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2 GREAT TROPHY DEER HUNTS!

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RELOADING

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how to control it

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HANIC .410 LEVER-ACTION

No, it's not a Winchester Model 94, it's a new .410 lever-action shotgun, made in Turkey by Hanic. Well made and nicely balanced, it is an effective small-game and pest killer that's also a lot of fun. Every feature of the Hanic .410 is familiar to a Model 94 owner — the flat-sided receiver, exterior hammer, barrel bands on muzzle and forearm, and lever loop, all of which are smoothly polished before being given a deep black finish.

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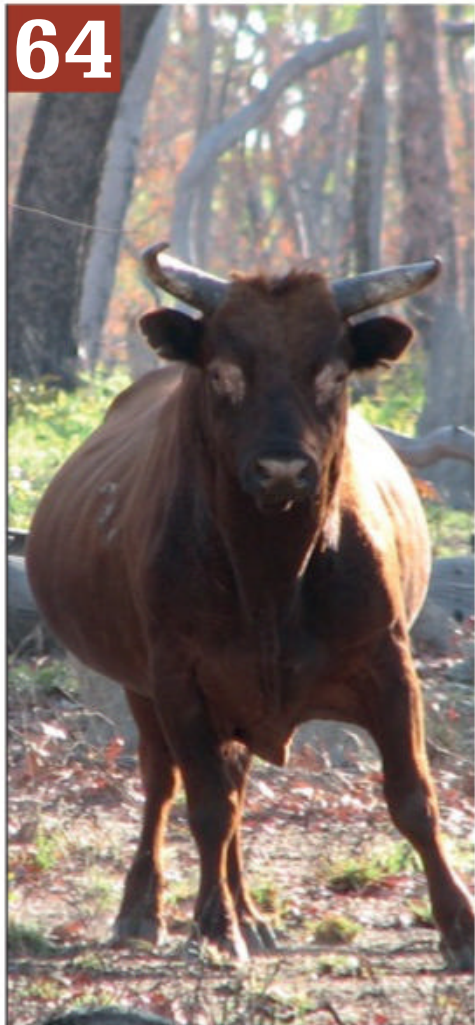
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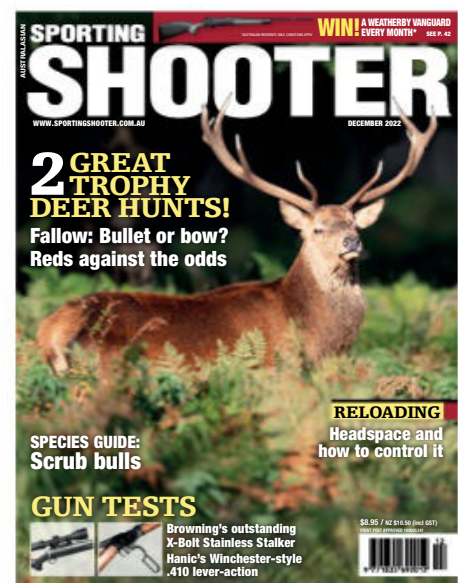


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ON THE COVER

You can see why they're the king of deer! Image: DG Wildlife/Getty.



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Wet but cheap?

Is hunting expensive?
Mick thinks it's all in the head.

EVERYTHING is just so wet! Large swathes of the country as sodden and some parts have recorded their wettest year ever. The one time I did try to get out hunting recently, I got bogged. Hint taken. If I can't walk, I can't go.

As I write, the creek's up, the causeway is under and the rain's pouring down. On my place, the pigs are ripping up the soft ground. There are goats everywhere. I'm sure the deer must be breeding up again. The fox kits are coming out. But it looks like myxo has hit the rabbits hard, so that's one good thing ... although the hunter in me disagrees.

When things eventually dry out and the grass and weeds die off a bit, it'll be a hunter's paradise. Hunters who try to hit feral populations hard will be very busy. I'm looking forward it.

However, there's another problem to face — the economy. Who doesn't feel pessimistic about their financial future, at least to

some degree? Everyone's down about money at the moment, for obvious reasons that we can't do much about.

But remember this: hunting is a cheap pastime, especially if you've already got the gear. Sure, it can be expensive if you aspire to a guided African lion hunt with a brand new European double rifle, but if you're serious about that you're probably not feeling the pinch like the rest of us.

Let's talk about a sambar hunt, something a bit more down to earth but still an incredible adventure. What'll it cost? A few dollars for the permit to hunt on Victorian public land, as much fuel as you'll burn getting to and from the hunting grounds you choose, a bit of food and maybe a beer in a pub. Would you camp? It'd save you a motel bill.

Ammo might have shot up in price recently but it's still small fry. For the sambar hunt, you might use half a box sighting in and one shot on the hunt.



“

Ammo might have shot up in price recently but it's still small fry.”

I know, I've made a lot of assumptions, but you get my drift: hunting can cost less than a night on the town and the hunt can last a lot longer, both in real time and memory.

So I'm not too concerned about money in that context. I just wish it'd dry out!

Apology

I got confused (which is not hard!) when writing last issue's

editorial. I wrote that Dodge Keir was the secretary of Nepean Hunters and Anglers. He's not; it's the Wingecarribee Hunters and Anglers Club. My apologies to everyone in the club as well as to the Nepean Hunters Club and its secretary, Brian Bigalow.

MICK MATHESON
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SPORTING SHOOTER

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Letters containing questions for answering by Nick Harvey must be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Mail your letters to: **The Technical Editor, 3 Reef Street, Hill End, NSW 2850.**

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Over-under patterns don't meet

Q Someone told me that with an over-under shotgun there is a point at which the two shot patterns meet, which is from 40 yards to infinity. If there is a converging point, would the pattern from the lower barrel of my over-under cross this point and actually pass in front of my target at long range? And would the upper barrel be shooting behind an incoming bird as it passes overhead?

I've also been told that the lower barrel of an over-under should be fired first because it is more accurate. Is this true?

— *Morris Sims*

A Most over-under and side-by-side shotguns have barrels with bores that are more or less parallel. There are some exceptions to this rule, and even parallel barrels may not shoot to the same point of aim. However,

the barrels are as likely to diverge as converge and may not cross at all. There is no 'correct' point of convergence as far as double-barrelled shotguns are concerned.

The lower barrel of an over-under shotgun is usually fired first because the recoil it generates moves it approximately along the centreline of the gun, directly back toward the shooter's shoulder. The upper barrel is slightly offset from the centreline, and its recoil causes a more pronounced pivoting action, throwing the barrels upward. Simply put, you can recover more quickly from the recoil of the lower barrel, which lets you get a second shot away slightly faster.

Consequently, most over-under guns are made with the lower barrel having a more open choke than the upper barrel.

Most upland hunting shots are taken at birds flying away from the gun, and the more open barrel is fired first. For incoming birds, this sequence should be reversed.



The lower barrel of an over-under shotgun is usually fired first, using a more open choke.

Herter's J-9 Rifle

Q I own a rifle in 6mm Remington marked Herter's J-9 that none of the gunshops in my area has been able identify. It was made back in the 1970s but that's all I've been able to find out about it. The rifle was a gift from the widow of a friend and I'd like to get some information on the company that built it.

— *David Merton*

A Herter's was an old American mail-order firm in Waseca, Minnesota, that published a popular wishbook for those who were just getting into shooting back in the 1950s. During the 1970s, Herter's started offering Mauser-action sporting rifles manufactured in England (J-9) and Yugoslavia (U-9). They were imported into Australia and sold by Jack Hochstadt's H&R Gunshop in George St, Sydney.

The J-9 was based on the original BSA Royal action and the U-9 on the Mark X Mauser action. They had 24-inch barrels and Monte Carlo-style walnut stocks and sold very cheaply.

I reviewed them and found they represented outstanding value for money. You've got a good rifle there, so hang onto it.

Remington Mountain Rifle upgrade

Q I own a Remington Model 700 Mountain Rifle in .270 Winchester that I've been using for over 25 years. I would like to have it rebarrelled to .280 Remington Ackley Improved as Nosler now makes brass for that calibre. I intend using the rifle for roo control on properties where they need culling, and also on the range. What are your thoughts on this calibre? Who would you recommend



As a general rule single-shot rifles are considered to be less accurate than bolt-action rifles."

as a gunsmith who could give my old rifle renewed life with a stock clean-up and a new, accurate 600mm barrel?

— *Ray Rollandin*

A The Remington Model 700 Mountain Rifle is a fine firearm, one that I can really identify with. As much as I like the .280 Ackley Improved, I don't see it as being the best choice for culling roos. I'd rather use something like the .25-06 for that purpose.

Having said that, the .280 AI is a fine all-round cartridge for everything up to our largest deer species. If you have your heart set on getting your rifle rebarrelled to .280 AI then by all means do so. I don't know many gunsmiths in Victoria, nor how good they are, but there's one that my friend John Clark uses who does good work. He is Colin Critton and his mobile number is 0427 662 213. Ring him during working hours through the week, but not after 5 o'clock.

Loose torque or loose talk?

Q I have mislaid my copy of *Sporting Shooter* with your article about left-hand twist in rifle bores and the supposed north or south

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hemisphere effect. Years ago I bought a .303-25 on the M17 Enfield action. During shooting, the barrel became loose. On inspection, looking from the breech end, I discovered that the twist actually turned the bullet anti-clockwise. I concluded that the vibrations and torque effect combined tended to unscrew the barrel.

I used a vice and a Stilson wrench to tighten the barrel and a centre punch to prevent it happening again.

Maybe the barrel was not properly torqued in the first place as I have never heard of this happening to anyone else. Back then I was probably reloading with 117gn bullets designed for the .25-35.

I continue to enjoy your writing. Did you ever write under the name of Peter Nixon? — *Mike Fallis*

Having your rifle barrel come loose has nothing to do with it having a lefthand twist; it means the barrel wasn't screwed in tightly enough by the gunsmith who fitted it. Your theory about the torque effect of the lefthand twist being responsible is only wishful thinking.

Glad to hear you enjoy reading my stuff. I believe that Peter Nixon was one of the nom de plumes that I used in *Australian Outdoors* 40 or 50 years ago.

Custom .416 Taylor

After reading an old article about your .416 Taylor I decided to have a custom rifle built in that calibre. I plan to use a Zastava Mauser action, a Walther stainless barrel and a laminate stock.

You mentioned the effectiveness of the muzzle brake on your rifle. Which brake did you use?

I will handload for my new

dangerous game rifle, but I'm wondering if unprimed brass is available for this wildcat? If not, can they be formed from .458 Win Mag cases? What powders and primers do you prefer when handloading this cartridge? Are there any .416 calibre bullets other than the ones you mentioned in your article? What rifling twist would you recommend?

— *James R Coombes*

My custom .416 Taylor was built on a Zastava action and had a Sprinter Arms barrel with 1:12" rifling twist. Today, I'd recommend a Walther SS barrel with a 1:12" twist rather than the slower 1:16" twist that was standard for the .416 Rigby, a cartridge with similar ballistics. I believe the faster twist better stabilises 400gn solids of monolithic construction like the Barnes, which is considerably longer than other solids of the same weight but different construction.

Norma unprimed brass is available from Winchester Australia. It ain't cheap, but if you intend taking the rifle to Africa, it is necessary to have the correct head stamp on your ammunition. Otherwise, cases can be formed by simply running .458 cases through a .416 Taylor full-length sizing die.

The muzzle brake I had on my rifle was the best I've ever seen but is no longer made. Williams Gunsight in the US makes a close copy, but you'll

have trouble importing one.

My rifle preferred rifle powders with a burning rate like AR2206 (discontinued but AR2206H should work), W-748 (compressed charges with mild pressures) and AR2208. I also used Dupont powders — IMR3031, IMR4064 and IMR4320 (all unobtainable).

Bullets weighed from 300 to 400 grains, but I got the 450gn Woodleigh out at 2200fps ahead of 72gn of W-748. Hornady offers two bullets weighing 400gn, a soft point and a solid, the latter having an extremely thick steel jacket coated with a softer alloy. Woodleigh's excellent bullets for the .416 Rem Mag include RN SN and FMJ, each in both 400gn and 450gn, that are unparalleled for African dangerous game.

Barrel wear and tear

I have a .243 rifle that has fired less than 1000 rounds, but accuracy has gone to pot and it appears that the barrel is burned out. A mate suggested that since a barrel usually wears out at the origin of the rifling, it could be cut off at the rear end and re-threaded and re-chambered to make it serviceable again. What's your thoughts about this?

— *Trevor George*

I doubt your .243 barrel is worn out after less than 1000 shots. Instead of having the throat shot out, it could be

badly fouled. Before doing anything else, I suggest you clean it using a good solvent like Sweets or Robla Solo. You might be amazed at how cleaning a bore can make it shoot better.

While a barrel generally wears out only at the origin of the rifling, and a barrel could be cut off at the rear and re-chambered, it is usually not worth the trouble. At least 50mm would have to be removed from the rear to eliminate the rough section, and sometimes more than this needs to be removed. This makes the barrel shorter and the contour no longer mates with the stock.

It is generally better to simply have the rifle re-barrelled as the grooves in a barrel can be eroded away to almost halfway down the bore.

What about the 8mm-06?

Why was the 8mm-06 wildcat introduced? Have you had any experience with it? If so, what is your opinion of it as a big-game cartridge? What kind of ballistics does it produce? The reason I ask is because I own a Mauser 98 in 8x57mm with a good barrel and would like to get more power without spending any money on this old gun.

— *Thomas Begley*

The 8mm-06 was introduced after World War II when military Mausers became available to American hunters at a time when loaded ammunition and unprimed brass were unobtainable. Owners started re-chambering their rifles for the readily available .30-06 case with its neck expanded to hold 8mm bullets.

A less expensive way of solving the problem that would have saved them the trouble of having their rifles re-chambered would have been to run .30-06 cases through an 8x57mm full-length resizing



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“

There's surely nothing wrong with the 8mm-06, but it won't do anything the .30-06 can't do.”

die and then trimming them to an overall length of 57mm.

There's surely nothing wrong with the 8mm-06, but it won't do anything the .30-06 can't do just as well and bullet choice is much wider for the latter.

Back in 1987 I played with a Mauser chambered for the 8mm-06 RCBS which is an improved version that I can recommend, as RCBS makes dies for it. It drove the Sierra 150gn bullet at 3145fps; the Sierra 175gn at 2970, the RWS 198gn TIG at 2790, and the Sierra 220gn SPBT at 2620. I don't think you'd be unhappy with its performance.

Varying accuracy

Q My rifle is a Tikka T3 in .308 Winchester which gives varying accuracy with different bullet weights in my handloads. The 150gn prints consistent ¾-minute groups, but the 165gn and 180gn loads open up to 1½ and 2-MOA at 100 yards. Why is this happening? Surely accuracy shouldn't vary this much.

— Ben Brown

A One reason you're getting different sized groups with the three bullet weights is that each bullet weight causes different levels of vibrations in the barrel. This is the reason why varying bullet weights seldom print to the same point of aim when fired in the same rifle. The vibrations set up as



ABOVE: Same rifle, three bullet weights, three very different groups with different points of impact. The top-centre shot was a sighter, the three shots to the left were one group, the three at upper right were another group, and the three at lower right were the best group.

the bullet passes through the bore interact with the bedding surfaces in the stock. This interaction, in turn, results in greater or lesser accuracy.

A light sporter-weight barrel will vibrate more than a heavy varmint barrel.

The rate of acceleration in the bore and the exit velocity of the bullet also affect barrel vibration. This is one reason why reducing or increasing the powder charge by a grain or two can sometimes have a dramatic effect on accuracy.

