

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER



The shooting trip of a lifetime

Daddy-daughter rifle double

Yildiz Pro shotgun review

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Editorial

Gemma Dunn

Welcome to the first edition for the year. It's refreshing to be moving forward post-COVID restrictions and it was the end of 2022 that really opened my eyes to the world again. As you will read in this edition's feature story, I was privileged to visit Finland and Sako with Beretta Australia on a whirlwind tour of the amazing country. I got to see where rifles and ammo are made first-hand and what the future holds in that regard. But it was my very first moose hunt that stirred up the most emotion. From fear, to concern to elation and appreciation. There were a lot of tears and a lot of amazing memories. I'm still on cloud nine hovering somewhere above the dense Finnish forest.

Furthermore, Laetisha Scanlan provides an insight into the importance of journaling your shooting, a loving father puts the ultimate plan in place for a milestone rifle combo for him and his daughter and we review the impressive Turkish-made Yildiz Pro shotgun with all the trimmings.

Wishing you all the very best for the year and I look forward to sharing more from my memorable trip and all things shooting and hunting here in Australia.

Gemma

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AUSTRALIAN
**WOMEN'S
SHOOTER**

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Taking aim

with Laetisha Scanlan

Journaling can deliver extra edge for competitors

I hope everyone is settling into a happy and healthy 2023. We have covered the importance of goal setting and writing down your aims for the future, but I wanted to delve more into the importance of journaling for those who are interested. Technology has allowed us the luxury of taking notes in a variety of forms such as voice memos, texts and digital diaries. These are all great methods to record in real-time information (if you are more of a traditionalist, pen and paper still does the trick). Many studies have shown journaling is a meditative, therapeutic exercise that can reduce stress and improve cognitive function, all while creating a more objective view of your own personal experiences. I find great value in training and competition journals. We all like to think we have excellent memory recall but sometimes the simplest details we

forget can be the most important. Journaling gives us a unique insight into our own internal thoughts and feelings and is a great tool for reflection and information. Journaling can be useful for many reasons and help to stop you from unnecessarily repeating the same mistakes time and time again. The more honest you are in your journaling, the better it will serve you and its purpose. For me personally, I have a dedicated notes section on my phone for shooting related feedback. Additionally, I have sub-sections for when I compete and travel internationally to new ranges and countries. I often make detailed annotations of what coloured lenses I wore, what layouts varied and why and what hold points I used, as well as a general overview of what worked well and what didn't for the duration of my time there. Therefore, if I travel back to the same range

(which happens often), I already have a detailed account of what I did right/wrong and I feel more prepared and at ease. My notes become like my personal cheat sheet and if this can improve my performance by even one or two targets then I feel like it is worth the effort and commitment. Furthermore, if you do choose to keep a consistent journal, it's also great to look back through after subsequent time has passed and realise how far you've come and what insights you had at a much younger and less experienced time in your life. Journaling may not be for everyone, but I do encourage you to try it out for six months and challenge yourself to be as descriptive and detailed as possible. You never know, it may be the benefit you didn't even know you needed.

WOMEN'S-ONLY COMPETITION

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Gemma was proud to have cleanly shot the first moose of the day.

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME, Finnished with a

moose hunt

Gemma Dunn

It was a normal Tuesday morning, but all it took was a five-minute and six-second phone call to completely change what the end of my 2022 looked like.

Within that phone call, I was invited by Beretta Australia to represent the SSAA and *Australian Women's Shooter* on a trip to attend Sako's 2022 Press Event in Helsinki, Finland. To which there was absolutely no hesitation on my end, so away we went with planning the trip of a lifetime.

Fast-forward to October and I was packing my bag for a trip I never even knew I'd wanted so badly to do. The itinerary consisted of multiple days in Helsinki involving new product presentations, in particular the launch of the new Sako 100 model and the fresh assortment of Sako Blade ammunition (separate articles about these will be out soon). It also included time at the Sako rifle and ammunition factories in Riihimäki (about an hour north of Helsinki), along with some time at the range for product testing and to complete a test for our moose hunting licence. Yep, you read that right – we were ending the event with a moose hunt.

Now, I have had a little bit of experience in hunting. I have hunted the usual mix of things here in Australia aside from deer and goat, so I wasn't completely out of my depth. But I must admit, the prospect of hunting moose in Finland was something that had never crossed my mind until that very phone call.

I will also admit to my hesitancy about hunting such an incredible animal. I was a little conflicted and unsure about how I'd feel about doing so. I decided that if I did land a chance on a moose, I'd make sure it was a good shot and be 100 per cent confident that I had gone about it in a respectful way. But at this stage, that was a BIG if.

