 50mm at heel. Cast-off 4mm at heel and 8mm at toe, 375mm length of pull

Weight: Approximately 8lb or 3.7kg subject to walnut density

Accessories: Choke wrench, instruction manual, choke tube holders, Allen key

RRP: Approximately \$2950

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies
osaaustralia.com.au



The 50mm objective lens ensures maximum light transmission.

Budget beauty

Nikko Stirling Panamax well worth a look, says Con Kapralos

Perusing the Nikko Stirling website it's clear this optics company - brainchild of Malcolm John Fuller and the Fuller Global consortium - designs, manufactures and markets sport optics to cater to all shooting applications and budgets. Their riflescope lines are one such example, consisting of 14 models covering everything from designated airgun and rimfire scopes right up to serious hunting and target/long-range optics with either First Focal Plane (FFP) or Second Focal Plane (SFP) reticles.

One superb hunting scope listed which I've been fortunate to have reviewed is the Ultimax category which sadly was a limited edition run. This riflescope gave the high-end European scopes something to think about. Yes, it was that good. The Panamax options could be referred to as an 'entry-level' bracket suited to airgun, rimfire and centrefire use and consists of 12 individual models with two additional sub-models in

the Panamax Precision and Long Range for a total of 15 riflescopes.

Being entry-level doesn't mean the Panamax range cuts any corners as they're superbly built around a one-inch main tube and are feature-packed. One of the most popular models on offer is the 4.5-14x50 with adjustable objective (AO) coupled with the Half Mil Dot (HMD) reticle. Outdoor Sporting Agencies, Australian importer and distributor for Nikko Stirling Optics, sent *Australian Shooter* one for review and it was eagerly received. Having tested and used Nikko Stirling riflescopes during 35 years of hunting and shooting, I knew this model of the Panamax would work - and work well it did.

Up close

The review scope arrived in the customary red and black Nikko Stirling carton with specifications printed on the end flap. The contents were securely packed and

consisted of the riflescope, bikini-style lens covers, a small lens cleaning cloth and user manual. What's immediately evident is the adjustable objective which allows tweaking the parallax from 9.1m out to infinity. The scope is made from aircraft-grade aluminium, the body assembled from individual segments in the objective bell, turret housing and ocular bell.

All components are finished in a lovely matte black with the gold Nikko Stirling emblem on the left of the turret housing and the model's name and magnification printed on the ocular housing. Top-quality seals are used to ensure dirt, dust and moisture are kept at bay and the scope is purged with nitrogen to achieve this.

Starting at the objective end, the 50mm lens helps maximise light transmission and is coupled with the adjustable objective (AO). By rotating the collar on the objective housing, parallax correction can be altered when shooting at precise distances



Elevation and windage turrets are excellent with low-profile, well-designed dials having 1/4 MOA click adjustments and aluminium caps.



Nikko Stirling Panamax 4.5-14x50 AO as reviewed - ideal for shooters on a budget yet big on features.

The ocular is compact and sleek, housing lens elements and magnification selector ring.



while graduations are clearly marked on the AO collar and its operation is smooth and positive.

Moving to the elevation and windage turrets these are no-nonsense, low-profile in design and capped with aluminium covers. The dials themselves are excellent, one click equalling 1/4 Minute of Angle (MOA) or 7mm at 100m, with all movements positive and audible (feeling and hearing each click wasn't a problem). The dials have a chamfered knurled section on the outer edge which allows the fingers to grip the dial and easily make adjustments as needed. These turrets are made for changing point of impact and certainly aren't for dialing in at long-range targets - that's left to other riflescopes in the Nikko Stirling stable.

The ocular housing at the user end is compact and sleek, measuring 75mm long by 43mm wide and houses the magnification selector ring and diopter adjustment (fast-focus) eyepiece, the magnification selector ring being aluminium with a grooved surface to enhance grip. A small stub on the collar permits a little more leverage and is a reference point for the magnification setting with the selector ring moving from 4.5x to 14x without any undue pressure or binding. The diopter adjustment eyepiece is easy to operate and permitted fine focusing of the

reticle to suit individual users. Eye relief was excellent at 80mm.

Internally the use of fully multicoated wide-angle glass lenses gave excellent light transmission with good colour, contrast and clarity out to 300m. Naturally on a rifle-scope in this price-point you don't expect top-tier glass and optical quality, but the Panamax collection continues to surprise and this model was no different. Field of view was excellent throughout the entire magnification range which made the optic suitable for general work, plinking and hunting. The glass-etched reticle with Half Mil Dot was perfectly functional though I prefer a simple duplex-style. Having said that, the Mil Dot is popular with range/target shooters as it allows precise holdover points to be used.

I subjected the scope to the usual tracking exercise at 100m, moving point of impact around the target and firing two shots at each step. Adjustments were positive and precise with the first and final shots overlapping which is always a good sign. The Panamax 4.5-14x50 AO HMD has an overall length of 336mm, weighs 558g and comes with Nikko Stirling's lifetime warranty for the original owner.