Bullet diameter for 7.62x54R

Q I have a bolt-action Mosin-Nagant carbine chambered for the 7.62x54R Russian cartridge and thought that .311" was the correct bullet diameter for it. Then I bought a set of reloading dies and found that the expander plug in the full-length sizing die is for .308" bullets. Can you tell me which bullet diameter I should be using?

— Ron Oates

A The correct bullet diameter for the 7.62x54R Russian is .310". The only readily available .310 bullet I know of is the Hornady 123gn spire point, but in its load data Hornady lists the 150gn SP and 174gn RN of .312 diameter for the 7.62x39mm Russian.

It is not uncommon to see an expander plug sized for the smaller .308" calibre bullets in American dies, because many handloaders discovered their Mosin-Nagants give acceptable accuracy with .308" bullets. This is especially the case if the barrel of a particular rifle was bored and rifled on the minimum side of the dimensional tolerance range.

However, there are other factors that come into play. Depending on the neck wall thickness of some brands of cases, the expander plug you have may also work alright when .310" bullets are used. If not, maybe you can get a slightly larger plug for the brand of dies you have.

My own dies are Simplex and

the expander plug measures .309" (for .310" bullets) and it uses the No 13 shell holder. I find Simplex dies always have the correct dimensions for metric calibres whereas many American dies do not.

Some Mosin-Nagant rifles have slightly oversized bore and groove diameters and will handle the Hornady, Speer, Sierra and Woodleigh .311" bullets made for the .303 British cartridge. However, to be on the safe side, they should not be used unless the barrel groove diameter exceeds .310" and the neck of the chamber is .343" or larger in diameter. If I were you, I'd get a gunsmith to make a casting of the chamber and bore to determine their exact dimensions.

Single-shot accuracy

Q My uncle gave me a Ruger No 1 light sporter model in .270 that he had no more use for. It has only fired 20 shots, all at deer, and is in tip-top condition. Recently I read that single-shot rifles aren't as accurate as bolt-actions due to the two-piece stock. Is this true? Do you think I should trade the No 1 on a new Ruger M77 in .270? — Jack Cassidy

A Single-shot rifles are considered to be less accurate than bolt-action rifles because their two-piece stocks offer less firm bedding. This is a broad judgement, though, and I know of single-shots that shoot tight groups and provide exceptional accuracy.

I've used some Ruger No 1s that were capable of ½ MOA groups, but will admit that if a Ruger No 1 isn't shooting well, it's harder to tune than an inaccurate bolt-action because of its two-piece stock.

You can get fine accuracy from a properly bedded No 1. Don't take everything you read as being gospel. Shoot your No 1 at a target before you race to trade it on an M77. ☒

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FALLOW HUNTING

Dylan Smith stalked a magnificent white fallow for a week with his bow. Kirra and her rifle showed him how it's done.

Kirra's buck

The fallow rut is a favourite time of year for many of us. Months of scouting and checking trail cameras build to a crescendo of excitement in the middle of April. I've been anxious and excited about it these past few years. I put in so much work to get it done with a traditional bow that the pressure could be a bit much. It's my own fault and I'm comfortable navigating it but I do need to remind myself that it's all supposed to be fun.



Kirra's best buck to date.



THIS year I started my scouting in February. I put my cameras in areas that had old scrapes all through them and focused on some good travel corridors to see if I could find out where the does were coming out to feed. I've realised that finding the does pre-rut is the key to finding where the bucks will show up.

The boys arrived in the first week of March, as usual. Some I recognised from previous years and others came out of nowhere. One of the newcomers was almost pure white; a rare sight in most areas, and he immediately stuck out as one to keep an eye on. He was no monster by any means but a mature animal and a fantastic representative head. Game on.

When I set out for a hunt, I had my dad with me on camera duties so I could direct all my mental and physical energy into getting close with the recurve bow. I still hadn't taken a deer with a trad bow so I wasn't going to be picky. Even more than I wanted to get a buck with my bow, I wanted to experience the rut that I had come to know — entire nights filled with croaks, lots of deer in stalkable positions, bucks mingling with the does all day and essentially being spoiled for choice with options.

You can imagine our glee when we ran into the white buck on our first afternoon. From that moment on, this animal would taunt us for close to a week.



1

He was down the back of the property in one of the most productive spots. It doesn't offer a lot of high points you can use to glass country but there is one open paddock with a creek going through the middle that has enough of a valley that you can scope out the other side.



2

There he was, in the late afternoon sun, rounding up his girls and keeping an eye out for intruders. And intruders there were! A handful of other bucks were within a few hundred metres, all with their own harems and grunting away.

There was enough cover for me to make it within about 100 metres. From there, I was stumped. A handful of doe calls and half-hearted rattles did nothing to pique his interest. I knew the rattles were a long shot as he appeared to have all the girls he could want and a fight would be a waste of time, but it was early days for our hunt and I was interested to see what he would do.

He heard me but never gave me any proper attention.

The next morning I pushed into thicker areas on the edge of the open paddock. As there was no activity in the open in the morning I simply headed towards the closest croaking. He had all his girls on a big scrape in the middle of the pine. Ordinarily I wouldn't bother

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Kirra took a young animal for the freezer.

2 Dylan captures the moment for Kirra.

3 Dylan took a pig with his recurve bow between stalking bucks.

4 The white buck keeps an eye on his does in the open.



“

He bedded on a scrape in the open and I started crawling in on my belly.”

pushing it, but I had plenty of time and hoped that I could use the trees to get close and be lucky enough to have him trot past me as he rounded up a straggler.

It was hard to see all the does — as is always the case — but the constant flashing of white as he circled in the scrub kept my excitement high. As I got to the 40-metre mark, a couple of younger bucks crashed the party and chased a few of his girls away and he wasn’t having any of that. They all moved off to higher and thicker cover.

That afternoon there was croaking in a similar area, so I gave myself plenty of time to get in there. He was in much deeper and below a ridge that I hoped I could





“

Being forced to slow down let us witness a plethora of amazing behaviour.”

skirt around and come in from above him.

When I got to the fringe, I saw pigs in the long grass and invested precious minutes in shooting and recovering one of them. Traditional bows don't scare all the game in a valley like a rifle does! Despite being quick, by the time I got within striking distance of the buck the sun was down and it would have been impossible to get a shot off.

We continued to hunt hard in the following days. It made sense to

take the pressure off the white buck and focus elsewhere.

We were lucky enough to witness an earth-shaking fight between two bucks in a different spot and it gave me my best opportunity with the bow yet. As they collided, I wanted to get up and run straight at them, but the does in the open would have betrayed my presence. I crawled into a gully and power-walked to the top but by the time I got there the fight had broken up and the bigger buck had taken his does into the scrub.

The losing buck came past me at 10 metres, utterly exhausted, but I didn't have my ducks in a row to make a shot. He bedded on a scrape in the open and I started crawling in on my belly. Almost an hour passed before I pushed it just a bit too much and he caught sight of me and took off. I had only needed 10 more metres!

Dad had been shadowing me over the week and each night we delighted in going over some of the photos and videos he was capturing. It all told a fantastic story of a newcomer to bowhunting, struggling to get close and appreciating every moment.

If it were easy, everyone would do it. Being forced to slow down and work for an hour or two on a stalk let us witness a plethora of amazing behaviour. More knowledge is never a bad thing.

Dad and I weren't unhappy with the way our hunting had been going, but we liked the idea of getting something on the ground for the sake of getting some nice pictures and venison. I had skin in the game with my recurve bow and didn't want to pick up a rifle but getting my wife, Kirra, onto one with her rifle was very appealing.

Kirra is a very keen hunter but doesn't have as much opportunity as I do. She is more of a meat hunter than one who chases trophies, but she still enjoys the rut. She has always been keen to get a white deer to skin and tan for a rug.

I called her on the phone and suggested she come out, but she was reluctant.

ON THIS PAGE

5 Glassing the open paddocks early in the morning.

6 These bucks fought hard for close to 10 minutes.

7 There is no shortage of deer sign in this area.



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“

“If I come out and shoot the nice one you’ve been chasing with your bow, you’ll never let me hear the end of it!” she said. In a way, she was right but I knew I’d be happy to see her get a nice one with a rifle.

The LandCruiser rumbled down the granite track in the darkness. We parked and started organising gear. I brewed some coffee. We could hear two or three bucks firing up. The croaking in the thick pine would be the white buck and the croaking on the big scrape in the open would be one of the bucks from the fight.

A bird in the hand, we thought, and headed into the open where a shot with a rifle would be easier. We’d shown Kirra pictures and video of the white buck but she was more motivated to get venison than potentially blow a stalk in the thick stuff.

As we crested the bank of the creek, I raised my binos and couldn’t believe it. The white buck

Kirra steadily made her way to a fallen tree 60 metres from the scrape and waited for the buck to present a shot.”

was out in the open with a bunch of girls; the first time in a few days. Interestingly, the mob of does he was with were the ones we had seen two bucks fighting over. He may have serviced all the does in his previous mob and had run the other bucks off this new mob.

It was remarkable to see him in full swing as the sun peeked over the horizon.

Kirra moved into a position that would get the wind in our favour and give us the cover of a few big trees. She made her way to a fallen tree 60 metres from the scrape and waited for the buck to present a

ON THIS PAGE

8 All meat and bone was carried back to the vehicle.

9 Kirra taking the buck’s white skin for a rug. Check the shot placement!

10 The first photo Dylan captured of this buck on trail camera.

shot. With a gentle squeeze of the trigger, the .243 hit the buck through both lungs and he ran a short distance before lying in his final resting place.

It was surreal as we approached him in the long grass. This animal had given us the slip repeatedly during the week. Seeing Kirra pleased was the biggest reward as he was by far the biggest buck she had ever encountered. The experience is more important than the trophy, but here we had both.

I’m hungrier than ever to get a buck with my traditional archery gear. The only real opportunities with a bow like that are inside 25 metres, which can be a struggle, but in trying to get there I saw and experienced some incredible things and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

To be at Kirra’s side when she got one was just as rewarding and a nice reminder that I don’t always have to grind and grind for a hunt to be a wonderful experience. 📍



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Go you good thing!

Browning has introduced a rifle that does much more than stand up to the elements.

DURING a hunting career spanning 68 years I've encountered some really difficult conditions — deep snow and ice, wet underbrush and forest canopies that drop a deluge of water. Extreme climatic and challenging weather conditions have to be contended with all over the world. You can go from extreme heat in the Northern Territory and Equatorial Africa to extreme cold in the Victoria alps and the Arctic.

Conditions that are hard on the hunter are always doubly hard on a rifle slung on the shoulder where it is exposed to the elements.

A rifle doesn't get damaged on a foot or backpack hunt unless you tackle steep, rough country which is physically difficult; your rifle gets knocked against a rocky outcrop or you slip and fall on top of it, or ride it down a rocky slope, as I once did.

Years ago I took wood-stocked rifles all over the world to places where they never should have gone. The French walnut and fancy figured-maple handles got dented, scratched and scarred. Metal surfaces showed a lot of wear. Admittedly, the damage could be termed honourable battle scars, but today there's no necessity to expose nice rifles to places where climatic conditions are extreme.

There are guns with synthetic stocks and stainless steel actions and barrels that are rustproof. Some, like my

Browning X-Bolt Hell's Canyon, boast an impervious Ceracote finish or similar.

The X-Bolt Stainless Stalker is another outstanding all-weather rifle, one capable of withstanding the most rugged outdoor conditions. The X-Bolt is basically an upgraded A-Bolt with more modern styling to transform it into a slimmer, trimmer, easy-carrying rifle.

The new X-Bolt Stainless Stalker deserves high marks. It is a lightweight, sturdy hunting rifle that is attractive, well-made and chambered for a range of excellent cartridges. The long action is available in .270, .30-06, .300 Win Mag, .338 Win Mag and .375 H&H; and the short action in .223 Rem, .243 Win, and .308 Win.

I'd be game to take the Stainless Stalker hunting anywhere, in any weather for almost any game. While my test rifle is in .223 Remington, I'll stand by that statement.

My test gun in .223 appears to be a stainless steel version of the Micro Composite model sans muzzle brake and with a longer barrel. The lines of the X-Bolt's receiver are slimmed down to be more refined. Above the stock, the sides are flat and then taper with two 30-degree angles. The top is slightly rounded to conform to the barrel's outside diameter.

A 6.4mm (0.252") deep, 23.2mm (0.915") wide steel recoil lug is sandwiched between the barrel and receiver, and has an angular



If the magazine runs dry, you can single-load a cartridge by dropping it on top of the empty magazine.”

shape to match the contours of the receiver ring. The recoil lug extends into a mortise in the stock and is held tightly with bedding material. The receiver ring and area behind the magazine well are also supported by epoxy.

The round-bottom receiver is held to the stock by two screws that pass through both the aluminium bottom metal and the composite stock. One threads into the receiver ring and the other into the receiver



behind the magazine opening.

The X-Bolt's hammer-forged, sporter-contour barrel is 56cm (22") long and has a recessed target crown. About 19mm (.75") of the barrel in front of the receiver rests on a layer of bedding epoxy, and the remainder of the barrel is free-floated.

The strong chamber locking mechanism utilises a bolt with three solid locking lugs spaced equidistantly around the bolt head. It has a low 60-degree

bolt lift and bolt travel on the short action is a brief 93mm (3.65"), against 140mm (5.5") for the long action.

The X-Bolt action cycles smoothly. A rectangular guide tab on the bolt body runs in a slot in the right side of the receiver, the upper lug runs in a corresponding channel

RIGHT: We used a Meopta Meosport R 3-15x50 scope for testing and tried a range of Winchester .223 ammo with good results.





ON THIS SPREAD

1 Even with five-shot groups the Stainless Stalker shot very well. Ken Harding gives it a run.

2 The major parts of the X-Bolt action. Everything is very well designed and executed.

3 The recoil lug is glass bedded into the stock and the barrel is free-floated.

inside the top of the receiver bridge, and the other two locking lugs travel along raceways to further enhance bolt travel. The rotary magazine perfectly aligns each cartridge with the chamber, so feeding is very smooth.

The bolt release is on the receiver's left flat.

The bolt face has a deep counterbore with a thick rim housing a stout M16-type pivoting extractor between the right two lugs. The Remington-style plunger ejector never fails to eject fired cases from

the chamber and pelt them well clear. The upper surface of the bolt body has a longitudinal flat machined to emulate the lines of the A-Bolt, but its bottom is round.

The bolt handle is a one-piece steel casting with a teardrop-shape knob that is swept back a few degrees. It incorporates the bolt unlock system — a square button in the top of the root of the handle. The button is large but unobtrusive and easy to work.

If depressed while the rifle is on safe, it unlocks the bolt

to allow unloading safely with the sear and trigger still blocked. When the button is pushed inward, a setscrew under the root of the bolt handle depresses a plunger, unlocking it to allow the bolt handle to be lifted. If the bolt is closed again, the system resets and locks up.

The angular bolt shroud is made of cast aluminium given a matte silver finish to match the stainless finish on barrel and action. The tail of the firing pin is painted red and acts as a cocking indicator



when it protrudes under the bolt shroud.

The top of the receiver is where the X-Bolt gets its name. Instead of the conventional two-hole arrangement for attaching scope bases, the X-Bolt has four screw holes for each base. There is one screw positioned at each corner, giving rise to the designated “X”. Instead of dinky 6-48 screws, the Browning uses eight of the larger, stronger 8-40 screws to add rigidity as well as making a solid platform for the riflescope.

The extra steadiness of this design has to contribute to more consistent accuracy.