So, there I was, boarding a plane headed for the Nordics in a post-COVID world where masks, vaccines and special visas were no longer a requirement and feeling very odd about it all. Also realising with a mixture of dread and excitement that for my first overseas trip in a long time, it happened to be the second-longest possible flight you could do. The trip would take 28-plus hours from door to door one way - Sydney > Singapore > London > Helsinki.

I will say that although I have been fortunate enough to travel to lots of different countries around the world, I really didn't know what to expect from Finland, and I really wasn't prepared for how much of an amazing place it is. It's a country we just don't hear much about. I'll quickly sum it up for you though - you must go. Put it higher on your travel bucket list than you'd ever think of doing. Sako chose an incredible hotel for us all to stay at. It was Hotel Katajanokka, a county prison and pre-trial detention centre until 2002. Beautifully restored, and if you're ever staying in Helsinki, it's a must. Safe to say, many jokes about the convicts (Aussies) being



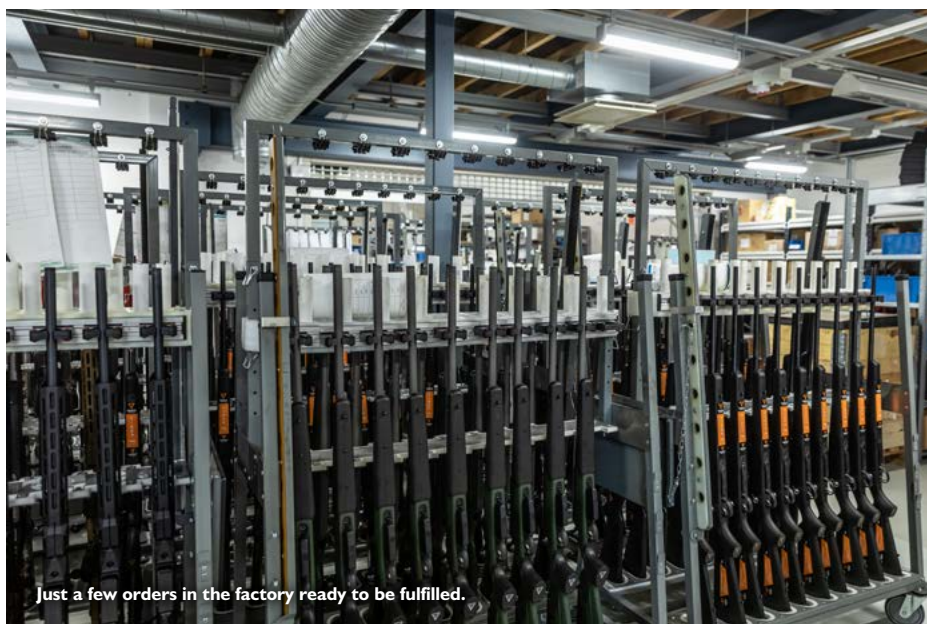
Gemma loved testing out the new products from Sako on the range.
Photo Luke Care



The whole group felt relieved to pass the moose licence test.



Gemma met some lovely women working in the Sako rifle and ammunition factories.



Just a few orders in the factory ready to be fulfilled.

back in prison from the collective group ensued. Speaking of the group, I was joined on the trip by constituents from various Beretta Holding groups, along with other magazine editors, writers and influencers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The group as a whole was an incredible bunch of people from all walks of life, all different ages and a good mix of women and men. Once settled in, on the first day we were treated to a tour of Helsinki and some product information sessions on the new Sako 100 and Sako Blade ammunition. On the second day, we headed to the Loppi shooting range to do some product testing. Basically, it was a chance to shoot and learn about these incredible products as much as we could, as well as sighting in our rifles for the moose hunt happening the following day. Also included in the shooting session was the moose hunting licence test that is required for all Finnish and international hunters to complete successfully prior to any outing. The test consisted of four successful shots (supported or unsupported) at a specific target 100m away within 80 seconds. Until four years ago, the test used to require these four shots to be unsupported and at a moving paper target. After we had all passed our test, we each had a go at the old test for a bit of small rivalry and competition to end the shooting session. Afterwards, we headed to Riihimäki, the hometown of Sako to visit Sako HQ and

tour their rifle and ammunition factories. Over 100 years ago, Sako was founded in Riihimäki to be the machine workshop for the Civil Guards. Since then, their ownership has transferred through many hands, such as the Finnish Red Cross in 1945, to Nokia (true story) in 1967 and finally to Beretta Holding on January 3, 2000. Such is the history at Sako that there is even part of the factory that remains underground/in caves which were built to protect operations during multiple World and European wars. The factories themselves were a sight to behold. A mix of old and new, human and robot, working simultaneously to create some of the best rifles and ammunition the world has ever seen still to this day. I am eternally grateful I was able to see the brilliance of Sako rifles and ammunition being made first-hand and can personally vouch for their fantastic build quality. It also was really cool to note that there were more female than male factory workers at Sako that I could see.