The Nikko Stirling Panamax has something to suit everyone looking for a quality riflescope without breaking the bank. You

could easily spend twice as much on other makes and models and not come close to the Panamax options for value, form and function. This scope retails for around the \$290 mark and is available from Outdoor Sporting Agencies dealers Australia-wide. More at osaaustralia.com.au ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Panamax 4.5-14x50 AO HMD
Magnification: 4.5-14x
Objective diameter: 50mm
Field of view: 14x - 3.2m at 100m; 4.5x - 9.7m at 100m
Click value: 1/4 Minute of Angle (7mm at 100m)
Eye relief: 80mm
Elevation/windage range: 60 MOA up/down, left/right
Tube diameter: 1" (25.4mm)
Length: 336mm
Weight: 558 grams
Parallax: adjustable objective - 9.1m to infinity
Reticle: HMD (Half Mil Dot)
Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies
RRP: \$290 (approximately)

No flash in the pan

Senior Correspondent John Dunn
has been fine-tuning a flintlock

Smoke from the priming charge at moment of ignition, the main reason the flintlock is sometimes called a 'flinch-lock'. Photo: Denise Dunn

Ever since I built my first muzzle-loading rifle in the late 1960s I've had a soft spot for flintlocks. In those early days it was the intricacies of their mechanisms that got to me - when you squeezed the trigger the rifle didn't just go 'bang'. As the cock dropped a whole chain of events was set in motion and unless you had your preparations right the rifle wouldn't fire at all. It didn't take me long to realise cap-lock ignition was much more reliable and like thousands of other muzzleloader shooters before me, my interest in flintlocks waned though never really died.

Almost 20 years ago I bought a Pedersoli Mortimer reproduction flintlock rifle in .54 calibre. More than anything else it was to meet a perceived need I had at the time and I must say it has served me well both as a fun gun when required and as a hunting challenge that can't be taken lightly.

When I visited America in 2012 I was inspired once again, primarily by the numerous types and styles of muzzleloading rifles I encountered during our travels, especially those displayed in various Salt Lake City museums. Having learned something of the early history of the Mormons in Utah and seen some of the firearms they'd worked with, I decided it was time for me to

once again look at hunting with a flintlock, if only for the sake of the experience. The Mortimer was accordingly removed from the back of the gun-safe, cleaned up and made ready for some serious shooting.

Working up loads for any muzzleloader can be a little convoluted, systematically experimenting with an array of projectile and powder combinations until you find one that

delivers the accuracy and power required to do the job you're asking of it. Much of that work had been done for the Mortimer previously so it didn't take too long to find the load I needed and the only real glitch I encountered was a lack of consistent ignition. In a clear case of the past coming back to haunt me, I had difficulty ensuring the rifle would fire every time and while I



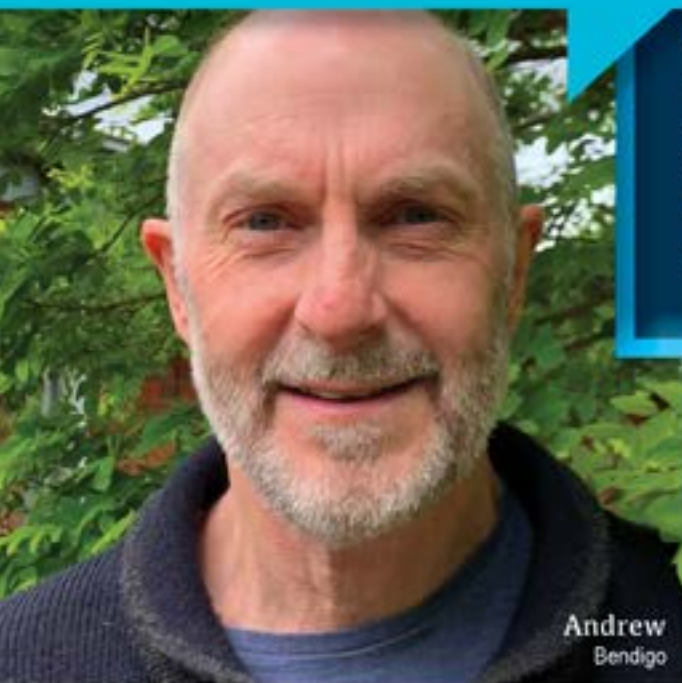
The much-maligned flintlock showing the edge of the flint central to the flash pan and frizzen pushed back as it would be after the rifle is fired.



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understood how the system worked, I obviously needed to know more and so began some interesting research into learning how to fine-tune a flintlock.

For the reader to understand what follows it's important to grasp exactly how the flintlock ignition system works. Those of you who already know will have to bear with me for a few paragraphs and for those who don't, I'll try to keep this as simple as possible. From the early 1600s to the early 1800s the flintlock was used in a wide variety of sporting, military and self-defence firearms and that's a longevity record no other form of firearm ignition is ever likely to beat, so in a historical context the flintlock is worthy of respect. Essentially it's a mechanised version of the ancient principle of striking steel and flint together to kindle a spark that lights a fire or, in the case of the flintlock, a charge of gunpowder.

When the flintlock's trigger is pulled, the cock or hammer is released from its cocked position and drives forward under spring pressure. Clamped in the jaws of the cock is a piece of flint, generally knapped or shaped to have a sharpened edge on the front and as the edge of the flint strikes the frizzen of the lock it does two things. In the first instance it begins to push the frizzen forward and up to reveal the flash pan under it, at the same



Blocking the flash hole with a toothpick when loading ensures the hole remains clear.



Only partially filling the priming pan gives faster ignition, direction to the flame and reduces flash near the shooter's face on firing.

time it scrapes a series of tiny sparks off the face of the frizzen which drop down into the flash pan holding a small charge of fine powder which the sparks flare up.

As that powder burns, the flame it creates flashes through a hole in the side of the barrel (the flash hole or vent) and ignites the main powder charge that's been muzzleloaded into the barrel and is held in place by a firmly-seated projectile. When the main powder charge goes off, the projectile is pushed up the barrel and out towards whatever the firearm is aimed at.

As noted it's an intricate process that requires all the various components involved to work together for a satisfactory outcome. It takes time - though not as much as some people would have you believe - and patience to ensure all goes as it should. Perhaps I should add it also takes nerve control as to the uninitiated, the flash of a priming charge going off right in front of your face can be daunting. The derogatory term 'flinch-lock' wasn't coined without good cause and protective eyewear is accordingly recommended.