The detachable polymer rotary magazine holds five .223 cartridges. It fits flush with the aluminium trigger guard/magazine frame that is moulded to be a close fit for the belly of the stock. The magazine release catch fits in a recess in the frame, so there’s little chance it could be accidentally pushed and drop out the magazine.

If the magazine runs dry, you can single-load a cartridge into the chamber by dropping it on top of the empty magazine and closing the bolt.

The X-Bolt has Browning’s innovative Feather trigger system, an impressive unit that’s markedly superior in feel to the previous trigger on A-Bolt rifles. An alloy trigger housing contains hard-chromed steel components that are highly polished on all contacting surfaces.

This three-lever trigger offers a clean, crisp let-off with no take-up or creep or over-travel — it’s totally inert. It has no adjustments for creep or over-travel; they are simply not needed.

The trigger weight, though, is screw-adjustable from 1.4-2.3kg (3-5lb), and is factory pre-set at 2kg (4½lb). To lighten the pull I removed the stock to gain access to the adjustment screw located in the front of the trigger housing. The hex-head screw was locked with epoxy so I removed that and turned the screw counterclockwise to set the pull at 1.4kg (3lb).

Trigger pull does make a difference in the success of your shots. When you’re sighting in at a benchrest, you’ve got plenty of time to settle down, focus on trigger pull and pay attention to any trigger discrepancies that might be present. In the field, everything can happen unexpectedly all at once and



You won’t have a bad experience with the Feather trigger’s crisp, light pull; it’s a winner.”



ACCURACY RESULTS

Bullet (.223 Rem)	Velocity (fps)	5-shot 100yd group (inches)		
		Smallest	Largest	Average
Browning BXV 50gn JHP	3195	0.65	1.00	0.80
Varmint X 55gn PTRE	3183	0.78	1.10	0.95
Super-X 55gn PSP	3075	0.85	1.15	1.04
Target 55gn FMJ	3115	0.88	1.30	1.10
Win Supreme 55gn BST	3084	0.78	1.10	0.97
Deer Season 64gn EP	2898	0.80	1.35	1.25

Accuracy taken as the average of four 5-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of 20 rounds measured with a MagnetoSpeed chronograph.



Winchester's 64gn Extreme Point Deer Season kills like lightning on fallow bucks and boars."



Manufacturer: Miroku, Japan

Type: Three-lug bolt-action centrefire with 60-degree uplift

Calibres: .223 Rem (tested), .243 Win, .308 Win, .270 Win, .30-06, .300 Win Mag, .338 Win Mag, .375 H&H

Magazine: Detachable polymer rotary

Capacity: 5

Barrel: 56cm (22") sporting contour, 1:12 R/H twist

Overall length: 104cm (40.75")

Weight: 2.9kg (6lb 5oz)

Stock: Classic black composite; glass bedded

Trigger: Feather Trigger, adjustable for weight of pull

Sights: None; drilled and tapped

Safety: Two-position on tang

RRP: \$1650

Distributor: Winchester Australia, winchesteraustralia.com.au

instantly. The last thing you need to affect your aim is a too-heavy, creepy trigger pull.

The quicker you can get your shot off, the more likely you are to make a clean kill. You won't have a bad experience with the Feather trigger's crisp, light pull; it's a winner.

The Stainless Stalker's composite classic-style stock is gracefully proportioned, weighs less than 900g (2lb) and features Dura-Touch Armour Coating. The comb is high and slopes upward toward the rear. The pistol grip is gently curved and the grip and fore-end have finger-tip grooves for a secure

hold, as well as panels of stippled gripping surfaces in place of chequering.

The butt is capped with a soft recoil pad that eliminates felt recoil in any calibre, let alone the mild-kicking .223.

Winchester sent three different loads for testing, but they proved to be all that was needed to see just how accurate this outfit was. With the 55gn Polymer Tip Rapid Expansion VarmintX load it shot just under .75" at 100yd (21mm at 100m) for three shots, and five-shot groups averaged right on .990". The average velocity was 3235fps.

Winchester's 64gn Extreme Point Deer Season load shot almost as well with an average of 1.10" for five lots of five-shot groups, and an average velocity of 3020fps. This recipe is intended for hunters of whitetail and mule deer in the US and I know from experience that it kills like lightning on fallow bucks and boars. On one occasion it

achieved complete penetration on a medium-size boar at almost 150m.

The third load, a 55gn FMJ target load, clocked 3226fps, but several cartridges failed to ignite despite the primers being deeply indented by the firing pin. The cartridges that fired punched five-shot groups averaging 1.10".

I was very pleased with the rifle overall, but several features stood out.

The Feather trigger made the biggest impression. It was light and crisp for sure, but it is also one of the cleanest rifle triggers I've ever tried. The mechanical advantage imparted by the third lever makes it feel as if there is absolutely no creep.

I was also taken by the Stalker's stock design, which feels perfectly balanced and lively in the hands.

Operating the bolt was as easy as with my Hell's Canyon Speed X-Bolt. The 60-degree lift made it easy to chamber a round without removing the rifle from my shoulder.

The rotary magazine fed cartridges smoothly and easily and the bolt extracted and ejected the empties as easily as shelling peas.

In the past, I have enjoyed a successful hunting history with Browning rifles, starting with the FN Mauser and progressing through the BBR and A-Bolt to the ultimate X-Bolt, which is just a bit more of a good thing. 🎯



ON THIS PAGE

4 The detachable polymer rotary magazine feeds five .223 cartridges as smooth as silk.

5 The sliding two-position safety on the tang blocks sear and trigger movement; an unlock button on the bolt handle's root allows the bolt to open on safe.

6 The Feather trigger is a three-lever design adjustable for weight of pull only.

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The .410 rides again

The Hanic may have the traditional looks of a Winchester Model 94, but this Turkish-made lever-action shoots .410 shotshells.

THE Hanic is a new boy on the block, a handy .410 lever-action shotgun cloned from the Winchester Model 94 Angle Eject. It could easily be mistaken for Big Red W's original. It functions just like the .30-30 version. It also follows in the footsteps of Winchester's own Model 9410, a Model 94-based .410 lever-action that sold from 2001 until 2007.

Every feature of the Hanic .410 is familiar to a Model 94 owner — the flat-sided receiver, exterior hammer, barrel bands on muzzle and forearm, and lever loop, all of which are smoothly polished before being given a deep black finish. The forend and butt-stock are made of figured Turkish walnut, with the butt of the review gun showing an attractive tiger-tail figure.

In place of the traditional half-cock safety, the gun has a rebounding hammer and a two-position sliding safety on the upper tang. The knurled button is thumbed back to make the gun safe and pushed forward for fire.

Like the Winchester Model 94, there is a small pin protruding from the bottom tang, which acts as a trigger safety lever. It blocks the trigger and only releases it when the finger lever is drawn up

1



into its fully closed position.

Outwardly, the Hanic .410 has the same traditional configuration as its Angle Eject counterpart. As the lever is raised, two large locking lugs engage matching slots in the sidewalls of the forged-steel receiver, at the rear of the bolt. The trigger and hammer mechanism in the lower tang assembly employ a coil spring rather than a leaf spring, reducing the levering force, which results in a smoother-operating action.

All of the gun's exposed

metal parts have a highly polished, durable finish reminiscent of Big Red W's XTR finish. The butt-stock is fitted with a classic black rubber recoil pad with a black spacer, and is attached to the action in the conventional manner by a screw through both the upper and lower tangs. The tubular magazine is secured beneath the barrel by a steel band up front while another band holds the forearm of the stock to the barrel.

The Hanic is a handsome gun by any standards. Metal

finish is a deep blue-black and wood-to-metal fit good and close. I checked the firing cycle by loading five shells and working them through the action. It worked smoothly with Super-X 2½" shotshells throwing a payload of ½oz of No 6 shot. Working the lever briskly caused fired shells to be ejected onto the ground about two metres away from the gun. Trigger pull averaged 3kg (6½lb).

Five 2½" shells are inserted singly into the full-length tubular magazine through a

loading gate in the right side of the receiver. The magazine spring is stiff and, after inserting the first shell, I pushed each successive round in with the nose of the next one.

The 24" barrel has a fixed choke and is mounted with a high-pointed blade front sight and height-adjustable rear sight with a vee notch. Windage is gained by drifting the rear sight to one side or the other.

You might wonder why it's fitted with a rear sight at all since it's a shotgun, which is normally pointed and not

Patterns: Thinner, not smaller

There are many myths connected with shotguns, and one of the principal ones is that the smaller the gauge, the smaller the pattern. Not so!

A full choke of any gauge (eg, 12 or 20) is one that will put 70 percent of the shot charge into a 30" circle at 40yd (76cm at 36.5m). However, the standard for the .410 is different. A full-choke .410 is one that will put 70 percent of its pattern into

a 24" circle at 25yd (61cm at 23m).

The .410 then, does not shoot smaller patterns, given the same degree of choke. It simply shoots thinner patterns and it's difficult to obtain dense patterns beyond 30 to 35 metres.

Since patterns run thinner in the .410, it is less effective with larger shot. With anything larger than #6 shot, patterns aren't too hot. I've had more luck on small game with 7½

shot in a .410 than with any other shot size.

I thought that for fox whistling the Federal 2½" load throwing four 000 buckshot pellets with a diameter of .357", and weighing around 72gn, at 1200fps might be a good bet. It produced 25-inch patterns at 25 yards and spread to 100" at 40yd. Based on this, the buckshot load would only be a 25-yard load at best, and there's a good chance it'd only wound.



aimed. Of course, some owners may want it for shooting rifled slugs, and there are no flies on a .410 rifled slug weighing 216 grains leaving the muzzle at 1830fps. It may not qualify as a pig load, but it's sure to deter a fox sneaking out of the hen house carrying a chook in its mouth.

What puzzles me about the Hanic's rear sight is why they didn't design it to fold down for use with shotshells and be raised when shooting slugs or buckshot.

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Full length view shows the high quality of the Hanic and its resemblance to its Winchester Model 94 counterpart.

2 Five shotshells are thumbed through a loading gate in the right side of the receiver into a tubular magazine just like the Winchester Model 94.

3 The Hanic's action has been cloned from the Winchester 94. Pin at the rear of trigger must be depressed when lever is raised or the gun will not fire.



“ Every feature of the Hanic .410 is familiar to a Model 94 owner.”





“

The Hanic .410 lever action is a quick-handling repeater that will appeal to adults and youngsters.”

The action is drilled and tapped so a better solution would be to attach a red dot sight using Winchester AE Weaver-type bases or a Picatinny rail. More about this later.

The Hanic's bore measured .405", a constriction of .005", which indicates a modified choke. A cylinder-bored .410 would probably be better for rifled slugs, but the extra degree or so of choke should add a little density to the patterns with shot pellets. I did manage to bag a couple of rabbits with the Hanic, both

within the 25m zone.

The Hanic is chambered for 2½" shotshells, which the designers say give smooth cycling that cannot be achieved using the 3" shells. Many shooters may prefer 3" loads for game hunting, but 2½" loads come in #4 and #6 shot for hunting as well as target and sub small-bore skeet loads throwing ½oz of 7½, 8 or 9 shot.

Federal Hi-Brass .410 is a high-pressure load and velocities are high at 1200fps, but throwing only ½oz of #6 shot, patterns are spread very

thin beyond 25m. Actually, patterns with the Federal load average 65 percent at 25m. For field use I much prefer 6s rather than 4s for their increased pattern density.

The Hanic's receiver is drilled and tapped for a scope mount, so I attached a compact Aimpoint H1 red dot sight to try rifled slugs. The red dot is quicker than the irons to point and aim with. In the past, I found .410 slug loads to be pretty much like the 86gn bullet in the .25-20. They proved to be capable of taking foxes out to 50m, particularly when using a red dot sight. Undoubtedly, the little .410-bore shell is reasonably capable of getting the job done when the right load is used.

Winchester's 2½" slug loads in the Hanic shot well through the modified choke. At 25 metres three 93gn slugs grouped into 1½". On the 50yd target, three slugs landed in 2½". That's pretty impressive accuracy from a smoothbore, and ideal for vermin like foxes, but at around \$20 per 25 shots they're a bit expensive to waste on target practice unless you reload.

Summing up: the Hanic .410 should be effective on small game out to 30 metres or so. I can only speculate about whether or not its tenure will last any longer than the late Winchester 9410. Its sole

competition is the Henry .410, a traditional Marlin 1895 takeoff, and the more modern-styled Adler A110.

Camp meat provider and just plain fun to shoot, the Hanic .410 lever action is a quick-handling repeater that will appeal to adults and youngsters alike for hunting situations where a larger gauge may be too much gun and the .410 may offer an ideal alternative.

Finally, the Hanic is a well-made, nicely balanced firearm that I'd like to see chambered for the .30-30 or some other centrefire cartridge. This would really expand its usefulness. ☎



Manufacturer: FSM, Istanbul, Turkey

Type: Lever-action repeating shotgun

Calibre: .410 bore

Magazine capacity: Five 2½" .410 shotshells

Barrel: 24" smoothbore; fixed modified choke

Overall length: 42.32" (1075mm)

Weight empty: 6.75lb (3.6kg)

Length of pull: 14" (355mm)

Stock: Turkish walnut, unchequered

Finish: Deep blue-black

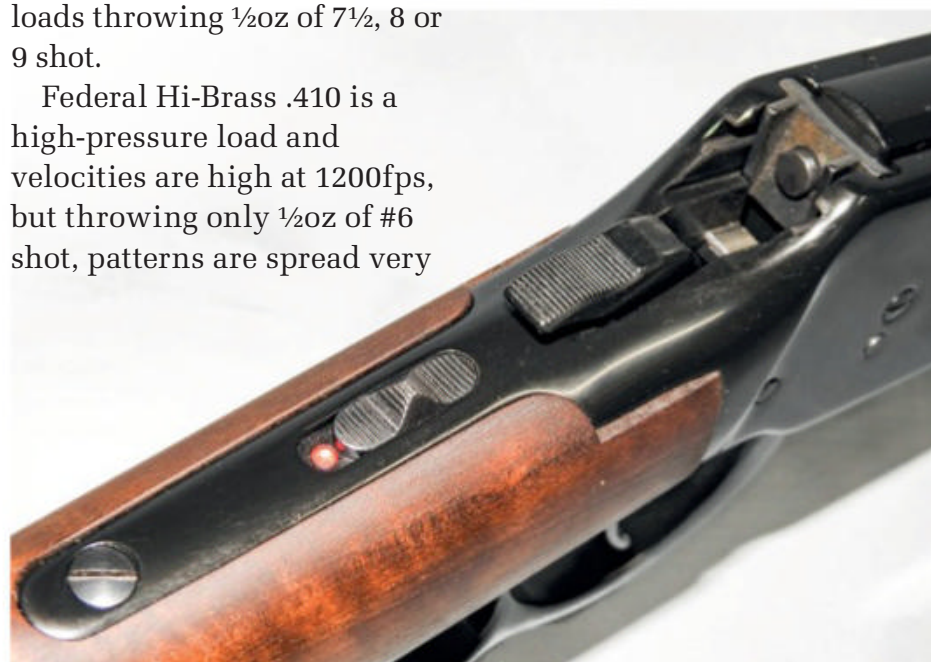
Sights: Fully adjustable rear; tapered blade front; action drilled and tapped for Winchester 94 Angle Eject bases

Trigger: Non-adjustable, single-stage

Safety: Rebounding hammer, two-position button on upper tang; trigger pin

Indicative price: \$1300

Distributor: Hunt's Shooting Supplies, huntsshootingsupplies.com.au



ABOVE: The versatile Hanic .410 shoots pellet and slug loads interchangeably. The Aimpoint Micro H1 red dot sight makes it fast to aim for moving targets on the ground or in the air.

