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GENESIS ONE

Designed and made in Australia, the Enfield Arms Genesis One is built to be an unstoppably reliable Category B firearm for hunting and pest-control. It is made to high quality with tight tolerances yet it sells for only \$1600. Nick Harvey has run two versions through their paces.

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ON THE COVER

A majestic sable antelope. Photo: Catherine Withers-Clarke/iStock.



The Australian-made firearm market is booming

Homegrown guns

THE Australian firearms manufacturing industry is going gangbusters. The number of gun makers is expanding, the number of guns they’re making is steadily increasing and there’s growing demand from overseas. Best of all, it’s only going to get better.

Lithgow Arms has, of course, been making contemporary sporting rifles in rimfire and centrefire for eight years and the factory is making a bit of a push now to expand its range of rifles and calibres. And on the quiet (you didn’t hear it from me!) there’s a lot more being contemplated by management and engineers.

Lithgow is our biggest manufacturer. Second is Southern Cross Small Arms, based in Campbelltown, south-west of Sydney. I went through the factory the other day and saw the huge investment the company has made in tooling up to make its Taipan pump-action rifle, which is also being tweaked to be available as a straight-pull

bolt action. In both pump and straight-pull form, it has garnered interest from foreign markets, including the US and NZ.

When I was there, Southern Cross was shipping out 400 rifles a month and not meeting demand. Yes, capacity is being increased.

Expect to see a few new calibres to supplement the .223 currently being made.

Meanwhile, Lithgow Arms is now putting its actions in Southern Cross TSP-X chassis. Nice to see collaboration between the Aussie factories.

In Queensland, Enfield Arms has designed and marketed the Genesis One straight-pull, as tested by Nick in this issue. It’s another Cat B firearm made right here in Australia for our market.

Don’t forget companies like Wedgetail, which makes high-end Category D firearms for the professional market. That began in response to the stupidity of Australian gun regulations, which make it so hard for Cat D shooters to



Damir Lukic of Southern Cross Firearms with one of his Australian-made Taipan rifles

import the guns they need that a local industry was spawned. Turns out there are only so many worn-out SLRs a professional can tolerate before happily spending a few thousand dollars on a brand-new Australian-made AR-platform rifle.

Wedgetail has designed a pump-action rifle for the Cat B market and was aiming to have the MPR308 Model 2 on sale about the time you read this. It’s a high-quality, made-to-order firearm using

some of the best components on a homegrown product.

There have been rumblings from NIOA, our local international arms conglomerate, about making commercial firearms here, but we’ll have to wait and see.

You could have a whole arsenal of Australian-made rifles and isn’t that a wonderful thing?

MICK MATHESON
Editor

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

CZ 527 Lightweight .223

Q I have been given a CZ 527 in .223 Remington by my uncle. I have Lee dies, 100 new cases, a can of AR2208 and 100 60gn Sierra soft-pointed bullets, so I'm all set to begin reloading. Can you suggest a load using my components?

Also, I've been told to watch how deep I seat the bullets. This puzzles me?
Cliff Cooke

A The CZ 527 is a fairly light yet accurate .223 hunting rifle featuring a 24" barrel with a fast 1:9 twist which enables it to stabilise a

wider selection of bullet weights than the standard 1:12 twist. This allows it to use both lightweight varmint bullets as well as the new generation of heavier match projectiles.

The trigger can be set to release at a few ounces by simply pushing forward on the trigger until it clicks.

A good load with a Sierra 60gn soft-point is 24gn of AR2208 for about 2950fps. I've used that bullet on pigs and goats with great effect.

The overall length of your reloads will probably depend as much on the length of your



rifle's detachable box magazine as the length of the chamber throat. Without going into great detail, if you seat the bullet level with the base of the neck of the case, your reloads should work just fine.

ABOVE: The lightweight CZ 527 in .223 is a fine walkabout varmint, ideal for taking shots of opportunity

The tangled web of reticle history

Q I know there are numerous scope reticles of various designs made of different metallic materials and that some are etched on glass, but the other day I was told that in the past some scope reticles were made out of spider web, which was the strongest of all. Is this true or is the guy having me on?

Alan Anderson

A The guy who told you that reticles were made of spider web didn't get the story right. Spider thread from the cocoon was used and is by far the best substance. However, this is not the web.

Cocoon thread has great strength and has the elasticity of rubber. Early experiments proved that it cannot be shot out or broken regardless of recoil. The diameter of this thread is small and very uniform, running about .0025mm (.001"). After being removed from the outer crust

of the cocoon, the thread was steamed before use and attached to the reticle frame with a tiny drop of shellac or Duco cement.

Its only disadvantage was that it is very slender and thus favoured by target shooters with high-magnification scopes. Personally, I prefer medium-thickness crosswires in a hunting scope and find many are too fine, which makes them hard to see in poor light.

Action strength

Q I am seeking your opinion on what is the strongest action for a simon-pure hunting rifle. I know it's rare, but should I have a blown primer or a case-head separation, in your experience, which action is likely to handle it best? There are no guarantees in these situations with 60,000psi of burning, hot gases, but I'm sure some actions must handle it better than others?

I hunt deer and goats with a



Your 'dainty' Tikka action will handle a blown primer or a head separation as well as any other"

Tikka T3x Lite in 7mm-08 Rem. The Tikka's action is svelte and silken to operate. I've fitted a stainless-steel bolt shroud and stiffened the stock with aftermarket aluminium bottom metal. This rifle is very accurate, but I wonder how well that dainty little T3x action would survive a worst case scenario?

I've heard Weatherby Mark Vs, Ruger No 1s and pre-1964 Winchester Model 70s are by far the strongest actions ever

made. The fellows at my range claim current production Model 70s, Ruger 77s and Mauser 98s also have an excellent reputation for strength. What do you think?

I am a hunter. Most shots are taken well under 200 yards. I don't care for magnums, precision matches or shooting at long range — 250-300 yards is a long way for me. Accuracy only needs to be minute-of-deer. The 7mm-08 kisses my shoulder but is deadly effective on deer.

I am confused by the huge variations in Mauser 98-style actions. What is the difference between commercial actions like the Santa Barbara, Parker Hale, Interarms Mark X and others? Does any one action stand head and shoulders above the rest in terms of strength and longevity? I presume that a longer cartridge like a .284 Win or 7x57 would be a better choice than the 7mm-08 for a standard-length Mauser action?

"Seriola"



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AYour “dainty” Tikka T3x Lite action will handle a blown primer or a head separation as well as any other well-designed action made of modern steel. Actions do vary in strength, but it is the strength of the brass that is the critical factor.