The process

Fine-tuning a flintlock for consistent ignition has two components, setting up the lock correctly and loading. Both work together and are crucial to consistent results, especially for hunters where the need to make adjustments to the set-up at the last moment could well blow the only chance you have at taking an animal. I write that from experience and know just how frustrating it can be.



When clamped in, the cock the inside edge of the flint must clear the barrel otherwise it'll be deflected or broken as the cock moves forward under spring pressure.

Setting up the lock

The flint is arguably the most important component of the lock as without it there can be no spark to fire the rifle. As a starting point it must have a reasonably sharp edge simply because that will produce more sparks and to generate those sparks the flint will need to be held securely in the cock, with the top jaw screwed firmly down. A piece of leather or a thin strip of lead sheet is usually wrapped around the flint inside the jaws to prevent it from cracking or breaking, to help hold it in place and assist in ironing out any irregularities in the thickness of the flint itself.

The flint must be set up so its inside edge will clear the side of the barrel as it swings forward - if the corner of the flint strikes the barrel it may break or be pushed sideways in the cock. Either way it won't strike the frizzen squarely and will fail to create the sparks required to ignite the priming charge. The front (working) edge of the flint needs to be in full contact right across the face of the frizzen to produce the most sparks.

All flints will wear over time and require replacing or perhaps sharpening, how fast they wear depending largely on the flint itself. I've had individual flints spark the rifle up to 14 or 15 times before they needed replacing or sharpening while others have struggled to come anywhere near that. Checking alignment of the flint as part of your reloading procedure is a good habit to acquire and will increase the useful life of most flints.

Loading the flintlock

Up to a point, loading a flintlock is the same as a cap-lock or any other muzzleloader. The powder charge is poured down the barrel from a charger (not directly from a

powder horn or flask as they often do in the movies), followed by a patched ball or projectile which is firmly seated on top of the load. However, with a flintlock it pays to block the flash hole before the powder charge is poured down the barrel and this can be done with a vent pick (essential equipment for anyone who shoots a flintlock, used to keep the flash hole clear), a pipe cleaner or even a wooden toothpick.

Any of the above will stop powder from the main charge blocking the flash hole and a clear flash hole speeds up ignition as it ensures that when the priming powder reacts, its flame can flash directly into and spark the main charge without having to burn its way through. It doesn't sound like much but it *does* provide more effective, reliable and faster ignition.

Finally when priming the flash pan don't fill it up, place the priming powder on the outside edge of the pan and never use any more than will half fill the pan. This achieves a number of things: It reduces the flash beside the shooter's face (less powder equals less flash), provides more space and I suspect some direction to the priming charge when it ignites and at the same time hastens the firing process. A priming charge which ignites without setting off the main charge is quite literally a 'flash in the pan' and historically that's where the expression originated.

Overview

While the processes listed may be different to those used by some flintlock shooters, all have been tried and tested in the paddock or on the range and will improve consistency and reliability of ignition when the trigger is stroked - and help make your flintlock hunting or shooting that bit more enjoyable. ●



Knapped flints alongside a node of raw flint from which they're typically struck.



Dream-makers

If you build it . . . Beretta Australia makes
Mark van den Boogaart's wish come true

It's a conversation that plays out every time a few hunting and shooting types come together. What if? What if you could build yourself a rifle? Just pick what you want and make it happen. We can all dream, tell tall tales and impress upon anyone who'll listen what we'd build and some of us, myself included, have even tried. Sometimes you get it right and it's so much better - and sometimes you don't.

But what if someone asked you to build a rifle? Something that'll be on display and be critiqued by thousands of readers - talk about pressure. Well that's what happened when *Australian Shooter* and Beretta Australia invited me to a 'virtual' meeting last year to discuss an idea they were cooking up.

My first thought when they offered me the chance to lead a rifle-build project was 'Yeah!' My second was the Homer Mobile. For those who don't understand the reference Homer, that's cartoon icon Homer Simpson, was asked by his long-lost mega-rich industrialist half-brother to build a

car that would be the flagship of his auto manufacturing empire. What Homer built destroyed the company and wiped out his brother's fortune in one beautifully ridiculous fell swoop.

The build

What became clear after that initial meeting is this wasn't going to be just about choosing some stockroom accessories to bolt together. After receiving considerable feedback from industry, Beretta Australia has established a true gunsmithing service that's open to everyone and they can either help customise your existing rifle or build you a true one-off. If you have a dream they might just be the guys to make it happen.

Talking with Beretta's national sales manager Scott Allen and Byron Young (workshop supervisor and gunsmith) via Zoom meetings, emails and on the phone, we spent a considerable time working up ideas and concepts. The upside was we had the ability to experiment and try new things, the downside being the potential to

create the dreaded Homer Mobile.

We finally settled on an idea for a utilitarian rifle. Now that doesn't mean basic, rather something with broad appeal that could be used across a wide range of applications, in other words built to be used. We also wanted the rifle to stand out, to be truly unique and most importantly be an integral part of where your hunting and shooting journey might take you.

The platform

Now we just needed a base rifle and after considering a few options and different brands I opted for a Tikka CTR in .308 Win. Why Tikka? They make good rifles and have a wide left-hand selection. Why a CTR? Well a couple of years ago I reviewed a CTR and was mightily impressed. Why .308 Win? Because it works, it meets all Australian state requirements and recommendations for hunting calibres and, in a world of supply chain troubles, you'll find .308 Win on the gunshop shelf.



The concept rifle.



Mesa Altitude stock in Mohave pattern.



Byron from Beretta Australia fluting the Tikka bolt.



Major components of the build.