RIGHT: Two-position knurled button on the upper tang combined with a rebounding hammer makes the Hanic very safe to operate.



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Spika's Xone pants are looking good as we head into warm weather.

SPIKA'S new Xone pants are practical all-round hunting strides that are as smartly designed as they look.

They're a mildly slim fit, as is the fashion, but not tight, especially as the material stretches comfortably. They've also got some length to them, which I appreciate, being longer in the legs. A hook in the bottom of the legs allows you to hook them to the laces of your boots to ensure they stay over the top of the boots to prevent crap getting in. There are also elastic drawstrings on the hems so you can blouse them onto the top of your boots in military fashion.

The waist design is great. It is slightly high-cut, which suits outdoors comfort. It has plenty of stretch to cater for you when you walk, squat, climb and do all those other bush movements we do when hunting. The inbuilt belt is a thin webbing one secured with a quick-release plastic clip but if you prefer to remove it and use your own, there are five standard-width belt loops.

There are five pockets all up: one at the back for a wallet, which seals with a zip; two generous hip pockets like



ABOVE: A zippered vent in each leg helps you keep cool.

you'd find in jeans; and two thigh pockets with zips. The thigh pockets are not big bellows-type ones but they're big enough and stuff doesn't bounce around in them, which is a big positive.

The all-synthetic material is very quiet to help you stalk silently, even in thick scrub.

It's not a warm material on its own, which is great in the hotter weather, and if that's still not cool enough for you you can open the zippered vents that run from lower hip to knee on the outside of each leg. This lets a fair bit of body heat escape.

I've worn the Xone pants



with thermals underneath when it was cold. I was warm and comfortable on a stalk. If it's colder — or windier, because these won't stop the breeze — you could add a thicker pair of pants over the top. This would have the advantage of letting you shed that outer layer when you're running hot, as I tend to do when I'm on the go.

Spika bills these as four-season pants, and that's about right if you keep in mind what I've said above. They're versatile because their use can be extended in conjunction with other gear. They dry quickly, too.

If you reckon these might be too hot for summer, you can buy the Xone shorts instead.

I can't tell you how they'll last because I haven't had them long enough to really judge it, but after several hard hunts they're looking fine. The knees have a second layer sewn into them for extended durability.

The quality certainly looks good, with everything well stitched together and no flaws.

They're definitely good pants, ideal for hunting in warm to mild conditions, but not limited just to that. The features are well considered and the comfort very good. 

Spika Xone pants

Sizes: S-5XL

Colours: Brown or Biarri camo

Price: \$159.95

Distributor: Spika, spika.com.au

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Goal setting

Dylan gets focussed and sets his sights on a bigger achievement.

AFTER competing in my local archery scene, I've started to realise the importance of setting goals. I don't believe hunting to be a competitive lifestyle or pastime, but I tend to take a casual approach. This usually sees me floating around, pleasing myself and only getting done whatever I decide in the moment.

I've since started putting things in place that encourage me to work towards some bigger achievements.

A bigger achievement doesn't have to be exotic or bettering a previous trophy. It could be as simple as rekindling a passion for something that used to be commonplace but has taken a back seat due to newer interests.

My fox shooting has gone by the wayside in the past few years and the handful I've taken have been purely opportunistic when out after deer or pigs. I've had friends tell me that taking a fox with a traditional bow is one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences a hunter can have, but unlike other similar challenges, foxes are in abundance in my area and my own laziness is the only thing getting in my way.



As a result of the ample opportunities, it tends to become one of those situations where I always tell myself I'll get around to it this coming summer, and never do.

Now that the warmer months are here, I decided to make sure I capitalise on the opportunities. I'm practicing a lot of close shots with my

bows, which I'm finding difficult as I have neglected them for so long. I'm also experimenting with different calls and whistles I've collected over the years yet have never used except for giving a few quick blasts after getting them from the mailbox.

Already, the chance of getting something to run right at me is making me excited.

Even though it's a little way off yet, I'm thinking about my deer adventures next year. I always find time to fill the freezer and I've shot some very nice bucks, but I've never considered myself much of a trophy hunter. I'm thinking that I'd like to set a proper long-term goal of improving genetics in the deer in my area and this may see me take a rifle out much more frequently

to remove the bucks that aren't showing trophy potential.

If for no other reason, it'll get me thinking about ensuring I have good quality deer hunting for years to come, as opposed to enjoying an abundance in the short term.

What do you do to motivate yourself to reach for bigger and better achievements? Is there a species of deer you haven't taken yet? Is there a rifle sitting in your safe that hasn't seen daylight for a while? Have you been toying with the idea of picking up a bow?

Or are you already setting yourself effective goals and sitting here wondering what's taken me so long?

Until next time, enjoy living your wilderlife. 🇬🇧

Follow Dylan on Instagram at '@wilderlife_'



ON THIS PAGE

1 A fox will need to be drawn in close before Dylan can get a shot with the trad gear.

2 There are stacks of good whistles available these days.



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Collective bargaining

Which shooting organisation should you join?

Well, why stop at one?

WE get a lot of enquiries each month from people saying, “My membership with another organisation is about to expire and I want to switch to you and use Shooters Union as my sole shooting organisation membership — can I do that and still keep my licence and have somewhere to shoot?”

The great thing is that we’re not like a phone contract or an electricity provider — you can be a member of us and as many other organisations as you like.

Our strength, as we’ve always said, is lobbying, member representation, industry liaison, media engagement and legal action.

We don’t own or run ranges, although we do have affiliated clubs. We don’t run training courses on the best way to hunt game animals. We don’t rent corporate offices. We focus on what we do best so we can help get a better deal and fairer treatment for our members and, by extension, all shooters in Australia.

Being a Shooters Union member is not an either/or thing. We encourage you to be a member of as many shooting organisations as you like in addition to us. If you like organised competition shooting, then join a target shooting club as well as us. If you are a keen hunter, join a hunting organisation as well as us. If clay target shooting is your thing, then you absolutely can be a member of a clay target shooting association as well as us

(at least from our perspective).

That way you get the best of both worlds — you get the benefits of Shooters Union membership and you support our lobbying and representation work; and you get the specialist benefits (such as range access, organised competitions, hunting property access, etc) of the other organisation.

Your support for Shooters Union allows us to keep having wins like we did in Queensland recently. There, working with industry representatives, we’ve been able to effect real change and reduction in licence and PTA processing times and backlog clearing. You’d also support our ongoing efforts to hold the Government of WA to account for doxxing the state’s gun owners.

We are a Genuine Reason for an A&B licences in several states, as well as Category H licences in Queensland. We’re an Approved Hunting Organisation in NSW for the purposes of getting an R-licence. We have on-the-ground representatives (local people, with local knowledge) in nearly all states and territories of Australia. And, of course, we offer \$20m of public liability insurance for organised competition target shooting or hunting with the written permission of the landowner (which includes government departments administering state land hunting programs).

As part of our commitment to effecting real change for



Just as you don’t rely on just one gun, don’t count on only one shooting organisation to handle everything you might need

shooters, we also arrange no-obligation consultations with firearm-knowledgeable lawyers, and we will also pay the Civil Administration Tribunal (or your state equivalent) filing fees if challenging a licence, PTA or firearms-related issue (although some conditions apply, obviously).

Shooting organisations are only as strong as their members, and taking a one-eyed approach to which organisation to join only hurts the shooting sports and the shooting community as a whole.

We at Shooters Union don’t mind which other shooting organisations you’re a member of, as long as you continue to support us — and we’d hope other shooting organisations have (or adopt) the same attitude.

As shooters, we are stronger together and a tribalistic or Highlander-style approach to which shooting organisation should be the only one worthy of support doesn’t help the community of law-abiding firearms owners.

We’re serious when we say Shooters Union is about standing up for all law-abiding firearms users, and part of that is helping shooters make the best choices about which organisations — and we stress the organisations, plural, part of that — they support, so we can collectively make our voices heard and enact positive changes for the more than one million licensed gun owners in the country. ☒

Graham Park is the president of Shooters Union Australia.



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W: 37mm
HRC: 58-60
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W: 37mm
HRC: 58-60
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**LARGE
FOLDER**

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WEATHERBY/FIOCCHI PHOTO COMPETITION

WINNER



“I managed to get this boar recently with a .243 loaded with Fiocchi 100gn soft points,” says Anthony Haraldson. “I came across three boars in a gully, five minutes from my home while on a lunchtime hunt. I lined up the biggest of the three and dropped it with a clean shot just behind the shoulder. It’s the biggest boar kill I’ve ever had. The rifle was borrowed so I’m really hoping to win a bigger-calibre rifle than my usual .223 with this pic!” Guess what, Anthony!



“I plucked this boy from a mob this morning after seeing him and another boar frothed up over a sow,” says John Starr. “The little 223 did a nice job, slipping a pill through the ribs and into the boiler room. He made a mad dash and piled up 20 yards from where he started.” Another good one, John.

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"Shot placement on any animal is important, especially on big game," says Andrew Elliot. "Having quality ammunition to take the shot is vital." Can't argue with that! Andrew decked this beaut buff using Fiocchi's .308 ammo.



We've received plenty of great photos that Ricky Howell has sent in of his daughter Sheridan's kills, but Ricky hasn't made an appearance in Hunter's Gallery for a little while. "I couldn't let Sheridan have all the goats, so I took this billy with my .30-06," he says. Good to see you getting into them, mate!



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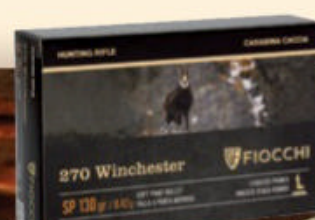
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THREE MONTHLY RUNNERS UP WILL WIN A CAP AND STUBBY HOLDER!





LEFT: New rifle, good mates, great country and a big boar. Tyson's happy!

over a hill towards an area known as the Twin Tanks for its pair of water tanks. I slowed as I approached them. Just as I was about to stop, I spotted something dark walking through the long tall grass. A pig!

The excitement of the chase ensued and I was keen to get the .308 to perform its magic.

Moving methodically through the grass, trying to limit the noise I made, I could make out a smell on the mild wind that was brushing against my face. The smell was undeniable; a boar. It was great to know the wind was coming towards me.

I kept my eyes scanning and soon saw the pig heading away from the dam. I only had a few seconds before it would be gone.

Like clockwork, I ran towards the nearest tree and lined the big fella up. He trotted into an open area and I squeezed the trigger. He dropped once before adrenaline took over but he only went another 10 metres before Jacko, who had him lined up for a follow-up shot from a position on the ridgeline, hit him and that was all she wrote.

You can't put a price on this stuff. I knew I was going to be having celebratory drinks with the crew.

Bally's Safaris — simply the best. Good memories, good mates and good times, always. 🎯

Bally's Safaris

Tyson Collis might be all grown up but he's still getting the best PE lessons.

WE like to call our traditional hunt "Bally's Safaris". They're led by Paul Ball, who used to be my primary school PE teacher. There's his son Jackson and my uncle, Micheal. It's always exciting to head out bush and try to knock over a few ferals.

I had just purchased a new rifle, a Steyr Pro Hunter in .308. It hadn't been christened yet. I'd only had enough time to put a scope on it and sight it in to make sure whatever I lined up was going down.

As always, the trip out was awesome. It's so good to get out and away from the city and into the country where peace and serenity can be found in spades.

Eventually, early in the afternoon, we made our way

onto the property, unloaded our gear into the dongs and got ready for a late-afternoon hunt.

We headed off around 4pm and I was keen to go and look around the back of the property. It was littered with multiple dams and I had a few favourites I was keen to check out.

We were lucky enough to have Bally bring his nephew's Can-Am along for some serious off-road pig chasing. Bally handed me the keys and told me to go easy on her, otherwise that's a strike. We have a long history of banter with our strike system when heading out bush. You forget to bring something? Well, that's a strike!

As I drove through the back parts of the property I headed up

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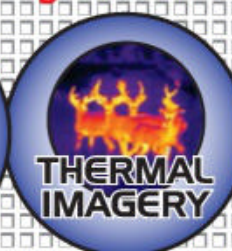
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Actions for custom rifles

Mauser-based actions are still the best choice for a tailor-made hunting rifle, for many good reasons.

GUN nuts get their kicks from dreaming up a new rifle. Once they've decided to go the custom route, choosing the component parts has them running around glassy eyed. The three main aspects of the project are selecting a cartridge, choosing a gunsmith to do the work and, most important of all, choosing which bolt action to use.

The action is the heart of any rifle — the mechanism which secures the cartridge in the rear of the barrel, fires it when the trigger is pressed, contains the chamber pressure generated by expanding gas and then extracts the fired shell after firing. It also feeds a new round from the magazine into the chamber by a reciprocal stroke

following extraction.

The action chosen for a hunting rifle should be strong, light, compact and smooth in operation. It should have a safety which locks the firing pin rather than the trigger. A commercial action would incorporate a trigger mechanism that is adjustable for weight of pull, although an ex-military action would require the addition of an aftermarket unit such as a Timney. No matter what kind of trigger is employed, it should be capable of the finest possible release action.

Most ex-military actions suitable for a custom rifle trace a heritage to the Mauser 98 pattern. Most modern actions, however, have moved pretty far

in the other direction. Many shooters building a custom rifle prefer a Mauser-type action of some kind, but some derivatives of the Mauser vary in strength and appearance. The most obvious features of the Mauser are its massive twin locking lugs, and its long non-rotating claw extractor that engages the rim of the cartridge as it is fed from the magazine and holds it under control as it is fed into the chamber. Most serious hunters demand an action which has controlled round feed.

In discussing actions for custom rifles, we won't consider them all, only those fit to serve as the heart of a truly fine musket. There are many which may be found

Commercial FN Mauser action is highly regarded but side safety is a weak feature and needs replacing.



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with excellent guns built up around them, like the Arisaka, for example, which has great strength. It seats its cartridge very deeply and solidly into the breech and has not one, but two port-side head lugs, the forward slotted for the ejector but the after one solid.

However, the Arisaka is a poor choice since it doesn't convert to a very attractive sporter rifle.

The '03 Springfield is another poor choice, probably the least efficient and weakest of all the Mauser derivatives.

The M17 Enfield was made for the .30-06, but it is long enough to handle cartridges based on the .300 H&H magnum case. It's as strong as the Mauser despite its slotted head lug, coned breech and cock-on-closing feature, and it has one of the best bolt-action safeties ever developed. As the basis for a custom rifle, it needs more work than almost any other military action, not least of which is milling the sight ears off, profiling the receiver and bridge, straightening the floor plate, and fitting a cock-on-opening kit and an adjustable trigger.

The Enfield was a government arsenal item and was produced only during a limited period during World War I, so today these actions

are practically unprocurable.

True Mauser actions come in a bewildering variety of types and sizes. The original Mauser-Werke at Oberndorf no longer makes rifles, but there are several sources of Mauser actions as well as complete rifles from western Europe which are of quality comparable to the original product, and include a number of design improvements as well.

Excellent modern Mauser 98 actions are found on Rigby's 21st Century line of sporting rifles and those from the Blaser factory in Isny, Germany.

The commercial Zastava Mauser actions from Serbia are not only affordable, but have excellent metallurgy and are of equal quality to the commercial FN Mausers made in Belgium after World War II. Very little work is needed to make them acceptable for a custom rifle. The only drawback is its two-position safety with a thumb-piece moving fore-and-aft on the right side of the receiver. It not only looks cheap, but does not retract the firing pin and is best replaced with a Model 70-type wing safety.