Cases are made to withstand working pressures of 60,000psi, which are normal in factory ammunition these days. If handloads generate pressures far above normal limits, the brass case will be permanently deformed and ruined. The diameter of the case head, rim or belt may be enlarged and the primer pocket so expanded that a primer will drop out.

If pressures are pushed higher, the shooter will see the results of a case failure — a tremendous quantity of high-temperature gas rushes back through the action, often wrecking it and injuring the shooter. Some actions will handle this kind of thing better than others, and the Winchester Model 70, Ruger M77 and Mauser 98s are strong, but so are the current tri-lug actions.

Like you, I think 250-300 yards is a long shot at a deer. Hunting accuracy is adequate if your rifle consistently groups three shots in to 1½” at 100yd.

All of the commercial Mausers you list are good strong ones, but the more sophisticated upgraded version seen on the Rigby and genuine Mauser rifles is nicer. Yes, longer 7mm cartridges are a better fit in a Mauser 98 action than the 7mm-08.

Lee Enfield sporters

QI’ve seen two Lee Enfield sporters being offered on Used Guns for \$2500 and \$3000. What kind of rifles are they? The prices seem excessive to me for an ex-military rifle. What can you tell me about them?

Peter Price

AThe Lee Enfield sporters you saw offered for sale were made in Ishapore, India. I reviewed a couple of them back in 2002 or 2003. They were imported by Australian International Arms (AIA). There were four different models: M10/A1 7.62x39 with 20” barrel; Model M10/A2 in 7.62x39 with 16” barrel; M10/B1 in 7.62x52 with 22” barrel; and M10/B2 in 7.62x52 with 25” barrel.

They were well-made and nicely stocked. The forend had a hand guard held on with a barrel band. They were built on the No 4 Lee Enfield action and had an adjustable peep rear sight and a front sight with protective ears. The muzzle had a flash eliminator. The 7.62x39 magazine was shorter than the one for the 7.62x52.

I honestly can’t see these rifles being worth \$2000 to \$3000. You could buy a good quality bolt-action sporter for a lot less than that.

.35 Whelen for sambar

QI recently bought a secondhand Remington Model 700 in .35 Whelen from a mate that I plan to use on sambar. The rifle has a 24” barrel and came with a Hornady die set, 50 once-fired cases and 50 225gn Nosler Partitions.

My first question is: what powder will give the best velocity? And second, I mostly hunt in timber and have considered cutting the barrel down to a handier 20”. What are your thoughts on that? Will it reduce the velocity too much?

Thanks for your advice, and keep ’em coming.

Bob Bell

AThere are several powders that will give top performance in the .35 Whelen using 225gn bullets, but 58.5gn of AR2208 will reach 2750fps from a 24” barrel and will generally give excellent



ABOVE: Made in Ishapore, India, the M10 No 4 Lee Enfield sporters showed fine workmanship and good wood. The muzzle has a flash eliminator and a front sight with protective ears

accuracy. Nosler lists a maximum charge of 60.5gn for 2800fps, but it’s better to err on the safe side.

I guess that you would lose about 100fps of velocity by cutting your barrel to 20”. This will not be noticed by any sambar, although it will increase bullet drop slightly. You will have to make that decision for yourself.

Case separations in the .303 British

QI have been experiencing case separations with my Lee Enfield rifle in .303 British. It has been checked by a gunsmith and the headspace was found to be minimum. Yet everyone tells me that rimmed cases shouldn’t suffer this problem.

Can you give me an explanation as to how this occurs and how to prevent it happening?

Arthur Jenkins

AThe .303 British is a rimmed cartridge and, yes, the case does headspace on the rim. However, there is a matching shoulder within the chamber and when a cartridge is fired it forms a secondary head-spacing point.

In a sporting or match target rifle, chamber dimensions are held to exacting standards and the linear distance between the rim face and shoulder is held to minimum tolerances to maintain the proper location of the shoulder in relation to the rim, to keep case stretching to a minimum.

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In a military .303, however, where flawless performance is required, the armourer may wish to ensure flawless functioning under battlefield conditions by designing the reamer with the shoulder moved forward slightly, to give extra allowance. He is not concerned about case stretching since fired cases won't be reloaded.

The British Army, in particular, was always concerned about adverse field conditions.

It appears that your rifle has a military chamber cut to military specs which allows the shoulder to be blown forward and then be set back in the die very time you full-length size the brass. Unless you set the die back so that it doesn't touch the case shoulder, they'll blow forward again the next time you fire them and be set back again when you resize them.

After a few reloads you'll experience case separations caused by this back-and-forth positioning of the shoulder.

While you can't prevent that initial stretching from occurring on the initial firing, you can get around it by backing off the sizing die just enough to leave case shoulders in their fire-formed forward location, which will allow the shoulder to support the rim in maintaining the correct head spacing.

Powder for the .300 Weatherby Magnum

QI have a German-made Weatherby Mark V rifle with a 26" barrel that I've used for hunting with a load I developed over 50 years ago. It contained Norma 205 powder and would drive the Nosler 180gn Partition to a neat 3200fps.

I have used up my supply of Norma 205 and can't find any. Can you suggest a load using an available powder that will duplicate that velocity?

Raymond Wilson



A Norma 205 has been discontinued for several decades. It was replaced with Norma MRP (Magnum Rifle Powder) which is identical to Alliant Reloder 22, but these days Alliant powders are impossible to get. Luckily, we have the excellent range of Aussie-made ADI powders.

Back in 2020 I worked up a load for a mate's Blaser using the 180gn Sierra SBT with 86gn of AR2213sc that got 3215fps with normal pressure.

Metric designations

QI am puzzled by the designations of most European cartridges and have trouble interpreting them, particularly some of the 8mm rounds. Can you please help with an explanation?

Martin S Harland

A The metric system is really quite simple. To begin with, one millimetre equals .03937 inch, or one inch equals 25.4mm. To convert millimetres to inches, simply multiply by .03937 or divide by 25.4. If this proves too hard, look it up in a conversion table.

Metric cartridges are normally designated by two sets of figures. The first is the calibre and the second the case length, both in millimetres. An R indicates a rimmed case and its absence a rimless one. The designer's or manufacturer's name may be tacked on the

end: Vierling, Suhler, Mauser, RWS, Brenneke etc.

Thus the 7x64mm is a 7mm calibre with a 64mm case length.

A major source of confusion is the two slightly different 8mm calibres which came about as follows: The original German military cartridge had a .318" (8.077mm) diameter bullet when adopted in 1888. So did all the 8mm sporting cartridges developed around that time. However, in 1905 the cartridge was altered to use a .323" (8.204mm) diameter bullet, and shortly thereafter 8mm sporting cartridges all followed suit.