The hunt

On the last day, we were up very early and drove over an hour to the area north of Helsinki where we would be hunting. It was 8am and -1°C when we arrived, but as we were pulling into the hunting grounds, the whole bus was buzzing with excitement. I'd say a lot of this was due to the fact that as we turned into the driveway, we all saw a large, completely white stag grazing in the field in

the sun on our left. It couldn't have been any more picturesque. Upon arrival, we were handed our radios and our rifles then lined up outside to listen to the briefing from the hunt master. He went through the procedure for the day, safety information about working within a driven hunt with dogs and finally we were told what we could and could not shoot for the day. We were allowed to shoot moose (buck, cow or calf), whitetail deer (buck, doe or fawn), roe deer (buck only), fallow deer (buck only) and foxes. No white animals were allowed



Choose wisely, it could make or break your hunt. Photo Luke Care

to be shot. There were all sorts of protocols surrounding the gender and ages of the animals permitted to be hunted and in what order if multiple had presented, and I began to feel very concerned at this point.

I really didn't want to do the wrong thing, but I had never seen any of these animals in the wild, ever. Nobody was told until that moment that we would be allowed to shoot anything other than moose, so I hadn't had a chance to brush up on my species identification. I had no idea what the difference between a roe and a fallow deer was at that point. Luckily, a couple of the boys from New Zealand were standing beside me to provide a quick run-down on the details of each species. Less than ideal, but thankfully they were there to help. I had decided at that point that I was only going to shoot at what I was certain about and let the rest go. Better to be sure than sorry.

After the hunt master's briefing, a tray of thimbles containing a traditional Finnish hunting drink was brought around, which we all drank to see the number in the bottom of the thimble. This number would determine where we were stationed on each of the three drives. Then, we were loaded up into several vans, proceeding as quietly as we could to each allocated stand and dropped off one by one. There were seven people in my van and I was the second last one to be offloaded.

Most stands were visible from the road/track, but as I was being dropped off, I had one of the dog masters waiting for me to take me about 300m off the track deep into the Finnish forest. Walking among the birch trees, I was slipping and stumbling on the icy ground trying to keep up with the man and his dog. When we finally reached the stand, he told me roughly where they would be driving the animals towards and left me at that. I was alone with my Sako 100 Carbon .308 Win in the dense Finnish forest, slightly paralysed and not really knowing how I found myself here alone so abruptly. I didn't realise that we would be on our own, with no guide attached to us during the hunt and all the fear and doubt that I would do the wrong thing started creeping in.

I didn't really know what was happening, I had never been on a hunt like this before in

my life, let alone by myself in a foreign country across the other side of the world, and I could feel myself starting to boil over.

In my previous life as a competitive shooter, we were taught mechanisms to help us re-centre and re-focus when we felt overwhelmed in competition. I immediately called on these skills and I began to focus on the smell of the forest, the chill in the air and how it made my skin feel and the sounds of the dogs barking, signalling that the hunt would soon be in progress. This helped me regain calmness and reduce my heart rate. Once I was calm and back in control, I then loaded my magazine and set up my rifle. Shortly after, the hunt master's call came on the radio to declare this drive open.

Now, something about me that you wouldn't know, is that I have nerve damage where my right ear and my brain connect. So, this renders me completely deaf in my right ear, which affects many things in life, but especially in this situation, it affects my directional hearing massively. Let's just say I have never felt more frustrated or distrusting of my hearing than I did standing there in the forest that day. So, as I was scanning around, looking for things I heard (or might have heard), the first shots were going off in the distance. The other Aussie journalist in the group, Hannes, had downed a few whitetail deer first up. As I was surveying the forest, I thought I had heard something over my right shoulder (the complete opposite direction to where the

dog master had told me to look), but I saw nothing. I kept checking, waiting to hear another rustle and saw one of the dogs galloping past the clearing, which was amazing to watch on its own.