FN and Mark X Mausers have the port-side head lug slotted for the ejector, which is considered a point of weakness in those Mausers as well as in the Springfield and Enfield actions, but whether it really matters is problematical. Ex-military Mausers avoided slotting the port-side head lug by locating the ejector beneath it.

Mausers also have a safety lug at the rear of the bolt which could be of value in the

“

The '03 Springfield is probably the least efficient and weakest of all the Mauser derivatives.”



2

ON THIS PAGE

1 The ex-military Czech Vz 24 formed the heart of a fine custom rifle. Note new safety and bottom metal.

2 Model 70 Winchester action is arguably the best of all the Mauser derivatives for a custom rifle.



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almost unheard of event of double simultaneous failure of the head lugs.

After the Second World War, military Mauser actions were easy to come by but are now becoming harder to find. The majority of Mauser actions come in four lengths: short, military, standard and magnum. The short action is for the .22-250 and members of the .308 family. It cannot be altered to take cartridges of .270 and .30-06 length.

The military length suits the .284 Winchester as well as all the shorties but, with some effort, it can be made to take '06 length rounds. The standard length will take anything up to the .270, .280 and .30-06 as well as short magnums like the .264 Win and 7mm Rem Mag.

Standard length Mauser actions have been opened up to handle long belted magnum cartridges like the .300 H&H, .300 Weatherby and the .375 H&H magnum, but considerable metal has to be

milled away below the lower locking lug. This makes the M17 Enfield a better choice for the big magnums. A-Square used M17 actions to build rifles chambered for some monstrous cartridges including the .450 Assegai, the .500 A-Square and the .577 Tyrannosaur.

The safety on the M17 Enfield rocks back and forth on the right side of the receiver. It locks the bolt back and positively cams the cocking piece back. It's an excellent safety.

The small-ring Mexican Mauser is at the other end of the equation, made especially for the 7x57mm cartridge. It makes a particularly neat rifle for cartridges in the .308 family. Being a pure military type, however, it must be extensively worked over to make it respectable.

The Turkish Mauser is standard length but most unusually has a large diameter ring with a small ring diameter thread. It's a good action, but one that needs considerable modification before it is acceptable for a custom rifle.

One of the most sought after Mauser actions is the Argentinian, but with the steel being rather soft it needs heat treating for high intensity cartridges.

For a custom mountain rifle, one of the most sought after actions is the Czech G33-40 which was designed for use by

“

Derivatives of the Mauser vary in strength and appearance.”



4

Alpine troops. The G33-40 action had lightening cuts on both sides of the receiver, a small diameter receiver ring, thin receiver walls and a hollowed-out bolt handle, making it the lightest of the Model 98s.

The Mauser wing safety that swings through 180 degrees is one of the safest. Fully applied, it cams the cocking piece back out of contact with the sear, and locks the bolt. It won't work under a low mounted scope, but commercial versions are available that do.

The classic Model 70 Winchester action is a Mauser derivative with unslotted lugs, a gas deflector bolt, very fast lock time, a single-stage adjustable trigger and, being a modern design, it naturally carries its bolt handle low and out of the way of a scope tube.

The Model 70 has been criticised because of its coned breech and not having a 'safety' lug for emergencies, but it is a strong, rugged action that rarely lets go. The Model 70-style three-position bolt-sleeve-mounted safety lever that moves in a horizontal arc on the right side also locks back the cocking piece and firing pin, and is

compatible with a scope.

As the basic Mauser action has been with us for almost 125 years, it is not surprising that we wonder why no major improvements have appeared, and why no entirely new action has superseded it. In an era which regards quick obsolescence as an economic necessity, it is gratifying to find something designed with a little stability.

Actually, there is not much that can be done to improve the Mauser outside of a few changes in detail and there are factories in Europe today that are doing just that. Superior modern versions of the Mauser 98 being made in standard and magnum lengths to suit various sized cartridges offer the option of single or double square bridges. In custom form they are offered with a choice of triggers, engraving, high-quality figured walnut stocks — all the bells and whistles you can afford.

These actions are seen on Rigby rifles and the original Mausers distributed by Outdoor Sporting Agencies, but can be purchased for building a custom rifle. Obviously, they are expensive, but no better rifle action has ever been designed. ☒

ON THIS PAGE

3 These modern Mauser actions were made in South Africa with right- and left-hand bolts. They are extinct but fine ones are being made in Germany.

4 This is an excellent example of the newest Model 98 Mauser action which many consider to be the best of all time.

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ACRO P-2™

(No mount)

AP-200691

RRP: \$1,449

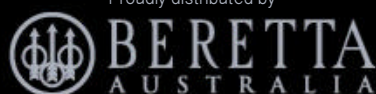


ACRO P-2

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RED DEER HUNTING

Jared and Aaron after
a successful week of
red deer hunting.

Moon boots and big stags

Never let adversity stand in the way of a successful stag hunt. Jared Matthews and Az earn two great trophies.

A man in camouflage gear and a cap is kneeling on a rocky riverbank. In front of him is a large stag skull with prominent antlers. The background shows a forest and a river.

It was early March, my training for the red deer roar was in full swing and every day I had been spending an hour or more at the gym trying to get in shape before a solid fortnight hunting with Aaron. This is when Az called with some bad news. He'd injured his ankle and calf muscle.

WE waited patiently for the outcome and the doctors confirmed he would be stuck in a moon boot for up to eight weeks.

I thought this was the end of the 2022 roar for us before it had even begun but Az was in good spirits and said we were going no matter what. The initial plan was that he would be camp cook and try to glass from camp. This was a much better outcome than being at work.

So we loaded up and headed north. Arriving at camp we immediately spotted some pigs down below the camp, so I quickly grabbed some gear and put in a stalk with the bow. Shortly after, I slipped a Kayuga broadhead straight through the biggest sow in the mob.

We were sharing the property with a couple of other good fellas, and they had decided to hunt out the front of the place so I headed

right out the back along the creek, a spot Az had pinned out for himself prior to his injury.

It had been a quiet morning with no reply to the roars as I walked down the long spur to where I planned to hunt. It was getting on in the morning, probably around 9-10am, when I cut a gully around 200 metres off the creek. I found a beautiful little grassy patch with a few rub trees and plenty of deer sign. I thought I would let out a few roars.

There was no response, though, so I started walking again when something to my left at about 80 metres caught my eye. A beautiful 15-point stag trotted around towards where I was headed. I put the gun up and followed him until he stopped, right behind a burnt log. I just needed him to take one more step.

I continued to look through the scope knowing that if he took off I'd never get a clear shot. I decided it was now or never, so I attempted to take a neck shot, which is all that presented.

I pulled the trigger and he took off at a great rate of knots. I followed his marks with no blood before I hit some rocky country and lost him. After 20 minutes I faced the fact that I'd missed him and decided to start walking out, and this is when I came across a few spots of blood up high. I spent about three hours in the rain to only find a couple more spots in

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Jared happy the carry-out is nearing the end and just about back to camp.

2 The sun's gone and there's still a lot of work to be done yet.

3 A nice little red-deer rub.

4 Jared's stag caught on trail camera a few weeks prior to the hunt.



Camp view on a beautiful April morning.



some very rocky, thick country before I headed back to camp.

It's never a good feeling, wounding a deer and not finding it so I went back in that afternoon to look around and try to locate him. Again, no success.

The next morning I went in to another spot further down. Az had decided to walk a track with his moon boot on in hope he might see something. I spotted a few pigs but I hadn't turned up any deer, so I headed back for an early breakfast.

I got a message from Az on the Garmin InReach saying he had a deer roaring back at him. However, he couldn't get into the steep gully where the stag was

holed up and he said that I should get down there. I packed pretty light and headed down.

Az pointed me in the right direction and I went in. He made the occasional roar to fire up the stag so I could monitor its location. I snuck in slowly, glassing and trying to keep the wind consistent to my face.

After some time, I managed to spot a pair of antler tops. I could make out a pair of perfect royal tops with some impressive back tines. I got into position about 100 metres off him but I couldn't take the shot while he was bedded. I stood next to a small tree for a rest and attempted a roar.

The stag roared straight back but



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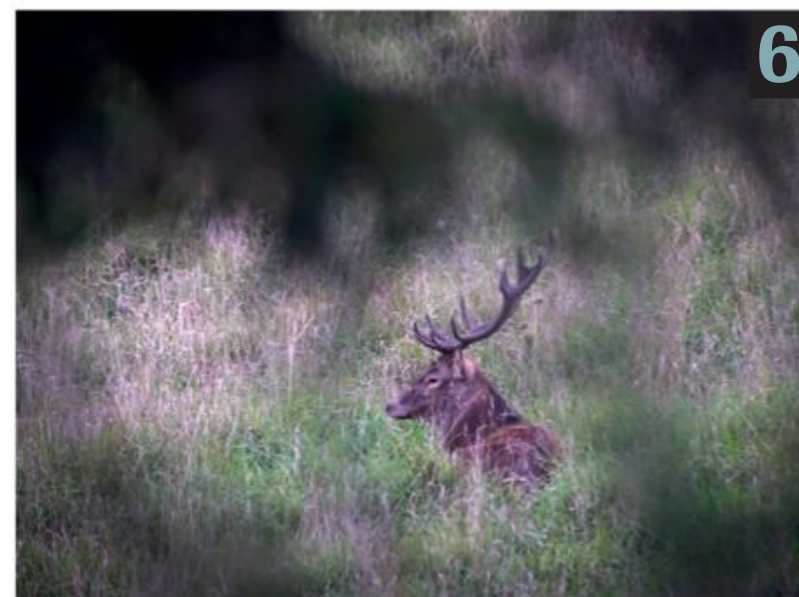
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7

didn't stand up. This continued for a further 10 minutes. I got impatient and decided I would yell out as aggressively as I could. He stood from his bed perfectly broadside, looking straight at me. I sent a Barnes TTSX right behind his shoulder. He took about 10 paces and stood there appearing uninjured, so I put in another one which sent him straight down into the gully floor.

Shaking like a leaf, I quickly radioed Az, letting him know what had happened. It was a bit disappointing that he couldn't get down for a photo and help me with the carry-out, of course, but I'm grateful he gave me the opportunity.

It was a serious carry-out of meat, head and cape and, as always in these situations, I didn't drink enough water so once I was back at camp I started to feel terribly sick. We went down to the farmhouse to share a few drinks with the other boys and the property owner, but I wasn't feeling well and I hit the hay early.

The following morning, I sat in camp face-caping the stag in between glassing pigs and chasing them around the mountain with the bow.

We spent a few more days there. Az managed to get some great

“He stopped, right behind a burnt log. I just needed him to take one more step.”

close-up footage of a young red stag that had an extra antler growing from its coronet. Even in the moon boot he managed to rack up the kilometres and see some nice deer.

We decided to visit another property Az has access to for a few days. On the first afternoon we could hear a stag roaring on a neighbouring property, so we attempted to call him in. I thought I heard a roar behind us and even though Az thought I was hearing things I opted to walk around the hill for a look.

I couldn't believe my eyes. A beautiful 13-point stag had bedded just below where we had dropped our backpacks an hour earlier. I ran back to Az and told him to get over there!

At first, he ummed and ahed. I thought, gee, if this bloke's not

going to shoot him, I might have to bump him out of my way.

“I think I'll take him,”

Az announced.

“Yeah, ya bloody better!”

I responded.

I set up the camera and he squeezed off a couple of quick shots, securing an absolute beast of a stag. Emotions were rather high as he had pretty well written off his chance of shooting a deer this roar, yet he managed to take a beautiful one.

To make it even sweeter I managed to get the ute and drive it right up to it.

This rounded out an awesome week away with two great stags on the deck and some great memories to boot. We decided to pack up the next day and head south to pursue some fallow closer to home. 📍

ON THIS SPREAD

5 Jared shot this big sow with the bow when they arrived at camp.

6 Aaron's red stag bedded up in the paddock.

7 The nice little gully where Jared shot at the 15-point stag that got away.



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FAMILY HEIRLOOMS



MAIN: After all this time the Lefever can still account for its share of rabbits on any hunt.

RIGHT: Leon and his son, Jason, on an early rabbit hunt with Leon using his Lefever side-by-side.

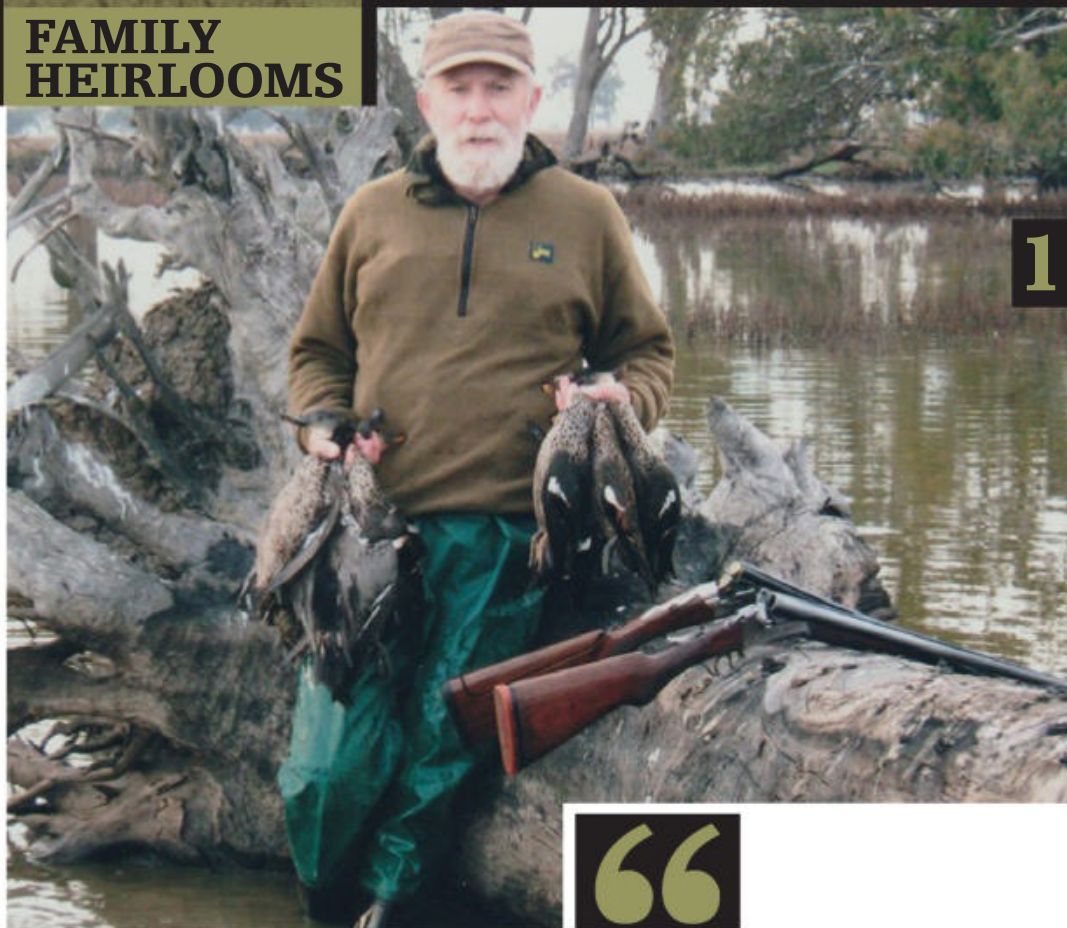


Leon Wright carries a shotgun that's nearly 100 years old and has been in his family for three generations.

The guns of a sentimental bloke



The boy, just short of his teens, sitting in the bow of the boat couldn't believe his good luck. Not only had his father taken him out on the morning of the beginning of duck season but he had just handed him the Lefever side-by-side 12-gauge shotgun with the instruction, "Shoot the duck again if it moves."