The original German military cartridge is indicated by a J (for Infanterie, the German I and J being interchangeable), and the newer one by an S. For example, the 8x57J has a .318" bullet and the 8x57JS the .323" bullet.

Incidentally, the metric designation for the .30-06 is 7.62x63mm.

Hope this satisfies your curiosity.

A clean bill of health

QI have enjoyed reading and have benefited from your advice in your Ask the Gun Editor column. I have noticed advice regarding head separations. I would rather junk brass than risk having a problem when hunting.

I have enclosed an example .270 Winchester case as I have

LEFT: Rimmed metric cartridges are labeled like this 9.3x74R is. The ancient round continues to see a lot of use in double rifles

noticed a thinning in a ring near its base when checking with a bent wire. I sawed it to visually inspect it and can see the thinner zone, which seems slight. Is this case showing early signs of separation? Is this case at the point where that batch should be trashed or would the thinning get more advanced than this when the brass is getting risky?

Richard Forde

A I don't know what you felt with a bent wire, but there's not the slightest sign of any thinning which would indicate an incipient head separation. The case you sent me is fine. The expansion ring around the base of the case is normal, too.

I'd say this particular case is in good condition. If there is a marked depression on the inside of the case, the hook on your feeler will catch in it. If doubt persists, sacrifice a couple of the suspect cases in the same way you did the one you sent me.

ADI powder and .45-70

QI recently acquired a Marlin Model 1895 SBL from a mate who sold it to buy a new Ruger-Marlin in .45-70. I would like to use the Speer 350gn Hot Cor bullet in it. Is it possible to reach 2000fps safely? I use a lot of ADI powders in several rifle cartridges and have AR2206H, BM2 and AR2208 on hand. Thanks for your help.

Charlie Angwin

A AR2206H and BM2 are both excellent powders in the .45-70, particularly for the velocity you want. Using the Speer 350gn Hot Cor bullet, either 61gn of AR2206H or 60gn of BM2 will deliver 2000fps from the 19" barrel of your Marlin. ☺

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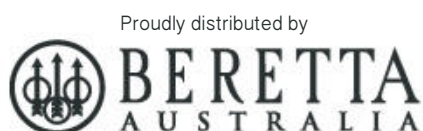
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FALLOW DEER



MAIN: A good mob of fallow, including two respectable bucks

INSET: The Pizzata trio, each with their fallow trophies



Granddad Tony Pizzata aims to score a trophy like his son and grandson, but will his crook knees let him?

The generational hunt *Part 2*

Just prior to this hunt, poor ol' Grandad (me) had just had a double knee replacement. You see, it all started halfway up a steep mountain face in New Zealand and I had to sit on my behind and slide to the bottom to get down, as my knees were in agony — and, as I later found out, bone on bone. Sounds amusing but let me assure you the pain I experienced was like no other.

IN the first week of January this year, I had a double knee replacement. Yes, both at once. I prayed I'd be right for the fallow rut. As it turned out, after almost a month in hospital, with ongoing physio and training, I was ready for the trip. Or so I thought.

As you'll recall from last month's story, my son and my grandson had each secured a nice trophy on the first two days of this hunt. We'd had a very memorable time away representing three generations of hunters and that's what mattered to me first and foremost.

But I must say by the end of day two, with many kilometres covered on foot, my new titanium knees were starting to feel a little tender.

"Perhaps you're overdoing it, Dad," Mick muttered.

"No, I'll be right tomorrow," I insisted.

The following day, our final day, we were all up bright and early again, but this time my knees were much worse for wear than on the previous days. Thankfully, however, I'd remembered to bring along some strong pain killers just in case and after breakfast took one for good measure. A half hour or so later, my knees felt a lot better, so I urged we head out for the final day's hunting.

Loading the vehicle with all we'd need for the day, we eventually headed off to a far-away paddock we hadn't had time to visit on this particular trip. Located in a secluded valley surrounded by steep, scrubby mountains, this

particular spot had produced several nice bucks over the years, so I was confident we'd see plenty. I also knew there'd be a lot more walking involved.

As the area I wanted to hunt was a distant walk from the vehicle, we elected to carry all we'd need for the day in our packs, so unlike the past couple of days, I too was carrying a loaded pack with me, tender knees or not. Leaving the vehicle behind, we crossed a nearby running creek and, after moving away from the sound of fast-running water, heard the distant grunting of a buck up ahead. Still in cover and unable to see the open valley, we soon heard a second and then a third buck grunting from the valley floor.

After the rather lengthy walk in, wet feet and a loaded pack, my legs





2 3



“

Fifty or more does moved around and several mature bucks gave chase”

had started to ache again. However, determined to continue on, I pushed forward.

Mick and Anthony were only metres ahead as we reached the open valley. Stopping on the edge of the scrub we could now hear several bucks voicing their dominance. Struggling to see them through the heavy fog, we squinted through binoculars for any sign of movement. The fog was slowly lifting so we held our position in cover.

Shortly after, the first sign of movement became evident as a young buck chased another immature buck from his area. Soon more and more deer became visible as the fog lifted a little more. The big, open valley was now in full view and we watched in awe as 50 or more does moved around and several mature bucks gave chase.

Does were running in all directions in an effort to escape the rut-crazed bucks that were running frantically around them. Two mature bucks were also fighting on the side

of a nearby hill and the clash of antlers echoed around the valley. At this point I felt like a kid in a lolly shop — which one to choose?

Frantically glassing as many bucks as we could, we agreed there were at least two that were of trophy class. Using what little cover we had Mick and I moved in, leaving grandson Anthony behind to watch, as too much movement might alert the deer. At around 180 metres distance, we were out of cover, so I'd have to plan a shot from where I stood.

I could now count five mature bucks and another quick look through the binoculars confirmed my intended quarry. Of the two shooter bucks, one seemed a little lighter in the beams and seemed to have some broken points. With my mind made up on which one to take, it was now or never.

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Tony used his new Howa Super Lite in 6.5 Creedmoor, which is very lightweight and accurate

2 The Pizzata clan with grandad's well-earned trophy fallow buck

3 Tony passed up this buck after a close look with the binoculars revealed broken points off his right antler



“

4



5

We strolled to within 100 metres of the deer before they all scattered”

Mick and I were out in the open with little more than knee-high grass for cover. Mick had the camera on its tripod ready to film the entire episode and that’s when disaster struck.

My knees were now in so much pain, they had locked. I was unable to crouch to one knee for the shot. I felt helpless. Mick grabbed the tripod and placed it in front of me, taking the rifle to allow me to somehow sit or lie or something...

Eventually managing to get to one knee, in a lot of pain, I grabbed the Howa SuperLite from him and managed to use the camera tripod as a rest. My legs were aching in this position as I held the crosshairs on the big buck’s front

shoulder — it was now standing broadside to me. Mick whispered the distance at 185 metres.