Shortly after, a few more deer were called hit over the radio from Hannes and others, I heard another rustling from the same direction, but again nothing. As I turned my eyes back to the left to look in the section of the forest I was told to, there was a giant moose about 30m away. Just standing there. I was in shock initially as I was not expecting something to be standing right there, as well as the fact I had never seen a moose before, and the sheer size of them is incomprehensible until you do actually see one. I cocked my rifle, dialled my scope right back to 3x power and just as I had gone to shoulder it, the moose saw me and instantly started running. Holy heck, they can move! And the next 30 seconds felt like a lifetime and a flash all at once. The first thing I was trying to do was put the gun on my shoulder, then get a visual of the moose through my scope as it was running through the dense forest. Then, I was attempting to double-check if it had antlers or if it was a cow moose. And if it was a cow moose, did it have a calf with it (I was trying to remember the rules about the order you shoot calves and cow moose). All the while I was striving not to lose a visual on the animal and line up my shot – as it was running towards the right-hand side of my stand and



Gemma's first ever buck taken with the brand new Sako 100 carbon in .308 WIN.
Photo Luke Care

Gemma was overcome with emotion - not realising waterproof mascara was needed for hunting.



past me. I was confident it was a cow moose and it didn't have a calf, and I was now lining up my shot, trying not to panic all at the same time.

I breathed and pulled the trigger. The moose jumped high and 'WHACK' went my barrel on the wooden post of my stand as the moose went over the ridge and disappeared. Now, the panic set in. 'Did I hit it?', 'Did it jump because I hit it, or was it just jumping over fallen logs?', 'Oh, no. Did I just injure it?', 'What was I thinking?', 'I'm sure the shot was good, but that reaction wasn't what I was expecting.'

All the questions, all of the adrenalin. I was sure that my shot placement through the scope was good, otherwise, I definitely would not have taken the shot. But I didn't know how a moose behaved when shot, and it all happened so fast AND it was on the run. More panic.

Then, I had to call it over the radio. "This is stand 16, cow moose shot. Unsure if hit, single shot only." "Okay, please wait for the dog master to come and check. No more shooting," said the hunt master. From what seemed right next to me came the dog man

through the forest to ask where the moose had run to. I pointed this out and he was off looking. I was not allowed to leave my stand. My body was shaking, my mind was racing about what had just happened and did I just do exactly what I didn't want to do – take a bad shot?

About what felt like an age later, the dog master came back to me. He had a very stoic look on his face, not giving anything away. I thought that's it, I missed it and it's gone. But as he reached the bottom of my stand, a huge smile broke out across his face, and he stretched up to shake my hand. One shot, an excellent kill and the moose only went another 10m over the ridge before falling. A clean kill. That's all I needed to know, and I immediately started to cry. All of the pent-up adrenalin, the horror that I had potentially ruined the shot, just dumped out of my system. I called it back on the radio and the hunt master congratulated me for taking the first moose of the day. I replied with a very shaky "thanks" which the whole group could hear and afterwards they told me it was really powerful to hear the emotion in my voice. It made their day.

The first drive was called off about an hour later. I had seen another cow moose with a calf in that time and decided to film and watch them, just enjoying the moment. Once the hunt ceased, I could go and see my moose. It was an incredibly powerful moment seeing the animal close up for the first time. A moment shared with most of the members in my van and the local hunt guides. It was an experience I will never forget. I thanked the animal, and we did a small traditional Finnish ceremony where I was donned with a twig from the closest pine tree. After that, I made sure to check my shot placement was indeed correct. We then went back to the van where I was met with celebratory hugs from the rest of the group and we made our way to the lunch hut swapping stories the whole way. To summarise the rest of the day, it was incredible. We were able to eat traditional hunting food - moose and deer stew with homemade bread for lunch. On each drive, I was in an extremely different kind of landscape. I had seen a total of six moose (including the one that I had taken), two whitetail bucks and a hare. I was fortunate to view so

many animals, as some other hunters in the group saw none whatsoever. I had decided early on that one moose was enough for me, but I managed to take a shot on two whitetail bucks in the last drive. I had clean missed the first buck, but I was lucky enough to be presented with another chance 30 minutes later. This time there was no way I was missing. I am pleased to say my shot was one that I am extremely proud of as the animal instantly dropped from where it was standing about 170-200m away. To score the group's first moose of the day and the last buck of the day was insane and something I can't really believe I'm able to write today. We finished the day with a special traditional Finnish hunting ceremony where all the animals were respectfully laid out and some words spoken about the day. Hannes was crowned king of the hunt as he had two whitetail deer and a buck moose, and I was second for the day (go the Aussies!). Only three of us took moose on the day (the limit was three total) and a small handful of whitetails were taken overall. As whitetail are deemed a pest species in Finland, there was no limit. The meat from our hunt went to our dinner and feeding local families, while I

opted to have my whitetail buck Euro-mounted and sent home. I will do a review of the Sako 100 and the new Sako Blade ammunition I was fortunate enough to use on this hunt in a separate article. I'll just say that I am making room in my safe for a new rifle and I'm going to sight in the AWS Tikka T3 with some Sako ammunition ready for my next outing soon. A huge thank you to Beretta Australia for inviting me on this trip, to Sako for having me and to the group at large for being so supportive. This group made a world of difference to my overall experience and I was really lucky to have a great bunch of people to share this experience with. Without such a wonderful group to support and guide me, I wouldn't have had the confidence to do something I never in my wildest dreams thought I would ever be able to do. A special mention to Cam Henderson from the *Hunters Journal* for providing me with lots of photos for this article and Luke Care from *NZ Hunter Magazine* also for providing pictures and helping me with my whitetail buck out in the field ●