The stock

With the rifle sorted it was down to components and improvements and my first point of focus was the stock. The CTR's synthetic stock is perfectly serviceable but after carrying one for 10 days during a road trip hunting adventure I wanted something a little different so decided on a Mesa stock. Pondering aftermarket stocks I chose the Tikka Altitude, a hunting stock which uses layers of carbon fibre combined with a lightweight fill and included in the stock are bedded pillars, a steel recoil lug and a new set of action screws. I also chose the stock in the Mohave pattern, and yes, I did have an idea for colour and finish.

Optics

For optics I chose Steiner as I've reviewed both Steiner scopes and binoculars in the past and honestly feel you get some major bang for your buck. Like the rifle, Steiner glass is utilitarian and would be a perfect match-up and there are plenty of models to choose from across the Steiner range which was a nice problem to have. As we were building what I hoped would be a high-end or top-shelf hunting rifle, I wanted top-shelf glass and that thinking led me to the Steiner Nighthunter Xtreme in 2-10x50mm, one of their flagship models with 30mm tube and illuminated 4A-i reticle.

Mounts

I'm not a rail guy as I like the clean lines of a rifle receiver though the exception to that rule is my Scout rifle which comes factory fitted with a forward rail mount. Now I understand rails and recognise their value, especially if you want to mount night vision and thermal optics so in designing this rifle, fitting a rail was a significant consideration. In the end aesthetics won out and ultimately we went with a scope-mounting system that would be functional, though discrete, and chose Burris low profile hunting-style rings.



Concept rifle with bipod.

Trigger

After mulling over the idea of an improved trigger I decided to stick with the factory version. This was one of those decisions I went back and forth on but I concluded that sometimes sticking with what you know is the safest way to go.

Bipod

After reviewing some modern high-quality bipod systems in England a couple of years ago, I asked Byron if they could set the rifle up with a Spartan bipod and while not part of the regular Beretta Australia product line, they were able to source a bipod and mounting system for installation on the Mesa Altitude stock.

Fluting

As part of the full gunsmithing option I decided to take up their offer to flute the bolt. Fluting isn't everyone's cup of tea and you can go a little overboard, so we decided on a straight-lined fluting pattern which primarily focused on reducing weight without compromising performance.



Steiner Nighthunter Xtreme in 2-10x50mm post-Cerakoting.

Colour

If there was anywhere along the build process I stepped out of my comfort zone it was around the final finish. I'm a traditionalist at heart as I like blued or at least Cerakote blued barrels, actions and timber stocks though do have one laminate-stocked rifle which is about as crazy as it gets. But that's me and I recognise there's more than one view of the world, so moving away from (my) norm I went for a combination of colours and finishes.

Using the Mohave pattern of the Mesa stock as a starting point we decided on Cerakote FDE (Flat Dark Earth) for the main components and Cerakote Smoke for the minor elements. And with that we had a rifle - or rather the components of a rifle - and it was now up to Byron to put it all together so I could take it to the range and start doing what it was designed to do.

• Next month: Putting the custom-build to the test. ●

Heat treatment



Hunt smart with Sector Optics' thermal monocular, says Chris Redlich

I recently had the fortune of reviewing the G1T2 scope with thermal imager and rangefinder by Sector Optics and discovered a means of identifying ferals hiding behind cover at close range and in lowlight conditions. Additional to their product line-up of night hunting aids is the T3 Micro Thermal Imaging Monocular and, keen to explore the advantages of this new hunting tool, I accepted a review invitation from Australian distributor Dolos Tactical.

Sector Optics T3

The T3 is basically a pocket-size version of the T2 thermal imager found on the G1T2 scope and when I say pocket-size I mean 'small' as it's the most compact thermal monocular I've ever used. It has all the thermal imaging capabilities of the T2 and can be mounted via an assortment of rings to your rifle's Picatinny rail in addition to an existing riflescope and it's this versatility which sets it apart from others. That includes the G1T2 as it can be used as a handheld thermal imaging monocular or 'standalone' close-quarters thermal image sight for an open sight shotgun or

rifle. In addition to these features the T3 can also be mated to the Sector Optics G1 scope using ring clamps and electronically connected to the G1 by way of a USB-C cable, same as the T2 thermal.

This allows the thermal image received and processed by the T3 to be viewed internally via the HUD (head-up display) in the G1 scope ocular housing when taking a sight picture in the same way the T2 provides. Like the T2's impressive features, the T3 has four main-screen colour choices of white hot, black hot, green and red along with a selection of six reticle styles. Other attributes include onboard image processing enhancement, photo onboard recording, battery readout display and auto power save.

Tastefully supplied in a soft cloth pouch, the T3 feels in the hand every bit a quality piece of equipment and weighs a solid but light 150 grams without battery. The 30mm main-tube and body has an overall length of 87mm and, being made from aircraft grade aluminium, is more than adequate of handling the 'crush' of a scope ring for mounting to a rifle. The USB port is on the

left of the body with function finger pad dead centre on top. The T3 is turned on/off by pressing the centre button for three seconds and once 'on' the same button can be used for menu/select displays with the left arrow keypad enabling scroll/down and right arrow scroll/up.

Sharp depressions of the centre button will take snapshot images and the T3 memory can store up to 100 of these. In image mode, individual images can be erased by pressing the centre button for three seconds and all images deleted by holding for 10 seconds. Alternatively, images can be downloaded by connecting the USB cable to your PC. Screen brightness display is fully adjustable and activated by the left keypad arrow with four colour schemes varying from white hot (my favourite), black hot, green and colour, all tones adjusted by toggling the control pad's right button. As with the T2 (of the G1T2) the T3 shares the same screen size with all images displayed clearly.

The optical zoom lens is variable from 2x to 4x magnification and easily adjusted by rotating the objective dial and I'm

T3 has an impressive suite of Picatinny accessories available for alternate firearm attachment.