Taking a breath, I held and slowly squeezed the trigger, knowing there’d be very little recoil. In my struggle, I was silently thankful for the Howa SuperLite, which took minimal effort to hold up in this position. At the shot, the sound of a solid hit echoed back and I knew he’d go down. This 6.5 Creedmoor using 129gn Hornady projectiles performed similarly to my .270 in projectile weight and velocity, but had considerably less recoil and only a fraction of the weight.

The buck went down and lay motionless. However, the rest of the mob, including the other rutting bucks, kept chasing each other as if unaware of what had just happened.

Michael took the gun from me and helped me to my feet again. The pain was bitter sweet.

We watched the deer for a while then eventually moved in to inspect my buck. We strolled to

within 100 metres of the deer before they all scattered in different directions.

A closer inspection of my buck revealed a very old, mature animal with tops that curled in to form a heart shape on top. He was indeed a very special trophy, as I was here, again, in the presence of three generations of hunters.

Unfortunately, the buck did have a broken back guard tine and a few other broken points but was nonetheless a handsome trophy animal.

After a few trophy photos, Mick and Anthony had to help me to my feet again, as I struggled to get off the ground due to the pain I was experiencing. But it was all well worth it and after strapping the antlers to my pack I made the journey out with the boys, carrying my own as tradition would have it.

As I write this final chapter in this family affair for fallow, I continue to get stronger in the knees and know I’ll be right for the next outing with the boys. After all, they are what keep me so keen these days. 🇳🇿

ON THIS PAGE

4 The old boy, insisting on carrying his own gear despite the tender knees

5 Ridgeline’s re-useable game bags are ideal for keeping meat and skins clean when transporting

INTRODUCING

GENESIS ONE

A Revolutionary, Australian Designed and Manufactured,
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Priced from only \$1595.00

Available in .223 Rem • 6.5 Creedmoor • .308 Win

ACCURATE – AFFORDABLE – AUSTRALIAN

Enfield Arms Genesis One

This brand new Australian-made spring-assisted straight-pull rifle is top quality from just \$1600

ON a hunt in Queensland back in 2019 I paid a visit to my good friend Ron Owen at Owen Guns in Gympie. He showed me the prototype of a tactical-style, straight-pull rifle that he'd designed and manufactured in-house. It has taken him a few years to perfect the design, but it is now available in gun shops. I received two for review, one with a heavy barrel and the other a light barrel, carrying low serial numbers — 120 and 139.

Designated Genesis One, this is a highly-specialised, high-precision rifle, a straight-pull bolt-action unlike any other, and it's built like a battleship. Initially, it is chambered for four popular calibres: .223 Remington, .243 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Winchester. Later, it will become available for the hell-raising .277 Fury.

Ron, the head honcho of Enfield Arms, has spent a lifetime studying firearms, their design and functionality. He set out to address the shortcomings of the many tactical-type rifles he's seen and used in creating a rifle which has precise tolerances where it needed them as well as room for dust to migrate, allowing it to function in the severest conditions. The result is a high-performance rifle with a quality build that is totally reliable and has increased accuracy.

Ron chose the name because it heralds the beginning of a new generation of firearms, produced in Australia. After



Enfield Arms intends to extend the range to include rimfires, shotguns, lever-actions and hand guns"

the Genesis One, Enfield Arms intends to extend the range to include rimfires, shotguns, lever-actions and hand guns, which are still in the planning stages. Options will include fluted barrels and all colours of Cerakote.

Ron conducted extensive destructive testing of the rifle and is extremely confident of its strength and durability. The tests included firing massive proof loads with no damage to the rifle, and machining back the locking lugs so that they were only 1.6mm (1/16") thick, which produced an excessive

amount of headspace. When the rifle was fired, no gas escaped (there's a gas shield behind the bolt head), the cartridge case split but was easily extracted and the rifle was undamaged. Once a new bolt head was fitted the rifle was as good as new.

The Genesis One consists of only 54 parts, all of which are machined with the finest tolerances on multi-axis CNC machines, auto-feed CNC lathes and other high-tech machinery. Enfield Arms makes 80 percent of its parts in-house — an almost unheard-of number in

the AR world, as most US makers usually make only a few key components, which means they are really more assemblers than manufacturers. The company also Cerakotes receivers, forearms and scope bases in-house. Plans are in motion to Cerakote the barrels for special orders.

The Genesis receiver is machined from round hollow bar of Grade 1075 fully heat-treated, medium-carbon steel that will not fracture under pressure (880Mpa) and has a wall thickness of 5mm per side. An integral Picatinny rail

2



ON THIS SPREAD

1 The magazine well is durable, being moulded as an integral part of a massive polymer platform. Detachable box holds 10 rounds

2 The comb, length of pull, comb height and buttplate position are all adjustable to suit the individual shooter

3 View of the Genesis One taken down into its major parts. The barrel, handguard, lower receiver and stock are all attached directly to the massive upper receiver



Barrels are made by Maddco from 416R stainless steel and have a full 5cm of barrel thread”

attaches to the top of the receiver with four M4/10 screws to lock it down. The receiver has been machined to house a six-lug rotating bolt, whereas most rifles of the AR-type typically have three-lug bolts. All highly stressed parts — bolt head and carrier, firing pin, striker and sear, extractor and ejector — are made of the best quality material, high-grade 4140 HT steel.

The bolt head is shaped, heat treated and then machined again. It completely shrouds the head of the cartridge. The extractor is totally recessed into the bolt head and is surrounded by a ring of steel, doing away with the need for cutting a slot in one of the locking lugs. The plunger-type ejector, too, is built into the

bolt head, leaving the rim of the counterbore in the bolt face unbroken.

Another important feature: most plunger ejectors are prone to jam if a small piece of debris or carbon residue enters the hole, but the Genesis One's ejector is struck by an ejector plate in the bolt carrier as it travels to the rear to eject the fired case through the ejection port. This is just one of the many unique features of this Aussie-made rifle.

The bolt carrier is a one-piece module and, unlike other straight-pull or semi-autos, the Genesis One has no hammer or hammer mechanism. The compact firing mechanism (striker and spring) stays clean and safe, being housed within

the bolt carrier. The rear of the bolt carrier, together with the firing mechanism, fits inside the return spring, which is entirely enclosed in the butt tube.

A two-stage trigger is attached to the underside of the steel receiver module and only the sear projects up into the tubular receiver in a way similar to the majority of bolt-action rifles.