“



THEY were sitting under the willow trees on the lake's edge, 100 metres from Bott's Point, which lay on the ducks' flight lane from Wright's Inlet (named after his family) a kilometre away.

The ducks would swing into Bott's Point Bay after being disturbed from Wright's Inlet, then fly over the willows where the hunters were moored. A mob of teal had just done that, and one dropped out at the shot. The boy's father started rowing towards the duck, which stirred slightly. That was all the boy needed to fire a finisher.

He knew he would never forget the excitement of that first duck hunt. I never have, even though it was a lifetime ago.

I cherished that old Lefever side-by-side and I still do. My grandmother bought it for my grandfather in the early 1940s and, along with their old curly dog, he hunted ducks on Wright's Inlet whatever chance he got. And apart from a short time when my uncle took it droving, it has been in our possession ever since my grandfather's passing.

I have hunted everything with it: ducks, rabbits, foxes, quail, hares and even pigs in the lignum along the Lachlan River. With the old Lefever cradled in my arms I hunted ducks for years on Dowdle Swamp, Mansfield Swamp, Lake Cowel, Lake Mulwala, Native Dog Creek, the Big Reedy, the Little Reedy, Sharps Lagoon, the Horseshoe, the Frying Pan, the

I have hunted everything with it: ducks, rabbits, foxes, quail, hares and even pigs.”

Boosey Creek and countless dams.

When the bag number was a lot higher than it is now, we would hunt grey teal on Yellow Box Creek where they numbered in their hundreds. We would shoot them on the 'splash' during the full moon, when they pitched into our strategically placed decoys. It was nothing to shoot the bag of 20 birds on opening morning and 10 on consecutive days. We would shoot the bag on the Victorian side then drive across the border to NSW and do the same.

In the early days I used cardboard cartridges in the old Lefever. Brands such as Grand Prix, Maximum, Olympus, Brno Pentra, Black Hubertus, Icil Specials and others disappeared with the introduction of plastic-walled cartridges. I was now using newer and possibly better ammunition with names like Eley, Blue Star, Browning, Beretta, Winchester in all its varieties, Federal, Fiocchi and Duxbox to name some of the vast array available. I eventually shot the Lefever off its face, mainly due to

my use of the heavier 1¼ ounce game loads instead of sticking to the 1⅛ ounce loads, trying to compensate for my poor shooting.

That's when I ventured into the reloading scene for both the shotgun and rifle. Shotgun cases were easy to obtain if you spent half an hour or so wandering around the swamp after opening morning.

Finally, with the Lefever having more rattles in it than my old Zephyr car, I took it to a city gunsmith to have it tightened up. He may have tightened it up but it was the roughest job I had ever seen. Not only did he burr one of the screws under the action, he polished off part of the sparse engraving when he replaced the pin. His work came with a guarantee of 200 shots, and I remember thinking that wouldn't last much past next weekend.

As the years progressed, I came to own another Lefever. A keen hunter from the city got in touch

ON THIS PAGE

1 A nice bag of teal taken by Michael while shooting over decoys with his old Lefever.

2 Duck hunting with his Lefever and his old curly, Missy. Life doesn't get much better.

3 Side-by-sides and duck hunting go together like peaches and cream.





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- 9 Round JMX-1 Magazine
- Weight: 3.1 kg



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4

with me in the early 1990s after reading one of my hunting articles featuring the old Lefever.

Apparently, it had come into his possession the same way mine had, inherited from his father who had used it for duck and quail hunting.

Earlier in its life his father had sent it back to America to have some work done on the barrels to make it more suitable for quail hunting. He wanted to know if I was interested in purchasing it as he was quitting hunting due to failing health and he wanted it to go to a keen hunter.

Buying an unseen second-hand firearm, I felt a fair amount of trepidation but the gentleman seemed genuine. I sent the money and the Lefever duly turned up.

I was surprised at its overall condition — barely a scratch on it, bores in mint condition. It was in far better condition than mine, which had copped a fair bit of harsh treatment while away with my droving uncle.

With a somewhat raised rib the Lefever is a really nice shotgun to

ON THIS PAGE

4 The two Lefevers owned by Leon and his brother, Michael. Both guns, although almost 100 years old, are still used to this day.

5 Hunting partner Blake with Leon's Lefever and a brace of rabbits.

shoot with. I have always been a big fan of the side-by-side. In my opinion, it leaves the under-and-over languishing when it comes to shooting game birds. I know my hypocrisy is beginning to show as these days I mainly shoot with a Beretta under-and-over, but believe me, it took a long time to adjust.

The double triggers on the old Lefever give me that instant choice of half choke or full choke and the shallow breaking of the side-by-side to load far outshines the breaking of an under-and-over.

I had the shooting of the old double down to a fine art. If the duck was within 30 metres, I fired the half choke; if out further, the full choke. I used the same system when hunting over decoys, when I usually had No 6 shot in the half choke and No 4 in the full choke.

I had a tendency to use No 3 shot in either 1½ loads or 1¼ loads for a lot of my shooting when using the side-by-side, and still do. It was a good size shot that could handle rabbits, ducks and foxes with ease. However, there were occasions, especially when shooting teal over decoys, when I used my own reloads in No 7 shot, which were deadly on teal over decoys in the light of the full moon.

With the introduction of steel shot to our duck hunting my Lefever has been sitting in the gun cupboard, only being used on the odd quail hunt and occasionally on a duck shoot over rice. When we have a fox drive on the go, it usually gets a run.

Embarrassingly, I have never checked the pattern on either barrel, but the full choke can certainly put a fox down at extended range.

Eventually, I found the Lefever was off its face again, but this time just from a lot of use, so I rang a gunsmith who has done quite satisfactory work on other firearms for me, asking if he could render the Lefever safe to use again. He found it needed rebuilding again, so I instructed him to get on with it. A fortnight later the shotgun was back and as tight as it had been when brand new.

I plan on using it again on the occasional sortie after quail, rabbits and ducks over rice. It may be a working man's gun but it has faithfully served three generations of avid hunters and is still in good shooting order. You can't ask much more of a gun that is almost 100 years old.

Our old Lefevers have been through it all — countless hunting trips, the introduction of duck licences, the decrease in bag limits, the change from cardboard cartridges to plastic and from lead shot to steel. Would I be willing to part with it? Never.

It may only be worth peanuts in monetary value, but the nostalgic value is priceless. The only time I will part with it will be when I hand it down to my son or nephew, in as good a condition as it was when it was handed to me all those years ago. 🇬🇧

Lefever history

Curiosity got the better of me. I decided to check the history of Lefever shotguns. All I knew was that they were made in America.

The Lefever Firearm Company was set up in Syracuse, NY, by Daniel Myron Lefever, the inventor of the hammerless gun. The company operated between 1883 and 1916, when it merged with the Ithaca Gun Company, which also operated in New York.

Our Lefevers are a product of this merger and are labelled 'Nitro Special Hammerless 12 gauge'. They were called "a working man's gun, but of good quality". Both are bored half choke (modified) and full choke with 30" barrels; other gauges and barrel lengths were also produced.

Surprisingly, both of our Lefevers were made in a 12-month period during 1924-25.



5



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357MAG 152MM BARREL



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COLT ANACONDA STAINLESS
44MAG 152MM BARREL



COLT ANACONDA STAINLESS
44MAG 203MM BARREL

SPECIES GUIDE: SCRUB BULLS

Bull fight

Scrub bulls are big, tough and potentially dangerous game that offer a unique hunting experience. Ted Mitchell Snr knows the drill.

Scrub bulls or feral cattle, naturally, started out as domestic cattle.

Many escaped over the years from properties or stations and they adapted very easily to the harsh Australian outback. Now they make for an exciting, challenging and sometimes dangerous hunt. Scrub bulls are a very large animal and can at times be very aggressive. To hunt these animals you need to be an experienced hunter or have a good guide.

RIGHT: A massive scrub bull, both in body and horns, is a real trophy animal.





THEY may be cattle (*Bos taurus*), but not just any cattle. These wild cattle are whole, ie, not castrated, and not to be confused with the famous banteng that are up in the Territory. They're often just called bulls, scrubbers and sometimes feral oxen; the young bulls are called Micky bulls.

Scrub bulls are hunted because they are trouble. Cattle stations want to keep selected herd bulls to service their managed breeding programs. Scrubbers are young males who've avoided being mustered and castrated, and they become hard to manage and dangerous. They will fight, damage fences and cause inbreeding. Station owners want them removed.

Average weight of our wild scrub bulls can vary anywhere from 450kg up to 900kg. They seldom become any heavier than that, but there's always the chance of a real monster. Most are usually a bit on the lean side and I would hazard to say the average weight would be around 700kg or a less.

Heights can vary but a large bull can stand nearly six foot high (183cm). The average colour is often what we call a red bull, as a lot come from interbreeding with the Peninsular reds, but depending on breeding they could be virtually any colours at all, as often other cattle have gone wild and spread their genes into the system.

Wild bulls can be found in many

states — in fact, in virtually any state of Australia — but most are distributed across the northern parts of Queensland and the Northern Territory. There are scrubbers further south in mountainous and wild country, from stock that has been lost and has run wild for years.

Signs and seasons

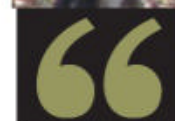
Cattle droppings are easy to see, as are their hoof marks or tracks and they do tend to rub trees. They often roll in sandy spots, too. Bedding spots in the southern areas are higher, usually on the saddle of a hill, where it's warm and the sun will hit first up in the mornings. In the more tropical areas, they will bed down not far from water.

Bulls really are a lot like other animals we hunt: you will find them anywhere as they are wanderers and usually get into some of the most unlikely spots.

There are no hunting seasons for scrubbers, though the weather patterns of northern Australia often dictate the practicalities of hunting them. As long as you can get around the countryside, bulls can be hunted year-round with permission from the landholder.

Hunting methods

There are many ways to hunt wild scrubbers. Some like to drive a vehicle or quad, so as to cover heaps of territory, as cattle can travel 10km or more in a day.



You will find them anywhere as they are wanderers and usually get into some of the most unlikely spots.”

One day they can be at a certain water hole where you think you will find them the next day, but instead they'll be many kilometres away at a different watering spot.

Having a guide who knows the country is the best way to go, as they know the most successful ways to find them. At Mitchell Cape York Adventures, bulls are often the intended prey and the guides there have a very good idea where to find that massive scrub bull you want.

Using a vehicle to find them, you can cover much ground and hopefully, if not disturbed, you can park the vehicle and complete the hunt on foot.

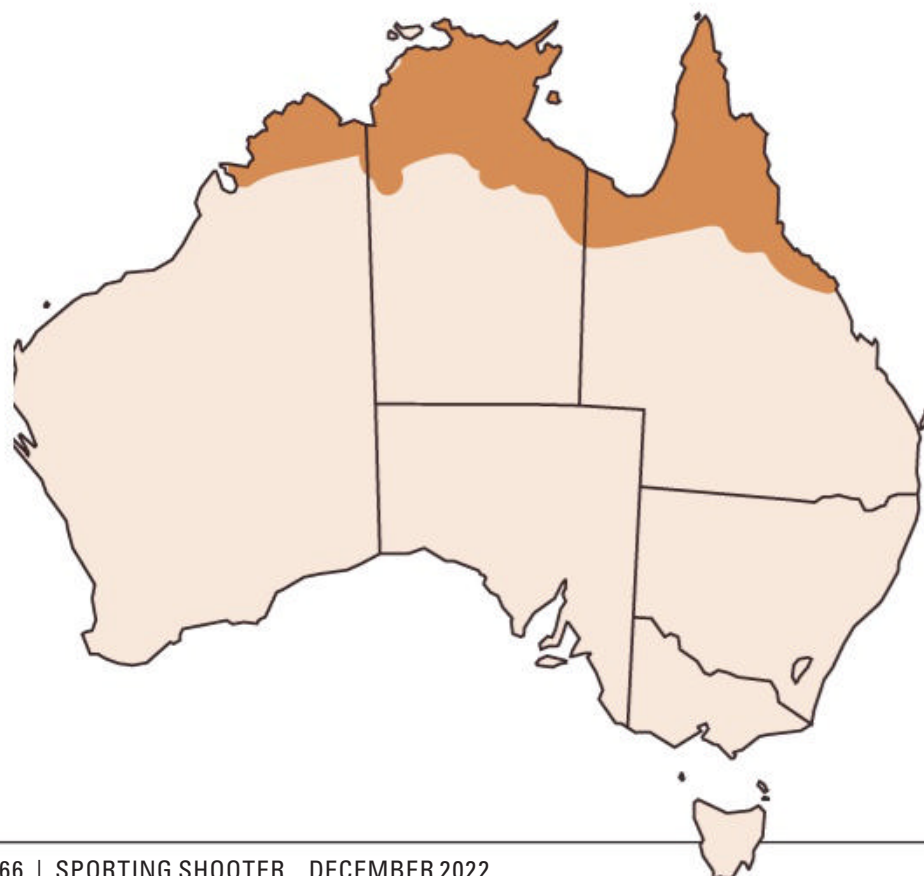
Tools for the hunt

Using a rifle, you need to have a decent, hard-hitting calibre from the .308 upwards, to whatever large rifle you can handle well. You also need to use decent projectiles. I have found that most of the

ON THIS SPREAD

1 This feisty old scrubber wanted to escort Ted and his crew off its turf!

2 This was the only wild scrub bull that ever charged Ted.





mono-type projectiles like Barnes, Atomic 29, Hornady GMX and others are the best. You need a projectile that smashes bone and penetrates deeply, plus holds together well, but it also must have the front expand well, to give a massive wound channel.

If stalking with the bow and arrow, a reasonable weight bow with good, strong broadheads of a reasonable weight will do the job. One of my sons recommends the two-blade broadheads, while the other son, who hunts nearly exclusively with the bow, uses the three-bladed stainless or titanium RAD broadheads that he imports from America for his business, Primal Hunting and Outdoors. They are great, leaving massive wound channels that will bleed the animal out quickly.

Both types will get the job done well, so long as you aim for the right place. Probably one of the best shots with the bow is the lung shot. It's a large area and easier to hit. The heart,

which is hidden behind the large leg bone, needs either a front-on or quartering shot to get the broadhead in there. My son has taken both scrub bulls and buffalo with these broadheads with no problems.

I have hunted many wild scrub bulls and years ago I used to guide people onto them. They can never be taken too lightly, as they are a large animal and at times can be very aggressive.

Often a bull that has taken a bad hit can charge you. A few words of advice: If charged, never turn and run, as you will get horned for sure. If there's a guide he will back you up. If not, just aim as carefully as you can and shoot again and again until the bull is down.

Then when it is down, never walk straight up to it as many hunters have been injured by so-called dead bulls. Come in from behind with your rifle loaded and cocked and touch the eyeball. If there's no movement, you are good to go.

Not many bulls will charge but it pays to always be prepared. I have only ever been charged once by a bull that wasn't first shot, but that's another story. Many bulls that have been shot will try to get you if they can, but if they're down with broken shoulders or such, then you're not going to have much of a problem.

Contact an outfitter or property owner who has wild cattle on his place. Good hunting and good luck. I hope you get a really great trophy bull. 🎯

Contacts

From experience, we can recommend Mitchell Cape York Adventures (0407 730 565) and Cape York Bush Adventure (0482 554 813). For the broadheads mentioned here, contact Primal Hunting and Outdoors on 0439 780 309.