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Picatinny handle available on order for alternate means of carry.

reliably informed the T3 is the only civilian handheld thermal device available with a genuine manually operated optical zoom lens, unlike digital zoom found on competitors' equipment. A lanyard loophole is on the underside if you prefer to secure the device to your wrist when using as a handheld monocular. Typically, as with all electronic devices, they need power and the T3 is driven by a single CR 123 battery housed in a watertight compartment on the right.

A 'sleep' menu offers battery saving options incorporating a 'dim' and 'shut-off' timer that can be set to off, one, five or 10 minutes, though interestingly the T3 will exit 'dim' after slight movement while 'shutdown' takes priority over 'dim' if both are set to the same timer.

For such a compact piece of equipment the T3 has a host of electronic elements as described with software updates via firmware upgrades. Firmware downloads are available by connecting the T3 by USB cable to your PC or Mac and transferring the data from sectoroptics.com to the unit's system. It may sound like a lot to swallow but even a 'tech gorilla' like me found the supplied instructions for firmware updates in the user manual easy to follow. With the technical side of the T3 covered I couldn't wait to see how it performed in real world scenarios.



Field testing

During the next few months the T3 accompanied me on numerous hunts and took up negligible space in my pocket. Used solely as a handheld monocular I never firearm-mounted the T3 so had no use for the reticles though it proved invaluable in locating game prior to shooting and retrieving it in grassy paddocks. Used in conjunction with my vehicle-mounted spotlight I'd scan and take snapshots with the T3 of game animals making their way across a field seemingly undetected and unaware they were being followed.

Once a decision was made to take a sight picture I'd flick the spotlight on, confirm and identify the target then shoot the chosen feral (fox or hare). A grassy paddock can prove hard to detect a dead fox at distance and the T3 earned its stripes in pinpointing fallen redcoats. It's important to note a dead animal will retain its body heat for some time depending on ambient temperature so enabling the T3's thermal features to make detection easy.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier the T3 was no 'space invader' and became a regular inclusion on almost all my hunting trips, during which time I realised it would also prove handy for bird-watchers, wildlife



T3 mounted to the G1 scope. Images can be viewed through the internal display via USB connection.

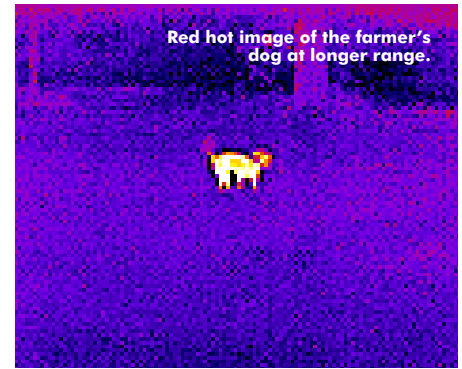




Image of the downed fox.



A farmer's dog clearly identified at close range on an evening scout (green hot image).



Red hot image of the farmer's dog at longer range.

conservationists or outdoors people in search of nocturnal species (the T3 is also used for search and rescue, security, law enforcement and by military agencies). I've tested other thermal imagers with larger objectives and while their lens size gives them an edge for detection and identity, they're nowhere near as compact as this. Available on request, accessories such as 'Picatinny handle' and ring mounts allow the T3 to be used for all aforementioned applications.

I would stress that while detection of an animal's thermal heat can be achieved at medium to long range, it was at closer marks of around 10-50m dependant on

ambient temperature (cold or hot night) the identity of a smaller varmint could be clearly picked up. Larger game such as wild pigs could be identified beyond the 50m-plus range. Being of solid aluminium construction with the versatility to retro-mount via 30mm scope rings to a shotgun or rifle as a thermal imaging shooting aid at close quarters, you can't go past Sector Optics' T3 monocular. This is a quality product backed by a five-year warranty and retailing for \$2380 at time of writing. All customer and aftersales service is handled by Australian distributor Dolos Tactical who can be contacted at sales@dolostactical.com or visit www.dolostactical.com ●



T3 plugged into the laptop through USB cable for downloading saved thermal images.



T3 features a reliable manual zoom adjustment.

300 years of history

The Gunmakers of Birmingham
1660-1960 by Joseph McKenna

Geoff Smith

Most people interested in firearms and their history will know the city of Birmingham in England's West Midlands became the epicentre of world gunmaking as the industrial revolution unfolded. Coal, iron and limestone were sourced from the nearby Black Country while the canal system greatly facilitated transport - and the evolution of guns over the subject period closely mirrors that of European society.

The start of large-scale gunmaking was spawned from several tragedies. Preceded by the English Civil War and beheading of King Charles I, the Great Plague of 1665 and Great Fire of London the following year saw the capital's population decimated, its economy crippled and simultaneously a massive demand for hardware and tools.

Birmingham 'stepped up' and thus began the growth of iron wares on a large scale. Wars then, as now, create opportunities and the 17th century saw the decline in matchlock technology as demand for the flintlock rose. London's 'Worshipful Company of Gun Makers' were not amused by Birmingham's growth and tried vainly to retain their monopoly but this was broken in 1692 and by 1720 contracts were let to Birmingham gunmakers for manufacture of the new 'Land Pattern Musket', soon to become affectionately known as the 'Brown Bess'.

The mixture of economics and politics affecting the gun trade and associated ethics is quite intriguing and to some extent matches what happens today and the American War of Independence (from Britain) saw both sides armed with weapons from Birmingham. Flintlock guns were cheaply and somewhat crudely mass produced (some with attractively vermilion-coloured stocks) for the African trade, where ships' captains bought large numbers and exchanged them for slaves they shipped to the American colonies, even after slavery had been abolished in Britain.