By function and appearance, then, Genesis One bears some resemblance to a pair of original

military straight-pull rifles — the Steyr Model 1895 and the 1889 Schmidt-Rubin — with the main mechanical difference being that the bolt is closed by the return spring. All you have to do is pull it to the rear to extract and eject the case and then let it go to load a fresh round and be ready to fire.

The smooth-bodied bolt glides in the steel receiver, guided by a sturdy pin attached to the ample cocking handle which runs in a raceway in the side of the bolt



4

5



ON THIS SPREAD

4 The Aussie-made Genesis One rifle was designed and engineered to Ron Owen's specifications

5 Telescoping buttstock has five positions that can be set to adjust length of pull and suit bilateral shooting styles

6 The Genesis One can be used ambidextrously. This light-barrel version is a bit easier to carry in the field

ACCURACY AND VELOCITY

Ammunition	Velocity (fps)	Group sizes (inch)	
		Light barrel	Heavy barrel
Win. Supreme 50gn BST	3283	1.10 to 1.55	1.10 to 1.35
Win. Target 55gn FMJ	3056	1.20 to 1.55	0.99 to 1.25
Hornady SF 53gn V-Max	2662	1.25 to 1.56	1.10 to 1.30
Hornady 55gn V-Max	3052	1.15 to 1.55	1.05 to 1.20
PMC Bronze 55gn PSP	2845	1.25 to 1.62	1.25 to 1.45
Geco Express 56gn SP	2945	1.10 to 1.55	1.00 to 1.30
Win. Deer Season 64gn XP	2850	1.15 to 1.64	0.95 to 1.38
Federal 64gn SP	2949	1.25 to 1.63	0.98 to 1.36

Accuracy range represents four 5-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 100yd. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by a Chrony chronograph at 12 feet from the muzzle.

carrier. The cocking handle is located on the left side of the receiver and has a serrated knob. The bolt can be locked open by pulling it to the rear and pushing it into a recess. It is spring-loaded and can be released quickly.

The round-bodied receiver sits atop a lower section, a one-piece foundation platform of moulded polymer which forms the trigger housing and magazine well. Thus, the Genesis is not a chassis gun. Having a firm gun platform, there's no chance of the action rattling around in the chassis when the rifle fires because the Genesis One has no chassis. The barrel, forearm, magazine well and stock are all attached to the robust receiver.



6



7

“

The firing mechanism has a much faster lock time than any swinging-hammer type”

Genesis One uses an MDT-designed polymer magazine which doesn't protrude far beneath the magazine well and holds 10 rounds in a single column for centreline feeding. The magazine release is located in a protective pocket in the rear of the magazine housing where it is easy to reach and activate. The controls, including the safety and magazine release, are bilateral to suit both left- and right-handed shooters. The trigger guard is moulded integrally with the lower polymer platform but the rubber-coated AR-15 type grip is an insert.

This rugged straight-pull rifle features an easily removable telescoping butt module with five positions that can be used to set length of pull to suit shooters with different builds and — together with the adjustable comb and cheekpiece — to suit different shooting styles. Even the cant of the butt pad is adjustable. (The butts of the test rifles had to be pinned and fixed at one length to comply with the gun laws in NSW.)

The butt module includes the rear collar, the butt tube and polymer butt with ridged rubber recoil pad. It can accommodate many types of fixtures to fit rifle slings.

The butt has a large castle nut attached which is threaded into the rear of the receiver. The butt tube is the same diameter as the AR-15 buffer tube (there is no buffer) so that other proprietary brands of buttstocks may be interchanged with the one supplied.

The end result is a system that is robust. The hand is comfortable and an adjustable cheekpiece helps a shooter line up with an optic.

To remove the stock, simply press the disassembly button (at the rear of the scope base), loosen the castle nut and spin the tube out of the receiver. You can leave the return spring with the butt and then remove the bolt carrier in one piece for cleaning.

Everyone is rail-crazy these days. A feature of Genesis One is the huge 1913 mil-spec rail mounted on the receiver. Stretching the full length of the receiver, it allows easy

mounting of thermal or night-vision devices for those who like to hunt at night.

The handguard surrounding the barrel has four integral Picatinny rails to attach bipods, flash lights, infrared illuminators, lasers, red dot sights, or sling swivels. They also keep the shooter's leading hand further away from the barrel and dissipate the heat over a much greater surface area.

Barrels are made by Maddco from 416R stainless steel and have a full 5cm (2") of barrel

ON THIS PAGE

7 The action is housed in a massive polymer platform containing the operating mechanism, trigger and safety

8 Pressing disassembly button allows rotation of the rear collar and butt in preparation for takedown

8





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9

✓ SPECS

Manufacturer: Enfield Arms, Gympie, Queensland

Type: Spring-assisted straight-pull bolt action

Calibres: .223 Rem (tested), .243 Win, 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win

Magazine: MDT A1, 10 rounds (15, 20 or 30 available)

Barrel: 16" heavy or light; longer options available

Overall length: 870mm

Weight: With heavy barrel, 4.9kg; light barrel, 4.2kg

Stock: Polymer

Length of pull: Adjustable

Finish: Matte black stock, stainless barrel (as tested)

Sights: None, 1913 Picatinny rail

Trigger: Two-stage, 1.8kg let-off as tested

Safety: Through-bolt behind trigger guard

RRP: \$1595; \$150 extra for a light barrel

Distributor: Raytrade, raytrade.com.au

thread for maximum strength. Barrel collars lock the barrel rigidly into the steel receiver. The Genesis One has a barrel that is fully free-floating, the easiest way to improve accuracy. The Genesis's heavy barrel will definitely help accuracy, too.

We obtained two sample rifles chambered in .223. One was a standard model with a 16-inch (41cm) barrel with a diameter of an inch (25.4mm), and weighing 4.9kg (10½lb). The other had a light 16" barrel and weighed 4.2kg (9¼lb). Longer barrels are also an option; the baseline length is 16 inches but longer barrels up to 32" (81cm) are available on special order at extra cost.

The two-stage trigger is a Mauser 98 type which is very reliable and resistant to mud and dirt. Two-stage triggers work well on rifles that you are trying to get superb accuracy from as well as rifles or carbines that are precision-type guns. The triggers on both test Genesis Ones delivered a consistent 1.8kg (4lb) pull after the initial amount of take-up, a clean release and no over-travel. Stock AR triggers normally leave a lot to be desired — usually very safe but with a heavy, draggy pull weight.

Enfield Arms will be making an optional single-stage unit available at a latter date.

The firing mechanism, being enclosed in the back of the bolt, is protected against any crud and debris and has a much faster lock time than any AR or AK swinging-hammer type.

The Genesis One is innovative, safe, versatile and speedy. And it's consistently accurate to boot. The bolt cycling and function on both rifles was smooth and clean with reliable no-flaw extraction and ejection. The Genesis One rifles shot consistently for this type of arm. Accuracy results are listed in the table.