The group enjoyed moose and deer stews in the hunters' cabin for lunch. Photo Cam Henderson

The traditional Finnish hunting ceremony was a beautiful way to thank the animals. Photo Cam Henderson



Daddy-daughter *double*



I found myself in the store talking with the team who seemed almost as excited about my daddy-daughter duo plans as I was

Scott Heiman earnestly prepares for a pair of significant family milestones

I love cleaning my firearms. I know it's maintenance and I know it's supposed to be a chore, but I love it all the same. It's like meditation. And while someone, somewhere, is probably saying that I'm a crazy man, stick with me on this one. It gets better.

Mostly, I clean my firearms directly following use. After 28 years in the Infantry, where you're dependent on your ballistic tool of trade, it's a force of habit. In the military, rifles are cleaned and oiled every day on exercises and operations. And ultimately, when you hand a firearm back to the armory, it's inspected by your Sergeant, Command Management System (CSM) or Quartermaster. Knowing you'll be sent away to clean it again if it's not up-to-scratch, you simply become accustomed to doing it right – first time, every time.

Regardless of who you are, a daily 'field clean' is good practice when you're regularly using a firearm. When you're done, put it safely away behind lock and key, clean and ready for next time. Then, about once or twice a year, it's a good idea to take cleaning to the next level. Lock the door, close the blinds and pull all your firearms out of the safe for a really good 'once over'. Particularly if it's been a little while between uses.

Legacy

This is the bit I particularly like. Every single firearm I own has its own story and each has a legacy of its own. My grandfather owned four of them and then my dad. And now, they're mine. In the case of two of them, not only are they the rifles on which my brother and I learned the principles of marksmanship from our dad, but they're the same ones that dad used when he learnt this from his father. After a hunt, my daughter Scout sometimes watches me clean them. I explain what I'm doing and why good maintenance is important. I describe how she could do the same with her things, like her bicycle. Importantly, we talk about the people and moments in family lore that have involved these firearms; what her great grandfather did in World War

Two, his job on the Rural Protection Board on his return and the hunting trips I took with him when I was a child, and so on.

About two years ago, I was cleaning the .22-250 Rem while explaining that granddad left me it in his will. I told her how I was originally too young to be entrusted with it. So, Poppy looked after it until I came of age. I also recounted what happened after I'd had my NSW minor's permit for a while. Apparently, at age 16 dad decided I was competent enough to step up from the trusty .22LR and to fire a .22-250 for the first time. Then, when I acquired my firearms licence at 18, the firearm truly became mine.

Then, out of the mouths of babes, Scout says: "Dad... when will I get my first gun?" At age 10, a conversation between a father and daughter about firearms legislation is a lot easier than one about the birds and the bees! So, I talked about the ACT minor's firearms licence for kids aged 12 and over, and that she can't have a fully-fledged firearms licence nor own a firearm before she's 18. We discussed the firearms training and safety course that she'll need to take before applying for a licence. We also talked about the importance of belonging to a club, to be deemed a 'suitable person' to hold a firearms licence, to be able to prove who you are, and to have a proper reason, and permission, to hunt on private land.

No doubt, this was all pretty heady stuff for a kid to take in. But not once did Scout's attention waver. Not once did her eyes glaze over. I had her full attention and it all seemed to sink in. Then to my surprise, I realised there'd been more than one set of ears listening-in. You see, my wife Kath had been in the next room the whole while and suddenly piped up that she'd go for her firearms licence at the same time.

Afterwards, I found myself reflecting on this daddy-daughter conversation for several days. I kept thinking how I was adding a new chapter to my family history. With a sense of pride, I thought about how my young daughter had asked all the right questions and had stayed attentive through all the explana-

tions I'd provided. She'd even made the link between a firearms licence and her wish to become a zookeeper when she grows up. As she saw it, having a licence like that would mean she would be able to use a gun when necessary to tranquilise animals who came into her care.

Decisions, decisions...

Over the next couple of months, my mind was occupied trying to think of a rifle, calibre and chambering combination that might be appropriate. Scout's firearm needs to be adaptable to her developing marksmanship skills and to remain suitable as she grows into a teen, then into a young lady. It needs to be something she can use at the range as a minor as well as being something she can go hunting with for the next 60 years.