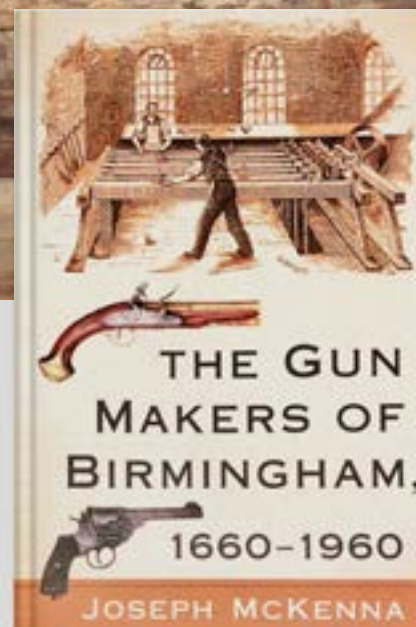
In McKenna's book, development of proof testing of guns is covered in some detail from the early years through to recent stringent rules. The African guns, for

example, were tested by filling them with water and if any seeped through the pores in the hammer-forged, twist steel barrels they were rejected. Later tests were initially required to be done in London but eventually Birmingham, by 1814, had its own proof house and individualised stamps. By this time the city was the largest gun producer in the world and the book details the names of many familiar personalities and how they contributed.

Engineering practices are also covered in some detail, describing how the basic process moved from skilled craftsmen in a variety of roles (filers, spring makers, barrel grinders, lock makers, hammer forgers, stock turners, barrel makers etc) through to lesser skilled operators with machines. Hand forging of a barrel required typically two men with heavy hammers, the barrel maker wielding the barrel blank and one or two more manning the bellows to keep the forge at the right temperature. A steam hammer and powered bellows then meant one person could do the same job and, using swages and gauges, required far less skill. Imagine the amount of work that could be done in the mid-19th century by Woodward's twin 30" bore and 180 horsepower steam engines with their 18ft flywheel compared to human power.

The rise of automation and competition from across the Atlantic and English Channel, coupled with global conflicts, saw Birmingham's gun production rise and fall over time. As the 19th century transitioned into the 20th smokeless powder, breech-loading firearms, 'modern' warfare (now not so modern), machineguns and ammunition manufacture turbocharges the narrative and Chapter 4 entitled 'The Two World Wars' outlines what led Sir John French to say "this issue is a struggle between Krupps and Birmingham" (Krupps being the German Empire's armourer).

But wartime manufacture came with risks. BSA, the conglomeration of Birmingham's main manufacturers, employed 28,000 workers and spanned 32 acres during WWII, their factories bombed



several times with numerous employees killed or injured (the book actually lists the names of the 53 who died). During slow times production transferred to bicycles, prams and motorcycles and as the 20th century drew to a close so too did Birmingham's gunmaking enterprise. Chapter 6 lists (over 103 pages) the names and addresses of the various gunmakers of Birmingham and when they operated.

Concluding the text of this exceptional book, Chapter 7 describes the gun workers from Birmingham's nearby Black Country, many of whom made both guns as well as unfinished components for Birmingham's gunmaking firms.

Four appendices commence with Rudyard Kipling's poem *Brown Bess* then a list of exhibitors at the Great Exhibition of 1851, appendix three provides a chronological list of locations of gunmakers between 1777 and 1957 and appendix four lists the displacement of gunmakers resulting from construction of the Inner Ring Road, which occurred following bombing damage during WWII and saw the loss of many heritage buildings and their gunmaking tenants. The book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography and index. I bought my copy online from Abe Books (\$A89).

• *The Gunmakers of Birmingham 1660-1960* by Joseph McKenna is published by McFarland & Co, North Carolina, soft cover, illustrated, 250 pages. ●

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National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

March 1-July 31, 2022

All clubs and branches

Program: 40-shot match under current SSAA National rule book. No nominations fees apply. See National website for full event details. Contact: juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

Handgun Metallic Silhouette National Postal Shoot

March 1-May 31, 2022

All SSAA HMS ranges

Program: Small Bore, Field Pistol, Big Bore. Prizes: SSAA merchandise vouchers to the value of \$300. Entry is free. Contact: Russell Mowles 0418 819 945.

National Junior Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships

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SSAA Air Rifle Field Target National Championships

June 3-5, 2022

SSAA (ACT) Majura

Program: June 3 Practice; 4 Open Air Rifle FT; 5 Open Springer Air Rifle FT. Prizes: National medals in each grade. Facilities: Camping. Contact: Darius Krivanek 0418 103 360 or Chris Dale 0418 255 874.

SSAA Gallery National Championships

July 23-24, 2022

Para Branch, Greenwith, SA

Program: Events will include Multi-Target I, Timed and Precision I, 1020 Match in Standard and Classic rifles and 1500 Match. Nominations will be received up to the start of events. Facilities: Canteen for snacks and drinks. Contact: Don Robinson 0428 986 070 or Dave McCarthy 0414 880 333.

SSAA IHMSA National Championships

Sept. 30-Oct. 7, 2022

SSAA (ACT) Majura

Program: Sept. 30 Practice; Oct. 1-3 Small Bore and Field Pistol; Oct. 4 Practice; Oct. 5-7 Big Bore. Contact: Russell Mowles handgunssilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au or Cheyne Fischer ihmsa.act@gmail.com

SSAA Fly Shoot National Championships

August 19-22, 2022

Big Springs Range, Wagga Wagga, NSW

Program: August 19 set-up and practice; 20 Light Gun 500m Fly; 21 Heavy Gun 500m Fly; 22 200y Rimfire Fly. Facilities: Catering breakfast and lunch all three days, camping with showers, toilets, cooking facilities, \$10 per person for all the event schedule. Contact: Greg Chapman chappo555@bigpond.com

NSW

SSAA (NSW) Rimfire and IRB Benchrest State Championships

June 10-13, 2022

Seaham Range, Seaham, NSW

Program: See National website for full event details.