Genesis One rifles are a rugged, high-precision design constructed from high-quality, high-tech materials. This modular rifle can also be disassembled and reassembled and is incredibly safe and strong. You get a rifle that handles well and shoots fast.

What is more surprising, these rifles are not all that expensive and if you have a liking for a tactical-style rifle then the home-grown Genesis One has to be a top choice. Don't let its short barrel fool you in terms of its performance — these rifles are totally reliable and capable of making hits at any reasonable hunting distance. ☒

ON THIS PAGE

9 The Genesis One is built on Enfield Arms' proprietary super-strong straight-pull stainless steel receiver, with stainless-steel Maddco barrel threaded two inches into the receiver. The large cocking handle with serrated knob is located on the left side of the receiver and is pushed in to lock the bolt open

10 A six-lug bolt module sits in a receiver machined from a hollow ground bar of 4140 steel. Enfield Arms manufactures the bolt to a high level of precision, machining the parts after heat treating

10





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Bergara BA13 Takedown

For the hunter who wants a strong single-shot rifle for the .45-70, Bergara's light BA13 takedown is an ideal choice



THE .45-70 has staged a major comeback in popularity and currently it is being chambered in a number of lever-action and single-shot rifles that are, generally speaking, fairly expensive. However, there's one single-loader that's affordable — the Bergara BA13.

The Bergara BA13 single-shot has a strong action which allows the use of heavy charges of smokeless powders. This convinced me that I should find out what kind of performance this handy carbine would be capable of with carefully developed handloads.

The little Bergara chambered for the .45-70 is one of the sweetest sambar rifles a man will ever carry. It is lightweight and powerful with the extent of the latter

being determined only by how much recoil you can handle. At about 3.6kg with a scope attached, the BA13 is a real hellraiser when you start shooting 350 and 400gn bullets at around 2100fps.

This is close to the limit in velocity to which heavy bullets can be driven from the Bergara, but nor is there any comparison between handloads and the milquetoast variety of .45-70 factory cartridges.

This robust single-shot carbine is made in Spain and fitted with the company's own accuracy-guaranteed, hand-lapped barrels, each of which undergoes rigorous inspection before leaving the factory. I have long been a fan of these Spanish single-shots because after years of using and testing them in the field and on the



It's surprisingly accurate considering its lightness and short barrel"

range they not only functioned flawlessly, but different calibres all produced excellent accuracy with a variety of factory ammunition and handloads. The Bergara is a quality product at an affordable price.

To break the carbine down into its three major component parts, you remove the forearm by pulling a lever recessed

**2**

into its underside, then simply swivel the barrel downward while pulling back on the trigger guard and lifting it off the hinge pin. The stock section has a length of 46cm and the barrel 43cm.

Basically, the Bergara has a simple break-open breech and robust straight-walled receiver which is hinged to a partially fluted medium-weight barrel.

It has an injection-moulded synthetic ambidextrous stock with panels of chequering on buttstock and forearm, sling swivel bases and a black Cantonera Crush Zone recoil pad. The forearm has a slight schnabel tip and is rounded to fit comfortably in the hand. Overall length is a handy, fast-handling 89cm.

The grip is slim, oval in

cross-section, gently curved and angled to properly position the trigger finger. Point patterns of moulded-in chequering on both sides of the forearm and grip provide a secure grasp, critical when you're shooting the hard-kicking .45-70.

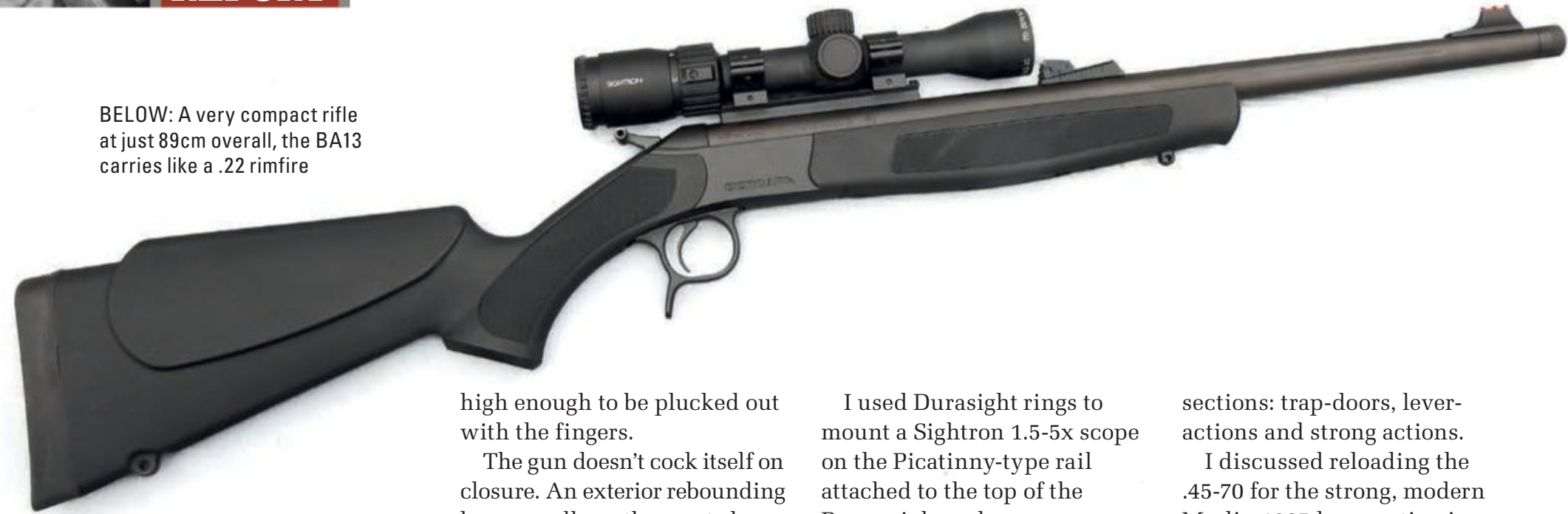
Although lightweight, the Bergara has a very strong locking system. Previous

ON THIS SPREAD

1 The Sightron 1.5-5x32 sits low over the receiver and is a good match, being in scale with the size of the rifle

2 The 300gn Hornady hollow point leaving the muzzle of the Bergara at around 2000fps proved devastatingly effective on this boar in the scrub

BELOW: A very compact rifle at just 89cm overall, the BA13 carries like a .22 rimfire



models I tested were in .243 Win and .270 Win — two high-intensity cartridges loaded to 60,000psi. The BA13 carbine gets its strength from a massive steel lug 66mm (2.6”) long, 20mm (13/16”) deep and 16.5mm (0.65”) wide, welded to the barrel under the chamber. This is similar in design to the underlug bolting system used in many double-barrel shotguns and combination guns.