I also wanted it to be a firearm she'll remain proud of. Perhaps even as proud as I am of my .22-250 Rem. Then maybe, just maybe, she'll



The MDT Long Rail was the first accessory fitted.

have something to remember me by in years to come. And I can keep hunting with her, long after I've gone. At least in spirit anyway. Then a light went on in my head. When she turns 12, I'll reach 50 just three months later. Suddenly the concept of a daddy-daughter double sprang to mind. Two custom-made rifles in two different calibres made with exactly the same accessories. That way there'd be muscle memory across both rifles, making them easy to swap over for different target species. After all, when I'm pushing up daisies, she'll own them both.

Deciding on my firearm for this duo was easy. I've always said that my firearms safe lacks a .308 Win for larger game and long-distance stopping power. But that left the harder decision of what would be best for her. I decided not to go with a random chambering that would be hard to find ammo for in the future, or for that matter in a gunshop west of Bourke. So, I consulted some relevant data to help make the decision easier.

You see, years ago I made Freedom of Information requests of all Australian state firearms registries when I was writing a SSAA article. At that time, I'd wanted to find out what were the most popular calibres/chamberings in Australia. The results are summarised in the accompanying table and I knew I had to choose from one of them. Straight away, I ruled out the .22, 12G, 177 Air, .410G, .22 Mag and .243 because I already had them in my safe, or someone in

our broader family owned them. So, there's a high probability that she will inherit one of these in the future anyway. This left the .223, .303 or .30-30. Noting that I'll need her to be comfortable with the rifle at a young age, the .303 and .30-30 were struck off the list. Besides, I was getting a .308. This has higher ballistics, higher velocity, more powder and higher aerodynamics, flatter trajectory and more stopping power than the .30-30. Sure, the .303 British has a lower recoil than the .308 Win and almost identical performance. But I'm saving that calibre for a SMLE Mk III. Ultimately that left the .223 Rem. It offers the perfect combination of features. It's a good training round after the 22LR that will help minimise flinching (after all, it has almost three-times less kick of the .243 Win). So, Scout will be able to concentrate on breathing, positioning and total firearm and trigger control.

Secondly, it's such a versatile hunting round, especially if handloading. Also, the availability of various commercial loads and projectiles makes it more than a simple 'pest gun'. Because, let's face it, it's all about shot placement. If you put the right bullet in the right place, you can drop almost anything.

The build

As a hunter, Army veteran and former Australian Federal Police (AFP) firearms instructor, I've always liked the concept of US Marine expert Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper's description of a 'scout rifle.' Basically, he talked about a short, light, handy, versatile, utility rifle. And he was a proponent of other characteristics too. So, I was looking forward to loosely following Cooper's principles for my daddy-daughter double build without simply buying an off-the-shelf scout rifle. Because, after all, these were going to be a pair of special rifles to mark two significant family milestones.

The first thing I decided on was the rifles' platform. Now, I'm sure I'm not the only one who was left both angry and sad when Remington Arms Company registered for bankruptcy in 2018. But the company lives on as Rem Arms. So, my choice was a pair of Remington Model 700 SPS Tacticals - everything you love about the legendary Model 700, with 20" heavy barrel with a one in 10 twist. This platform looked like it would fit the scout rifle brief perfectly.

Australia's most favoured calibres/chamberings	
Rank	Combined ratings
1	.22
2	12G
3	.177 Air
4	.223
5	.410G
6	.22 Mag
7	.303
8	.308
9	.243
10	.30-30

Next up was the stock. I was determined to be rid of the nasty synthetic stocks that come standard with the 700 SPS Tactical (to lower the cost) and to replace them with GRS Hybrid stocks. The colour choice was easy - Green Mountain pattern for me and Jacaranda for Scout. But there's more to the GRS Hybrid stocks than just pretty timber. Apart from aesthetics, a key benefit is the versatility of the adjustable cheek pad and extendable stock which means the rifles will be readily interchangeable between myself and lil' miss. Cooper said that a scout rifle should have both iron and optical sights and be fitted with practical slings. To conform with this, I mounted MDT Long Rail systems, Aukmont 45-degree offset battle sights and a Bushnell Engage 3-9x40 scope with deploy MOA reticle and dust caps. This leaves plenty of room for additional accessories should we want them down the track. It will also allow us to replace the optics later if needed. As for the sling, I let Scout choose these and what did she go for? A pink True Tree GrovTec GT sling with swivels. I went for the green one. Cooper said that a scout rifle should have a 10-round removeable magazine. The SPS Tactical has an internal hinged floorplate magazine with a four-round capacity. I chose the Lucky 13 10-round detachable magazine conversion, plus an additional magazine.