Contact: Kim Cosstick 0429 335 389 or kimcosstick@hotmail.com

SSAA (NSW) Big Game Rifle State Championships

June 17-19, 2022

Windamere Regional Shooting Complex, NSW

Program: June 17 camping, practice, Event No.1; 18 Events 2-7; 19 Events 8-11. Medals for first three.

Facilities: Camping and caravans permitted, toilets and showers. Cudgegong caravan park nearby. Event contact: Ben Doherty 0409 831 258 or bjdoherty@bigpond.com.

SSAA (NSW) Benchrest State Championships

June 30-July 3, 2022

Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, NSW

Program: See National website for full event details.

Contact: Ian Thompson: 0499 212 260 or isp_projectiles@yahoo.com.au

Qld

SSAA (Qld) Long Range Precision State Championships

May 27-29, 2022

Captains Mountain Complex, Qld

Program: See National website for full event details.

Contact: luna@ssaaqld.org.au

Queensland NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette Postal Shoots

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

WA

SSAA (WA) Centrefire Benchrest State Championships

May 29-June 6, 2022

Jarrahdale Sporting Shooters, WA

Program: May 29 Unlimited; June 4 Sporter; June 5 Heavy Bench; June 6 Light Bench. Facilities: Camping with showers, toilets, barbecue, limited power, no canteen. Contact: Trevor 0417 085 528 or Dave 0400 205 892.

SSAA (WA) Single Action State Championships

June 4-5, 2022

Southern Districts Rifle Club, Bedfordale, WA

Program: Friday: Set-up. Saturday: Stages 1-4 and 5-6. Sunday: Stages 7-10. Facilities: Camping available from 1pm Friday. Contact: Noel Wilkinson 0419 988 137.

SSAA (WA) NRA & Air Rifle State Championships

June 11-12, 2022

Port Bouvard Smallbore Rifle & Pistol Club, Dawesville, WA

Program: June 11: Scoped 10m Air Rifle Precision; Scoped 3-P 10m Air Rifle. June 12: NRA 3x40 Smallbore. Prizes: Medals for first three, certificates for top score. Facilities: Barbecue, canteen, toilets, showers. Contact: fieldrifle@ssawa.org.au or Matthew Boots 0439 092 686.

SA

SSAA (SA) IHMSA Big Bore State Championships

May 26-29, 2022

SA State Shooting Park, Virginia

Program: May 26 Practice, May 27-29 Competition days (state medals) Facilities: Camping but no catering or canteen. Contact: Stuart Kearney Mobile 0417 417 149.

SSAA (SA) Rifle Metallic Silhouette State Championships

June 18-19, 2022

Monarto Shooting Complex, SA

Program: Saturday 80 shots rimfire and 40 shots air rifle; Sunday: 80 shots centrefire. Range open 8.30am for 10am start. Facilities: Barbecue, showers, toilets, cooking facilities. Contact: mmsrcsecretary@gmail.com

SSAA (SA) Fly Shoot State Championships

July 16-18, 2022

Monarto Shooting Complex, SA

Program: July 16 Practice; 17 200yd rimfire fly, target competition; 18 centrefire 500m fly. Facilities: Barbecue, showers, toilets, range, camping (\$5 per night). Contact: Pat Kitchke 0455 280 024, (08) 8349 6544 or whytiger49@hotmail.com

Vic

SSAA (Vic) IHMSA Ultra 500 State Championships

May 10-12, 2022

Eagle Park Shooting Complex, Little River, Vic

Program: Ultra 500, Unlimited, Unlimited Any Sight. Contact: metallicsilhouette@iinet.net.au

SSAA (Vic) Single Action Black Powder State Championships

July 9-10, 2022

165 Gifkins Rd, Little River, Vic

Program - Saturday: Long Range, four main stages, dusk shoot. Sunday: Six main stages. Facilities: Free camping (limited powered sites), showers, toilets. Contact: Tony Diabolo 0419 187 980 or email diabolot6@bigpond.com

SSAA (Vic) IHMSA Big Bore State Championships

July 21-24, 2022

Eagle Park, Little River, Vic

Program: Production, Revolver, Standing, Unlimited, Unlimited Any Sight, Unlimited Half Scale. Contact: metallicsilhouette@iinet.net.au

SSAA (Vic) IHMSA 80-shot Ram Slam State Championships

August 26-28, 2022

Eagle Park Shooting Complex, Little River, Vic

Program: 80-shot Ram Slam, Production, Revolver, Standing, Unlimited. Contact: metallicsilhouette@iinet.net.au

ACT

SSAA (ACT) Field Target State Championships

June 3, 2022

SSAA (ACT) Majura

Program: June 3: 2 x 30-shot Open Air Rifle Field Target. Facilities: Camping with water, power, showers (\$10 a night), limited canteen. Contact: Darius Krivanek 0418 103 360 dariuskrivanek@gmail.com or Erwin Rebolledo 0402 848 056 erwin61@hotmail.com

SSAA (ACT) Rifle Metallic Silhouette Snowball Shoot

June 11-13, 2022

SSAA Majura Range, ACT

Program: June 11: 80-shot Rimfire, 40-shot Air Rifle; 12: 80-shot Centrefire; 13: 40-shot Rimfire Hunting Rifle, 40-shot Centrefire Hunting Rifle. Facilities: Camping with showers, canteen. Contact: David 0423 043 663, or Mark 0401 867 839.



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Outback Survival by Bob Cooper

Outback Survival covers what you need to do, and how, to survive in the great Australian outdoors. The 230-pages take you through every aspect of a survival situation from bush tucker and bushcraft to off-road driving and survival kits.