The rear face of the lug has a notch which engages a spring-loaded locking lug under the standing breech as the barrel is rotated into battery. When the system is locked, hold-down pressure is applied to maintain secure breech closure.

A spring-loaded extractor is housed in the floor of the chamber. As the breech is opened it lifts the fired case

high enough to be plucked out with the fingers.

The gun doesn’t cock itself on closure. An exterior rebounding hammer allows the gun to be cocked without having to break open the action.

The trigger is adjustable for weight of pull between 1.3 and 2.3kg (3-5lb).

The 51cm (20”) blued carbon-steel 4140 chrome-moly barrel comes with sights and has hefty dimensions, particularly around the breech, which has a diameter of over 25mm (1”) at the chamber end. It tapers to 19mm (¾”) at the muzzle, which is threaded 5/8x24 UNF for a suppressor. The barrel is ‘through hardened’, a process whereby steel of a certain carbon content is heated to high temperatures and then quenched resulting in a strong, tough barrel which has the same hardness factor from the surface to the bore. Some .45-70 rifles have the original twist of 1:38 but the Bergara has the faster twist rate of 1:20.

I used Durasight rings to mount a Sightron 1.5-5x scope on the Picatinny-type rail attached to the top of the Bergara’s barrel.

Modern .45-70 factory ammunition is loaded to a low maximum average pressure level because of the weakness of old or replica firearms, but it gets an extra boost when handloads are used in a strong single-shot rifle like the Bergara. This variation in firearm strength is why handloading data in various manuals is presented in three

sections: trap-doors, lever-actions and strong actions.

I discussed reloading the .45-70 for the strong, modern Marlin 1895 lever-action in the April issue.

SAAMI rates the maximum average pressure at 35,000 CUP in a strong action with maximum loads of medium-burning propellants like Alliant Reloder 10x, Benchmark 2 and AR2206H, with AR2208 on the slow end. With charges that vary in weight from 55 to 62 grains, these loads not only fill the



LEFT: The action is opened by pulling back on a spur on the trigger guard and rotating the barrel downward

ACCURACY RESULTS					
Bullet	Powder	Charge (gn)	Velocity (fps)	COAL (inch)	Accuracy (inch)
Sierra 300gn FN HP	RE 10x	55	2075	2.550	1.150
Sierra 300gn FN HP	BM2	60	2109	2.550	1.244
Hornady 300gn HP	Re 10x	56	2058	2.600	1.245
Hornady 325gn FTX	BM2	58	2148	2.590	1.150
Woodleigh 350gn RNSP	AR2206H	62	2090	2.611	1.255
Speer 350gn Hot-Cor	RE 10x	50	1944	2.708	1.498
Speer 350gn Hot-Cor	AR2206H	61	2010	2.725	1.335
Speer 350gn Hot-Cor	AR2208	57	1790	2.727	1.305
Speer 400gn FNSP	AR2206H	60	2010	2.560	1.398
Speer 400gn FNSP	BM2	61	2102	2.560	1.242

Starline brass and CCI 200 primers were used for all handloads. Velocities were measured with a MagnetoSpeed chronograph and are the average of 3-shot groups. Temperature was 35°C.

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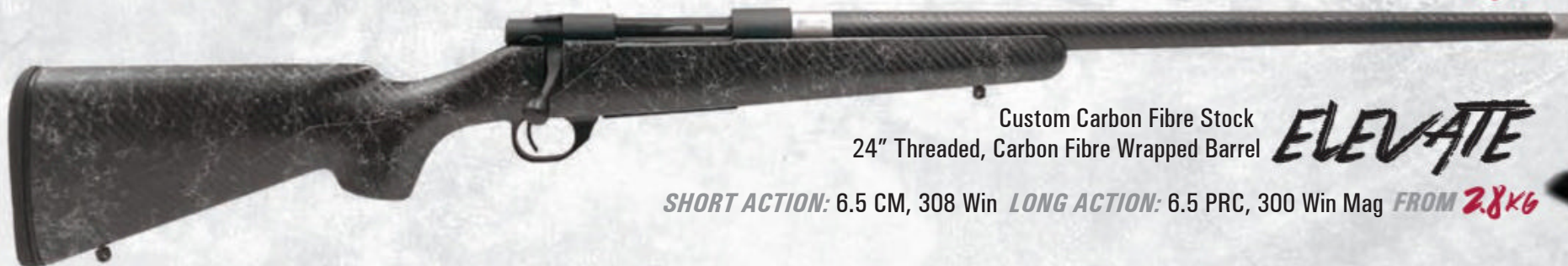


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LONG ACTION: 270 Win, 30-06, 300 Win Mag FROM **2.8KG**



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The handloader can load the Hornady 325gn FTX to move out at 2150fps for 3336ft-lb of muzzle energy”

LEFT: A compressed charge of AR2208 prevents bullets from being seating to the cannellure, but this load chambered in the Bergara



Manufacturer: Dikar.S.Coop, Urarate 26, 20570, Bergara, Spain.

Model: BA13 Take Down

Calibres: .45-70 Govt (tested), .243, .308, .30-06, 8x57 JRS, .300 BLK

Type: Break-action single-shot

Barrel: Blued carbon-steel, fluted, 500mm long, 5/8x24 threaded muzzle

Rifling: 6 grooves, R/H 1:20 twist

Overall length: 89cm (35")

Weight: 3.2kg (6.8lb)

Safety: Internal interlock safety with rebounding hammer

Sights: None, Picatinny rail attached

Stock: Black synthetic, ambidextrous with molded checkering

Finish: Matte black metalwork

Price: Just under \$1000

Contact: Herron Security & Sport, herrons.com.au

case but some powder charges are compressed.

Today, there is plenty of strong .45-70 brass to choose from and I used new Starline brass. These cases proved exceedingly tough, withstanding both extremely heavy handloads and repeated full-length sizing for up to 10 firings without a failure of any kind. Trimming was needed only infrequently.

The BA13 carbine is intended for hunting, period! It carries like a .22 rimfire but kicks like a mule with any of the heavier handloads.

It's surprisingly accurate considering its lightness and short barrel — with the right loads. It showed a marked preference for the Hornady 325gn FTX bullet and gave the best accuracy with the heavier loads, but you have to hold rock steady against the punishing recoil!

It's strong too, digesting any and all .45-70 loads that could be considered sensible.