Beretta 687 Silver Pigeon V

The Silver Pigeon evolves with the V version, the top of Beretta's range of 'standard' over-and-under shotguns. Hunters will love this gun even more as a beautiful symbol of efficiency, reliability and minimal maintenance requirements inherited from the 680 platform. The new model is characterised by a new look together with a superior wood grade. The fine engravings are made using state of the art, five-axis laser technology.

Featuring an exquisite gloss finish which enhances the grain of the stunning Class 3 wood (a step up from the Silver Pigeon III's Class 2.5) this beautiful shotgun is available in a hunting or sporting

version, in either 12 or 20 gauge.

The main features of the 687 Silver Pigeon V Field include its wooden butt pad, a glossy water-repellant finish for the walnut, high-contrast deep scroll engraving, Nistan finish, 3" chambers, 6x6 top rib, Steelium Optimabore HP barrels, internal HP chokes and a choice of 28" or 30" barrel lengths.

The Sporting model has the same features, however, it offers a rubber butt plate, 10x8 top rib, barrel lengths of 30" or 32" and external HP chokes.

To find out more about these beautifully made shotguns ask at your local gun shop or visit berettaaustralia.com.

Bushnell Broadhead LRF for archers

Designed specifically for the archery market, the Broadhead 6x25 laser rangefinder is the next level for precision measurement, with an all-new engine capable of +/- 0.3-yard accuracy out to 150yd for archery enthusiasts. This has been tested to ensure the range is deadly accurate in the field or for competitions and combines with angle accuracy of +/- 1 degree.

Its Accusync display allows you to see in low light and bright conditions, as it features an all-new auto-adjusting black-to-red reticle and the display fluidly morphs according to your background for maximum contrast.

Other features include high-definition all-glass optical system for clarity; Angle Range Compensation (ARC) technology; Exobarrier lens protection that repels water, oil, dust and fog; and near/far ranging modes for accuracy in the field.

To find out more, ask at your local gun shop or archery supply or visit nioa.com.au.



GRS Fenris stock

The latest addition to the GRS range, the Fenris is produced in synthetic material with fibreglass reinforcement. It is pre-cut, pre-bedded and with adjustable cheek piece and length.

The Fenris stock is versatile enough to handle all hunting and shooting situations, even in the most extreme conditions. The brand new stealth grey colour of the stock combines with the black details of a rifle to not only make it aesthetically pleasing, but also help it blend into its surroundings.

This new stock is designed to fit all body types, as you can adjust the stock for length of pull and comb height via its SpeedLock system. In addition, the honeycomb grip ensures good grip in all conditions, while reducing vibrations.

These stocks are made with inlets to suit the Howa 1500 and Howa 1500 Mini Action, Savage 12 and 16, Tikka T3, T3x and CTR, Bergara B14 and Remington 700.

Ask to see them at your local gun shop or visit nioa.com.au for more information.



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ZEISS DTC 3 clip-on thermal imaging

The Zeiss family of thermal optics has again taken a leap forward with yet another intuitive night-hunting product. First, Zeiss released its DTI 3/25 and 3/35 thermal imaging camera/monocular with its high-resolution HD LCOS display that offers excellent thermal-imaging clarity at night. In addition, it also offers the ability to take photos and video, which can be stored on the camera or transferred to your smartphone using a Zeiss app.

The latest news, however, is the release of the new DTC 3 range of clip-ons in two models, the DTC 3/25 and DTC 3/38. At the time of writing these new clip on models were about to land in Australia so limited information was available, but there are a few things we do know. Both have a large, high-contrast

1024x768 HD AMOLED display, intuitive ergonomics, precise and user-friendly zeroing and virtually unlimited battery life.

Their base magnification is 1.0x. Featuring numerous customisation options, the Zeiss DTC 3/25 clip-on device has an 18.4m field of view at 100 metres and the ability to easily recognise detail. The DTC 3/38 covers 12.3 metres at 100 metres.



Their extremely precise zeroing should ensure they are highly accurate for an ethical kill shot at night.

To find out more and see the latest in the Zeiss family of thermal devices, ask at your local gun shop or visit osaaustralia.com.au.



Ridgeline women's wear

In addition to menswear, Ridgeline carries a full range of outdoor wear for women. To start, the Merinotech thermal tops and leggings, made of 100 percent merino wool, are ideal as a base layer in cold weather. There's also the full Performance range of gear in the latest Escape camo pattern. The Ascent softshell jacket is cut in women's sizes, the Stealth pants come in slim fit for women and both come in the choice of Escape camo or Field Olive finish. Next are the quarter-zip tops in Escape camo. The Ascent version is made of 130gsm brushed grid back fleece for cold conditions; the Performance top is made of a breathable grid fabric for the warmer months.

The Ridgeline range also includes a host of other tops, anoraks and jackets made and styled specifically for women. Ridgeline has several female brand ambassadors who are avid hunters both here in Australia and in NZ. They test and report to ensure the gear ticks all the boxes.

With Christmas just around the corner, have a look at the Ridgeline range, which you can see at your local gun shop or at ridgelineclothing.com.au.



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Garmin Instinct 2 Solar

You may remember a review I did some time ago on the Garmin Fenix 5 Plus, a multi-sports watch that offered arguably the widest range of options available when it came to things like navigation, tracking, training and health monitors — not to mention the time and lots more. Not only has the Fenix range progressed even further since then, Garmin has added the Instinct series to its Adventure collection that's very well priced and has a host of useful features for outdoor activity.

The Garmin Instinct 2 watch is indeed a very powerful tool for outdoorsmen, offering such things as basic navigation, bread-crum tracks, fitness tools, training for different activities like running, bicycle riding and swimming, and the ability to connect to your smartphone to sync data or receive alerts. It's a rugged GPS smartwatch with access to multiple global satellite systems.

There is also a solar version, the Instinct 2 Solar, and what a great idea that is. While you can still charge the watch via a USB cable, the Instinct 2 Solar promises unlimited battery life via a transparent glass solar panel that covers the screen and keeps the watch charged.

Used as a smartwatch alone, the Instinct 2 offers around 28 days run time without solar or other charging, though the more features you use, the shorter the battery life, of course. Hence the Solar version is an excellent choice for outdoorsmen because if you're in the hills you only need a few hours per day in direct sunlight to top up the battery. Hunters who use the various functions will appreciate this feature, particularly when away on extended trips in the mountains where a power source isn't available.

When setting up, the Instinct 2 also offers a host of monochrome watch face designs to choose from, depending on your personal needs and preferences. I choose heart rate, battery life, steps, time and date, but there are many other combinations.

This watch can also track a host of activities via its widgets. For example, the weather offers current, hourly and daily reports as well as



as air quality index, while sunrise and sunset times, including twilight times, are ideal for determining prime times for hunting. When out bush, you may also wish to use the compass, altimeter and barometer; there's even a storm alert feature. Many of these readings can also be custom set on your watch face for quick and constant access at a glance.

You can track your steps on a daily and weekly basis, set goals, check your constant heart rate and stress levels or view them on a graph showing the past seven days. I loaded the Garmin Connect app to my iPhone so I could store and view these details on it, too. In fact, by doing so, I could see all my activities — things like steps, calories, respiration in breaths per minute (BRPM) while asleep or awake, and much more.

For those who want to go to the next level — for example, when in high altitude areas like NZ or when pushing your body to the limit — you can set the sensors to Pulse Ox Mode to measure your blood-oxygen levels, though these days I tend to take it a lot slower and try not to exert myself too much.

Sport mode is another useful setting on the Instinct 2, with sub-modes to suit activities such as bike riding, run and many others. I choose the hunting mode which I had to download and add to my watch, which is quite simple to do. This mode gives you a compass reading for the direction you are heading, tracks where you walk, allows you to save tracks and much more while travelling. You can return to an area and follow the same path at a later date by simply saving the trip.

One of my favourite features in the Instinct 2 is its Back To Start feature. Extremely simple to use, it gives peace of mind when in new country or heavily wooded areas, to ensure you don't get lost. I recently tested this feature while in the Victorian high country. It enables you to turn around and head back using the same trail or straight line. While the latter may be a quicker option, you may end up in areas that are uncrossable, so using the Track Back is advised. You can also delve into time, distance, heart rate, terrain inclines and declines and much more.

But as always, its safety aspect was my main objective.

After a couple of weeks of use, I'm still finding new features on the Garmin Instinct 2 Solar. In fact, as the watch is synced to my

smartphone, I realised I was receiving notifications, including emails and messages, on the watch. I also like the quick-access features of the Instinct 2, some of which include turning off the watch, controlling music on your smartphone or, as I found out the hard way, finding your smartphone if you lose it; you just press a button on the watch to set off a loud ringing tone on your phone.

While the Garmin Instinct 2 Solar doesn't have as many options as the Fenix 5 did, such as topo maps, a colour screen or music storage, it is a rugged outdoor watch that suits our lifestyle, is well priced and offers some very useful health and fitness options.

For more details check out the Garmin Instinct 2 Solar at garmin.com.au or ask at your local gun shop or Garmin dealer.



ZEISS SFL binoculars

If you are after a lightweight pair of binoculars but don't want to compromise on the magnification, Zeiss offers its new SFL (Smart Focus Lightweight) binoculars in the choice of 8x40 or 10x40 sizes. Featuring ultra-high definition (UHD) optics, these binoculars offer true-to-life colour and excellent clarity, with the highest level of detail.

Featuring a well-positioned focus wheel for fast and precise focussing, the 8x40s have a field of view of 140m at a distance of 1000m and the 10x40s span 115m at 1000m. Both will focus as near as 1.5m.

Many binoculars in this class have 42mm objective lenses, but Zeiss made these ones 2mm smaller, making it possible to use thinner lens elements at closer spacing and thus reduce weight by as much as 20 percent compared with Zeiss's Victory SF models; they're 13 percent smaller in terms of volume, too. Zeiss claims this makes the SFL binoculars up to 30 percent lighter than comparable products from competitors.

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Headspace is essential to safety and performance, but a handloader has control over it.



1

The critical importance of headspace

HEADSPACE is a ballistic term which crops up frequently in print. Too bad it is seldom accurately defined, because its effect on the cartridges you load, and the adjustment of the dies, is critical. If you want to be a truly safe and effective handloader, the concept and practice of headspace must be

understood and adhered to.

An important mechanical aspect of a cartridge case is its system of headspacing, which is a dimension within the rifle's chamber. Specifically, it is the distance between the bolt face and a datum point within the chamber, but it may also be defined as the amount of forward and backward

movement of a chambered cartridge when the breech is closed and locked.

Ideally, this endplay should be zero, but this is impractical in factory ammunition because of manufacturing tolerances in both cartridges and chambers. Therefore, industry standards set allowable headspace at .004" (0.1mm) maximum. Four one-thousandths of an inch is not a great deal of space, but more headspace than this in a chambered cartridge is considered excessive and potentially dangerous.

There are four common methods of determining headspace and these four methods are closely related to the four general types of cartridge cases.

On a rimless or semi-rimless cartridge, it is measured from the bolt face to a some point on the shoulder known as the datum line. The datum line is usually indicated on minimum chamber drawings and data sheets. For example, the datum

line on a .270 or .30-06 cartridge case is the point in the shoulder which measures exactly .375" (9.525mm) diameter.

This measurement varies with the size of the case. For example, on the .300 H&H belted case, headspace is measured in front of the belt recess. Minimum chamber drawing specifies .220" from the bolt face to the datum point. The tolerance is -0 and +.008" (+.2mm). Consequently, a rifle would be within specifications if the distance from the bolt face to the front of the belt recess was anywhere from .220" to .228" (5.59-5.79mm).

On a rimmed cartridge, headspace is measured in front of the rim recess and is the thickness of the rim, or the distance from the face of the fully locked bolt to the forward edge of the rim of the cartridge case which contacts the end of the barrel. Rim thickness varies with some rimmed cartridges, but normally it runs from .063" to 0.067" (1.6-1.7mm). This is probably the most precise method of headspacing in use today, although it is also the oldest.

Rimless pistol cartridges are usually straight and have no shoulder or rim to provide a stop. Headspace is usually measured from the face of the fully locked bolt to the end of the mouth of the cartridge case. When one of these cartridges is chambered, its forward travel

2



ON THIS PAGE

1 These are what resulted when factory cartridges were fired in a .30-06 Ackley Improved rifle which had excessive headspace.

2 Improved rimless cartridges must have practically nil headspace. Contact must be at the bolt face and junction of neck and shoulder.



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3

“Think of headspace as being relative to each individual rifle and the cartridge.”

specifies .220" (5.59mm), then the go-gauge would be made to .220". If the bolt closes on the go-gauge then it is .220" or greater. If it does not close on the go-gauge, it is less than .220" and therefore would fall out of specification.

The no-go gauge is normally made to some intermediate specification such as .223" or .224". If the bolt does not close on the no-go gauge then headspace is less than .223" or .224" and therefore falls within the lower half of the allowable specification, indicating that the rifle would be safe to shoot. However, if the bolt closes on the no-go gauge it means that the headspace is excessive and the rifle would be dangerous to use. A factory technician would reject that rifle and place it aside to be rectified.

Some factories use only the no-go and go gauges and will reject any rifle if it closes on a no-go gauge. This is certainly the safest thing to do. However, there is a third gauge called the field gauge. In some factories, this gauge is made close to maximum and might be .227". Any rifle that closes on a field gauge might still be within specifications, but normally would be rejected.

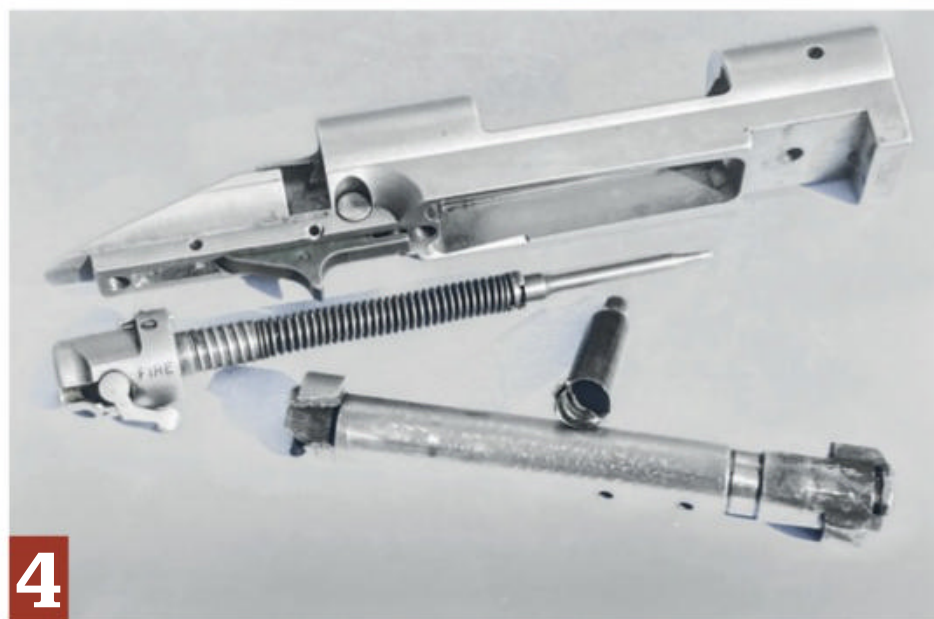
In a military rifle, where maximum life of the rifle is the issue, and not necessarily accuracy, the field gauge will be at the absolute maximum on the

minimum chamber drawing. I have a set of three gauges for the .303 Lee Enfield: 0.064", 0.067" and 0.070". When the armorer closes the bolt on the 0.070" field gauge, that rifle would either be taken out of service or have the bolt head changed to one of the correct length.