The Gunbloke M11 combination muzzle brake will make things more comfortable.

I decided to go the next step with a Hy-Skor bipod. It has 6"-9" variable legs and a swivel of 18 degrees. So, it should suit her now and when she grows into a young woman and heads into the field.

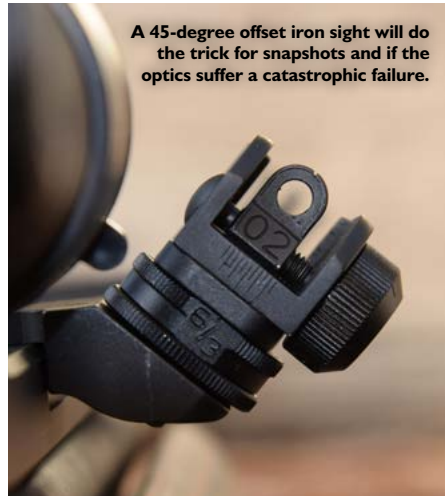
Last but not least, was to utilise the threaded muzzle. Again, looking at reducing the recoil a little, I chose the Gunbloke M11 Hybrid muzzle brake. This is a combo muzzle brake and compensator that should keep the recoil energy down by 70 per cent and reduce the barrel jump. Weighing in at 5.7kg, the entire build might be a bit heavy for my daughter right now. But, as a junior, I know she'll be mostly target shooting prone and that the weight will also help reduce the recoil.

As for who helped bring this vision to reality? Cowboy Guns & Gear in Cowra have consistently impressed me with the store's array of firearms, ammo and field gear. They always greet me with a smile and friendly banter when I stop by now and again. And, importantly, they have a great reputation. So, I chose this family business to help me find all the right gear. With COVID disrupting supply chains all around the world, I needed someone who knew what they were doing. So it was, after a gentle two-hour country drive, I found myself in the store talking with the team who seemed almost as excited about my daddy-daughter duo plans as I was.

The verdict

As for the verdict? Well, we'll just have to wait and see because our birthdays are still many months away. When she first eyed the finished firearm in the shop, lil' miss immediately said she loved it.

But, for now, both rifles remain stored safely away, oiled in TMT Seal Lock, and tucked-up in their Allen gun socks – pink for my daughter and Hi-Vis orange for me. They'll stay that way until she turns 12 and receives her minor's firearms licence, and I turn 50. Then it'll be time to hit the range, sight-in our treasures and start building some new family memories ●



A 45-degree offset iron sight will do the trick for snapshots and if the optics suffer a catastrophic failure.



It even looks like a piece of art.



You don't have to be in the Army to have crossed rifles.



John McDougall covers the stunning revamp of a popular Yildiz Pro shotgun

The Australian distributor of Yildiz quality firearms have a modified version of the Pro shotgun on offer. The gun is available in various colours but the pink Cerakoted option under review is particularly striking. So, let's have a closer look at this delightful firearm.

Barrels

These are 76cm in length (30") and impeccably finished with a satin blue/black colouring that contrasts well with the pink Cerakoted metal body parts of the gun. They are fitted with internal chokes, with seven supplied. Five being fully internal 51mm chokes along with collared 72mm of half- and full choke constrictions.

To install and remove the choke tubes a solid propeller-like spanner is provided to simplify things. A single front-sight is installed at the muzzle. There is no mid-sight, but this could easily be fitted should it be desired.

At the receiver end the monobloc is polished, with the bite for the Boss locking mechanism

perfectly machined. This is a quality made sporting firearm and well suited to entering the upper echelon of clay target shooting with an intention of winning.

At the chamber end the model favours 12-gauge 76mm cartridges, although for the competition lady most 24- or 28-gram loads will be used to reduce recoil. The Aguila loads travelling at 1275fps in 28-gram loading are ideal for the review model and any recoil is negligible. The forcing cones are standard and the gun weighs in at 3.82kg.

Receiver

This is treated with a pink Cerakote and complements the excellent blueing and stunning woodwork. Cerakote is also applied to the triggerguard and inletted fore-end release, which supplements the receiver. The hinge pin in the receiver and the release lever on the fore-end catch are left blued and add a pleasant contrast. It is also convenient not to Cerakote the surfaces of these parts as they are replaceable should they ever break or wear.

The action is super strong with a Boss locking action. Such an action is generally reserved for the most expensive shotguns. Polishing is to perfection and the gun action quite tight, with the fitting of the barrels to the action a precise process.

The triggerfoot, although well designed, is not adjustable while the guard is well inletted into the stock. All metal-to-metal and wood-to-metal surfaces are perfectly aligned – testimony to the use of CNC machinery during production. All surfaces about the receiver are finished to perfection and the Cerakote stands out markedly.