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

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

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Adventure Cooking: Fire to Fork by Harry Fisher

Harry's first cookbook, *Adventure Cooking - Fire To Fork* combines everything he knows about cooking over an open flame with over 60 of his favourite bush recipes, desserts and cocktails.

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Field to Fork - Second Helpings

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

\$49.95

Free shipping for members



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!

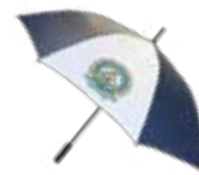
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Ceramic Kitchen Knife Set

The SSAA ceramic blade kitchen knife set comes presented in a gift box. The set of two knives stay razor sharp, are non-corrosive and reduce food oxidation. Suitable for cutting boneless meat, vegetables, fruit and bread.

\$28.95



SSAA Sports Umbrella

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

\$39.95



SSAA Hoodie

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

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

Available in sizes S to 5XL.

\$53.95

SSAA Softshell Vest

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

\$64.95



SSAA Renegade Jacket

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

\$94.95

Please visit our website for measurements for correct sizing



Glow-in-the-dark Fishing Knives

When you are on the water instead of in the bush, you can't go wrong with the new SSAA SICUT Fishing Knife Pack, with glow in the dark knife handles!

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
- 12" slicing knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle



\$124.95

See full details online

SSAA Rechargeable Knife Sharpener

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

\$89.95



SSAA Camping Lantern

This lantern is lightweight and ultrabright, with 450 lumens. Simply pull the SSAA Pop Up Camping Lantern upwards to turn on and push closed to turn it off. When you want overhead light, use the metal 'arms' to easily hang it. Runs on three AA batteries.

\$24.95



Australian Shooter Binder

Keep all your magazines safe and in one spot.

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SSAA Stubby Holders

Keep them cold with a SSAA stubby holder.

\$7.25 each



SSAA Bush Kettle

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

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

\$84.95

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

Membership No.

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**PLEASE
READ AND SIGN**

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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

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

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Mutual April 2022

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Or enter online
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- Beanie
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RRP \$86.85

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onlineshop.ssaa.org.au



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

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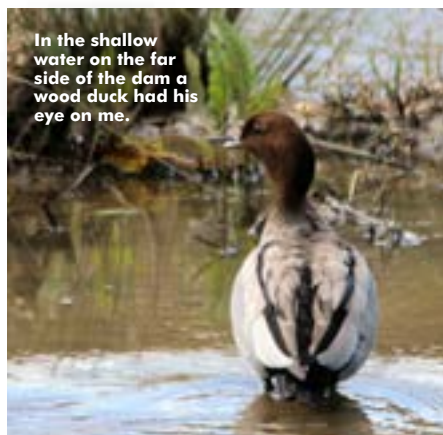
A wood duck . . . watching

A small flock of wood ducks came twisting through the trees, perhaps a dozen birds mewing softly to each other the end was in sight. Over the clearing at the head of the gully they banked across the face of the timber, dropped their landing gear and came around to the duck weedy surface of a spring-fed dam.

Though I haven't been a duck hunter for years I've always enjoyed watching the birds and the new arrivals were a welcome distraction. For the previous hour or so I'd been sitting and quietly waiting, planted in a tangle of windfallen limbs some 50 metres above the dam, the dog asleep beside me. On the far side was a well-used sambar wallow which had recently been used by a number of different animals, one of them a stag with big feet. The green pick in the clearing was well cropped so not unreasonably I'd decided it could be a good place to sit and see what came out of the bush just on dark. It had been a lonely wait.

While I hadn't sighted them since I arrived, I knew there was a pair of black ducks planted in the reeds at the back of the dam. They'd swam quietly out of sight as I settled down - not overly concerned, just naturally wary. The arrival of the woodies seemed to give them confidence and a few minutes later one of them flapped up on to the wind-shattered top of a mountain gum growing at the edge of the water.

It couldn't have been a comfortable place to perch. Ragged spikes of pulled timber and the broad, flat, paddling feet of ducks



would naturally seem to be at odds with each other but for a good 10 minutes or more the duck shuffled its feet and looked around, paying particular attention to my patch of logs. I didn't move and when the bird had apparently reassured itself it stepped awkwardly down and disappeared into what was obviously a hollow in the top of the shattered trunk. A few moments later its head came out for a final look around and was quickly withdrawn, the bird no doubt settling down to brood over a clutch of eggs.

By then most of the wood ducks had left the water and were grazing around the water's edge. In the shallows a lone drake stood guard, one bright eye seemingly fixed on me though I couldn't be sure.

Up along the edge of the bush a red wallaby doe and her bouncing joey came out of the dogwood, squeezed under the fence and began feeding. Somewhere up the gully

a lyrebird was reeling off his repertoire of local bird calls, magpies called softly to each other while a couple of crows drifted by on softly flurrying wings. On the face of the mountain a wild dog yawled but received no response and as I slowly swung around to check as much of the bush line as I could see, I noticed the wood duck drake still appeared to be watching me.

The last of the evening light was fading to dark and a long way over in the gut of a wrinkle in the hillside, a wombat shuffled out closely followed by a couple of black wallabies then half a dozen grey kangaroos, the oversized buck obviously entranced by a smaller, agile doe who seemed to be playing hard to get.

Shooting light was well and truly gone when the only deer I saw for the afternoon appeared on the edge of the fence line and hurried out to feed, a small fallow buck and not the sambar I'd hoped it might be. The illuminated red dot of the reticule sat brightly against the white spotted hide of his ribs but I couldn't bring myself to shoot. I'd had a good afternoon and have never been a big fan of field dressing deer in the dark.

I broke the action, removed the cartridge and put the rifle down then lifted the binoculars for one last look around. Down in the gully bottom, in the shallow water on the far side of the dam, the wood duck still looked like he was watching me. He was still standing there when I stood up and walked away.



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