Every handloader should get into the habit of thinking of headspace as being relative to each individual rifle and the cartridge. If it is a factory cartridge, it will have normal dimensions, but if the chamber itself is too long, the combination has excess headspace. On the other hand, the chamber can be normal and still show excess headspace with an individual cartridge which happens to be too short in the headspace measurement.

In working with one particular rifle, however, a handloader can adjust the dies to produce cases which approach zero headspace in that rifle. He can also adjust belted magnum cases to headspace on the shoulder like rimless ones instead of on the belt and enjoy certain benefits.

We won't start a discussion about whether it is better to neck-size or full-length size your fired cases. There are arguments for and against both. Suffice to say that I've never found that full-length resizing overworks the brass and shortens case life. It is true that neck-sizing only makes a better fit between case and chamber, but it often makes for hard chambering after two or three firings, and unless the chamber



4

is stopped when the end of the cartridge case contacts the end of the chamber.

With these cartridges, the depth to which the cartridge can enter the chamber is controlled by a recess in the chamber which contacts the mouth of the case, and the headspace measurement is the full length of the case itself. Such cartridges cannot be crimped onto their bullets, since this will change the headspace.

Cartridges like the .220 Swift and .225 WCF are classed as semi-rimmed. They have a rim or extractor flange that is only slightly larger in diameter than the case base and usually a distinct uncut area between the rim and case base. Rebated cartridges like

the .284 Win and magnum cartridges based on the .404 Jeffery case have rims of significantly smaller diameter than the case body at the base, plus a definite extractor groove between rim and base or belt. All of these cartridges do have a sort of rim, but they headspace on the shoulder exactly as do all rimless cases.

Since this dimension is inside the chamber, you can't get to it to measure it with a caliper or micrometer. Rifle manufacturers measure headspace by the use of gauges. A gauge will not give a specific dimension, but a series of gauges will give a range within which they know the dimension falls. If the headspace dimension on the minimum chamber drawing

ON THIS PAGE

3 If you prefer to neck-size your cases, you should buy a three-die set with a special neck-sizing die.

4 Don't let this happen to you! This Model 70 had a head separation. The locking lugs held but set back, breaking off the bolt handle. It could have been a lot worse!

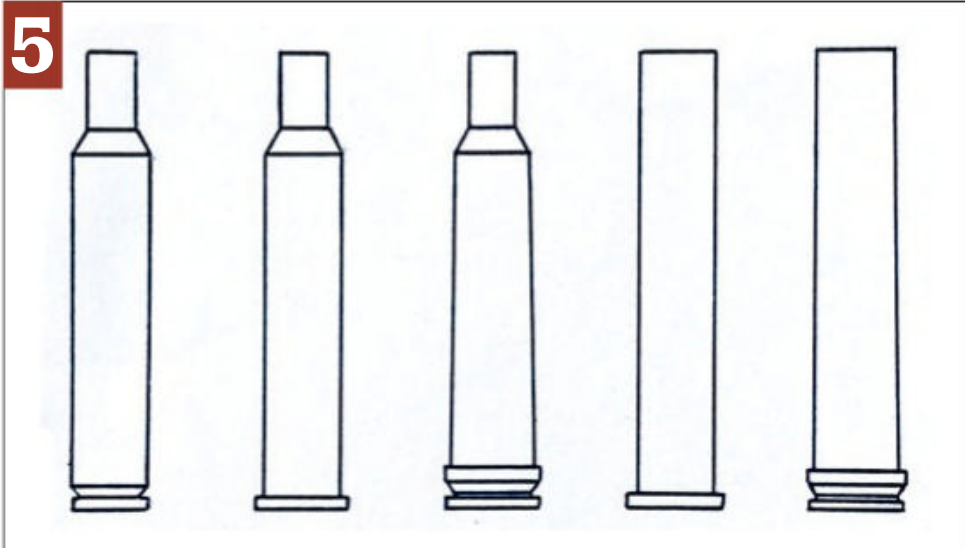
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and die are perfectly concentric the bullet is unlikely to be held in perfect alignment with the bore unless great care is taken to chamber the cartridge oriented exactly as it came out of the chamber after the previous firing. Hardly practical for a hunting rifle.

Forget partial neck-sizing in a full-length die; true neck-sizing requires a special neck-sizing die. Partial neck-sizing causes more problems than it solves as it usually results in a case which cannot be chambered in the rifle and/or one on which the headspace measurement has been altered. If you want to neck-size, buy a three-die set and do the job properly.

After 70-plus years at the reloading bench, I full-length resize in order to gain maximum reliability in feeding from the magazine and smooth chambering. Accuracy in anything except benchrest rifles, which are loaded in dies especially

reamed to fit, is as good as anyone can reasonably expect from a light sporter and I've found case life to be normal in the calibres I regularly reload.

A problem with belted cartridges is early case failure from stretched or separated brass, which can even happen with sub-maximum loads. This occurs because such cartridges headspace on their belts and not on the case shoulder, as do rimless cases. Because head-to-shoulder length is not critical, some manufacturers of rifles do not hold dimensions in the shoulder area of their chambers to very close tolerances. When the cartridge is fired, the case shoulder is blown forward to be a close fit for the chamber shoulder.

Then, when the case is full-length resized for reloading, the die sets the shoulder back to factory standard length. The whole process is repeated each time

the case is fired and reloaded and the case gradually becomes weakened by being stretched upon firing. After as few as two or three firings the case will fail, developing an annular crack just in front of the heavy interior web section.

The handloader can avoid this by adjusting his sizing die so that the case actually headspaces on the shoulder in the same manner as for rimless cases, and the belt is relegated to the useless appendage it really is.

To do this, unscrew the die body until it fails to touch the shoulder of a fired case, then smoke the case shoulder using a match or candle. Run the case as far into the die as it will go, and examine the shoulder. The coating of soot should be unmarked. Screw the die body down a half-turn and try it again.

Repeat this process, slowly turning the die down a little each time until it just barely

makes contact with the shoulder of the die cavity. If this case chambers easily in your rifle, set the lock ring at this position. You can be sure your magnum cases will headspace on the shoulder and not suffer any more lengthening and shortening.

Contrary to popular belief, a belted case and rifle is not inherently stronger than other designs. When the headspace is ridiculously oversized, there is an insidious danger. The belted case is not solid behind the belt; it is hollow. The sidewall in front of the belt is no thicker than the sidewall on a rimless case — normally between 0.025" and .040" (0.6-1.0mm). When the headspace is excessive, the case wall in front of the belt is not supported by the chamber.

Even though the cartridge is pushed forward by the firing pin, the base of the cartridge will be pushed back against the bolt face by the gas pressure and the entire distance from the front of the belt to the belt recess in the chamber is unsupported.

In an extreme example, a belt blow-out almost certainly guarantees the destruction of the rifle.

In order to avoid stretching the cartridge case and suffering a separated case, and to improve accuracy, you want as tight a fit as possible between the chamber and the cartridge at the datum line on the shoulder. 

ON THIS PAGE

5 Types of rifle case (from left): rimless bottleneck, rimmed bottleneck, belted bottleneck, rimmed straight, belted straight.

6 Headspace gauges for the .303 British (from left): 0.064" go-gauge; 0.067" no-go gauge; and the 0.070" field gauge. The tool is for stripping the Lee Enfield bolt.

7 After the shoulder of this belted case was allowed to stretch and shorten a number of times, a head separation was inevitable.



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Why so much hatred for deer?

Is all the anti-deer rhetoric and culling really justified?

[PIC: MASSIMO CATARINELLA]



“

Why are they being labelled as a ‘large issue’ when kangaroos cause more damage?”

pasture grasses farmers grow for livestock, to cars, to fences and in many other documented ways, especially when numbers are high. Feral pigs are a greater biosecurity risk to properties than deer will ever be.

I hope to be able to take my kids one day in the future to watch these creatures feed out, oblivious to hunters. But, unless the government changes its tune or all shooting and hunting bodies band together, future ruts will be no more. ☒

WHO needs a weekend getaway to the beach with cocktails when you could head inland chasing magnificent red deer?

After a seven-kilometre walk following fresh deer and dog sign with Old Pop and good friend Clark McGhie from Wild Country Adventures, we returned to the legendary Suzuki without the red deer we’d hoped to get, but we’d downed a calf-killer so the cattle were safer.

The ride back to camp was an adventure in itself as we drove past many wallows that had gotten a good thrashing over the rut.

Even though we didn’t take a deer, back at camp Old Pop and I made ourselves useful, helping two other hunters butcher their hard-earned takings. In the end, there was nothing left whatsoever, with all the off-cuts pushed through the mincer.

While we were walking the hills and following the abundance of sign, I really got to wondering about why there is so much hate surrounding deer. Back in the day, a small herd of red deer was given to the people of Queensland by Queen Victoria, after the state was named in her honour.

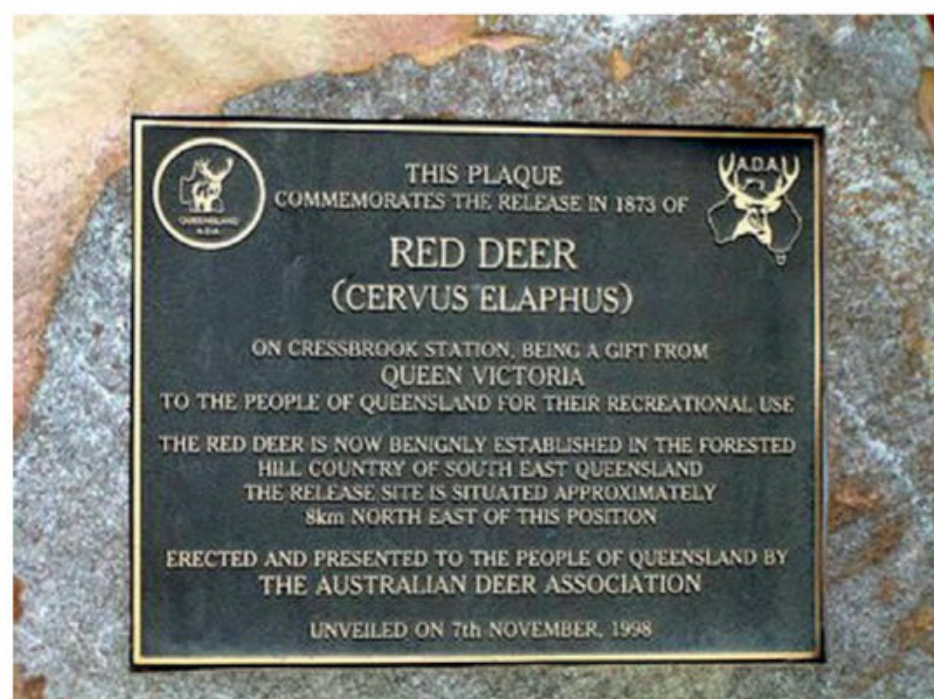
Red deer were once an animal of royal status. It is sad to see that they are now shot from choppers and left to rot. A total waste of a renewable resource.

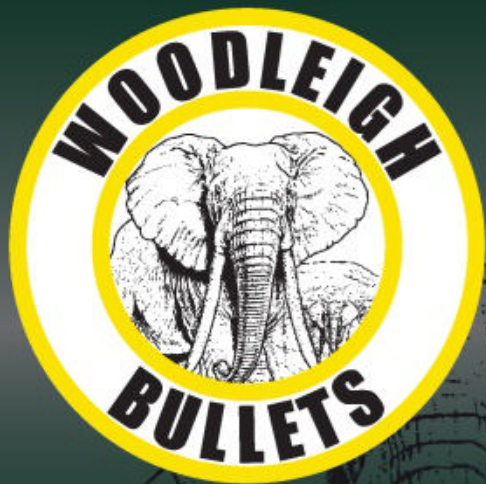
With the cost of lamb and beef going through the roof, why aren’t deer sustainably managed instead of the government wasting them?

RIGHT: A plaque commemorates the release of red deer in Queensland.

ABOVE: Pets or pests? Meat or mess? To cull or to hunt?

Deer were not listed at all when *The Land* recently published a list of the top 10 invasive species, so why are they being labelled as a “large issue” when kangaroos cause more physical and economic damage — to crops, to



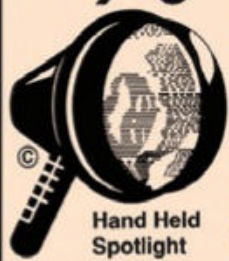
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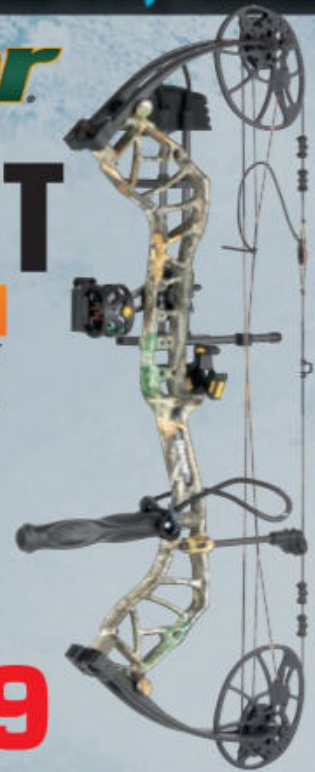
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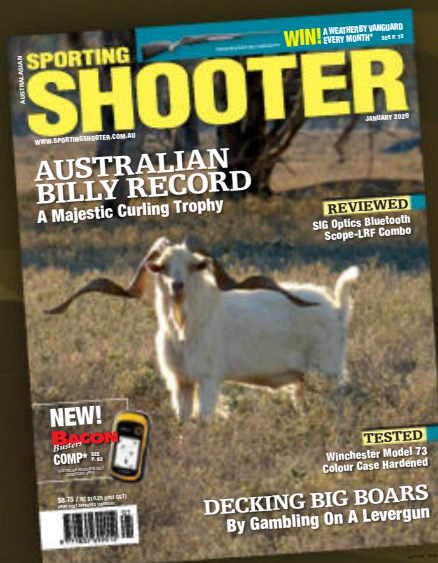


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SPORTING
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"While I was out hunting in the Northern Territory for buffalo we glassed numerous animals without finding what we were after, so we piled into the Cruiser to go to some freshwater springs for a cool down," says **Brett Meldrum**. "As we pulled up to the springs I jumped out and headed for the water — and a massive boar charged out of it!"

"I ran back to the ute and got my bino harness and release aid in record time. I quickly gained ground on the boar as it didn't seem that bothered by what just happened. I used the banks of the clear, shallow creek to stalk in on him and managed to get a good range on it at 40 metres. I sent an arrow flying straight into the vitals! The boar ran about 20-25m and it was all over for him."

"To say I was stoked was an understatement. He was by far my biggest boar to date with a very good set of hooks on him that later unofficially scored 29 Douglas points."

This tusky fella is **Ben Tipping's** biggest boar so far. Ben was on the bike when he bumped the big pig in a creek.





William Summers was celebrating his birthday when he shot this chunky boar, which he found wallowing in a waterhole.



"Our workers and I went out for a look after dumping a calf carcass," says **Finlay Waring**. "As we started to get a good look at the carcass we heard the dogs jump and next thing you know they are on. After a 500m hike up a rugged hill, we reached a small clearing where we saw this boar backed up against a termite nest. It was a ripper boar and we were glad we had the glow-in-the-dark mouth piece purchased from Brisbane Hunting Supplies."

WIN a GARMIN eTrex 10 EVERY MONTH!

ENTRIES: Please email your high resolution .jpg or .png pig hunting image as an attachment to the email addressed to mickmatheson@yaffa.com.au – all images must be at least 1MB in size. For entry to be valid the following contact details must be included: First name, surname, full mail address, contact phone number and email address. A short explanatory sentence with the email is also needed.

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