Stock and fore-end

Made from magnificent grade 5 Turkish walnut, the stock and fore-end are well matched to the quality of the model with its Cerakote finish. The woodwork, with its oiled finish, rounds out the gun well. Fitted with an adjustable comb as standard, the gun can be ordered in either left or right-handed stocks. All tools and spacers for the adjustable stock are supplied with the gun. Walnut on

the Schnabel fore-end is spectacular with immense charm. The fore-end release is via a lever underneath, its operation easy but firm to maintain the fore-end in a rigid position. Chequering on both the stock and fore-end is around 18-20 lines/inch. It is faultlessly completed and sufficient in coverage to provide a good, firm grip.

It is pleasing to see a significant recoil pad fitted to the butt of the stock for consistent gun mount and recoil reduction. This is always an appreciated addition, for to have one fitted aftermarket can cost in excess of \$200.

The stock is easily removed with an extension tool. This can be quite convenient if the shooter has two stocks and may wish, for example, to change between field shooting (where the stock might be flatter) to a higher stock for the various clay target disciplines.

Time for testing

Taking the Yildiz Pro out of its fitted gun case is a delight. It not only looks good, but it shoots well. I was fortunate to test it at my local SSAA club with much satisfaction as target after target was smashed to oblivion. This was also demonstrated by my lady friend at the time who is an avid sporting clays shooter. We were both impressed with the performance of the choke tubes. The 30" barrels balanced the gun well and it swung smoothly while the chokes did their job at pulverising targets.

In summary, the review model is highly imposing. It is well manufactured and represents excellent value for money.

Some may harbour doubts about Turkish guns but I am reassured by endorsements from a respected gunsmith that these guns are well made. With all this in mind, I have no hesitation in highly recommending the Yildiz Pro series of competition shotguns for either clay or field. ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Yildiz Pro

Manufacturer: Yildiz, Turkey

Distributor: Raytrade Pty Ltd
raytrade.com.au

Overall length: 1200mm/47¼"

Overall weight: 3.82kg/8lb 5oz

Barrel length: 760mm/30"

Barrel weight: 1.49kg/3lb 4oz

Bore and chamber: 12-gauge,
76mm/3" chambered. 18.6mm bore/0.732" for both barrels

Forcing cones: Extended

Chokes: Interchangeable choke tubes or fixed barrel chokes upon order. Internal and external choke tubes optional. External chokes measured 73mm long, including collar. Choke dimensions - Cylinder: 0.733", Improved Cylinder: 0.730", Modified: 0.714", Improved Modified: 0.710", Full choke: 0.703". T-bar style choke tube wrench supplied. Extra chokes available for \$25/choke tube

Trigger pulls: Under Barrel 4lb 2oz, Over Barrel 4lb 4oz, Non-adjustable triggerfoot with inertia trigger set

Stock configuration: Stock fitted with an adjustable comb as standard. Left-handed stocks, custom stocks and inletted blanks are available upon request. Drop at comb: Adjustable, Drop at heel: Adjustable, Length of pull: 375mm/14½"

Warranty: Five years

Recommended price: \$6300 complete with lockable hard case, choke tubes, stock Allen keys and spacers, gun socks and basic instruction booklets



There are seven choke tubes supplied, including two longer 72mm being half- and full-chokes along with a sturdy propeller-type choke tube spanner.



A striking pink Cerakote finish sets the Yildiz Pro apart from all other models.



A close-up showing off the Cerakoted pink surfaces, including the fore-end release lever, fore-iron, receiver and triggerguard.



Fully assembled along the case the shotgun is supplied with.



Dedicated to the most distinguished huntresses in the field.

 VITTORIA

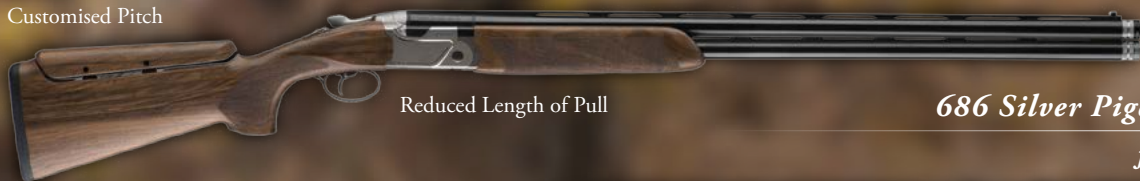
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694 Vittoria with B-Fast

Available in Trap starting from \$7,799 RRP, and Sporting from \$8,399 RRP.

Customised Pitch

OCHP Chokes



Reduced Length of Pull

686 Silver Pigeon I Vittoria

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