When I tested a new Marlin 1895 last year I was aware of the severe restriction this action places on overall cartridge length. This

restriction does not apply to strong single-shots like the BA13, making it possible to produce loads with a COAL of up to 69.22mm (2.725") to utilise the full potential of the .45-70 and turning it into a modern timber-hunting cartridge.

For deer, the handloader can load the Hornady 325gn FTX to move out at 2150fps for 3336ft-lb of muzzle energy, dropping 5" over 200yd from a 150yd zero. Or you can go to the 350gn FTX and attain 2050fps for 3266ft-lb. Either of these energy figures betters the output of cartridges like the .358 Win and the .444 Marlin. As a matter of fact, they even exceed the listed muzzle energy for the potent .350 Rem Mag!

The result of chronographing handloads determined that barrel length has

little effect upon velocity. Results were surprising, indicating that with medium-burning powders velocity loss runs between 20 and 25fps per barrel inch. Thus a 24" barrel could be expected to deliver only 80 to 100fps more than the Bergara's 20" barrel, making little difference in the field.

In conclusion: The Bergara BA13 takedown carbine in .45-70 is not only the backpacking sambar hunter's dream, but an effective buffalo gun, a David against Goliath and capable of bulldozing the largest trophy buffalo bull. 🎯



The Bergara BA13 taken down, showing the massive locking block and forearm attachment which is adjustable and can be tightened

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Zeiss Conquest V4 3-12x56 rifle scope

The Zeiss Conquest stands out for its value, especially in this specification

ZEISS'S entry into the four-times zoom market is the Conquest V4. The Conquest line is the company's midpoint in terms of price. Manufactured in Japan, the V4 is, overall, an optic with all the basic controls the average hunter wants or needs. But the most impressive feature of any Zeiss Conquest scope is its value — the relationship between cost, quality and utility.

The V4 range includes 1-4x24, 3-12x44, 3-12x56, 4-16x44, 4-16x50 and 6-24x50. The sample I received is the 3-12x56 model. It was paired with a new Sauer 100 Stainless

Classic in .223 and was a good match for the gun.

Zeiss cut costs of the V4 by working directly with a manufacturer in Japan where labour costs are lower than in its traditional German Oberkochen base. Examining the V4, I wondered if the lower retail price might have resulted from cutting corners and maybe the scope was a Zeiss in name only, but the V4 3-12x56 delivers in spades, exhibiting workmanship and performance on a par with scopes costing double and more.

Built on a 30mm main tube and finished in Zeiss's

signature matte black, the V4 is sealed and purged with Argon gas, rendering it waterproof and fog-proof. From objective lens to ocular lens, the scope's profile is trim and streamlined as one would expect from a hunting-style optic, but a large eyepiece, 56mm objective, and three-turret system all indicate that the V4 may be as functional on the range as it is in the field.

The eyepiece houses a sizeable magnification ring, neatly labelled "3 to 12", which is knurled to improve purchase. Movement through the power range was smooth and a raised

thumb fin facilitates fast changes. A rubber-buffered fast-focus eyepiece caps the ocular end of the scope and can be used to sharpen the image or the scope's reticle to suit individual eye sight.

The V4's left turret controls the brightness of the reticle, which has 10 levels of brightness; the top turret adjusts elevation and the right one is for windage. Rather peculiarly, there seems to be no adjustment for parallax, which one would expect in a 12x glass. High-range variable hunting scopes with fixed parallax are usually set for 100 or 150yd; this Zeiss is at the former.

Adjustments per click have a value of ¼ MOA, with 70 MOA available, and can be reset to zero without any tools. Once the scope and rifle are sighted-in, simply remove the turret's cap, lift and spin the dial to align with "0" and replace the top cap.

Range testing left me impressed with the V4. For a big scope it has a decent amount of mountable scope length — 14cm out of its 37cm total length — and though it's on the large side for a typical hunting scope, weight is a reasonable 610 grams.

Zeiss scopes are famous for superior light transmission, the quality of their glass and high-tech coatings. Most scopes these days, even economy class ones, feature fully multi-coated lenses. It means every lens surface, inside and out, has been treated with rare earths to enhance light transmission across a range of wavelengths. An uncoated lens can lose four percent of light to reflection and refraction. Multiply this and you can understand the dim images hunters endured before Zeiss used magnesium fluoride to increase light transmission back in the 1930s.

Zeiss's lens glass, produced at Schott Glaswerke (part of the Zeiss family) is generally considered the finest optical

glass in the world. Zeiss riflescopes have an enviable reputation for superb resolution and contrast, excellent light transmission and reliable adjustments.

The Conquest V4 sports a large 56mm objective lens. This lens diameter, mated to fully multicoated lenses, provides a bright, sharp image. The coatings include Zeiss's legendary T*, an antireflective coating that transmits the highest possible amount of light through the lenses. The result is maximum contrast, true colours and, what is most important to hunters, the ability to see the target clearly in low-light conditions.

The V4 also features Zeiss's LotuTec, a hydrophobic exterior lens coating that repels water as well as dirt and grease. Essentially, it causes moisture to form round droplets instead of flat ones, and these spheres of water slide right off the lens.

The etched reticle is located in the second focal plane and does not change size as the magnification is varied up and down. Five different reticle designs are available, with my test scope featuring the venerable German No 4. Additionally, the V4 features a constant eye relief of 90mm.

Magnification runs from 3x up to 12x. This provides either a wide field of view (a

whopping 12.7m at 100m or 38ft at 100yd) on 3x, or a close-up look at a distant game animal (3.2m/9.5ft field) when you crank the power up to 12x.

The first thing I did was to check how accurate the Conquest's tracking was. With the Sauer printing sub-MOA five-shot groups, any faults would soon become obvious. After zeroing the scope on the centre of the target, I walked it around the outside boxes, firing two shots at each one, while adjusting windage and elevation, before finally bringing it back to centre. The Conquest came through with flying colours.

Next I pinned up a resolution test pattern chart at 50yd and proceeded to examine the V4's optical qualities at various distances, starting at 50yd and moving farther away in increments of 50yd out to 200yd. Given the resolving power of the eye is about 1 arc minute or so in daylight, the eye can resolve fine details on a chart with black lines and white spacers and subtends about 2 arc minutes. On a cloudy day or in low-light conditions (dawn or dusk) the resolving power of the eye decreases to about 4 or 5 arc minutes.

The first thing I noticed was that resolution (the ability to see fine detail) was excellent from the centre of the image out to the edges. I was able to cleanly resolve down to the number 6 on the 0 block on the



2

chart at 12x. During this part of testing I detected no curvature of field or spherical aberration.

Contrast was very good and no astigmatism was noted. No barrel distortion and no rolling distortion was present. Other things I noted was how the V4's image was bright and colour transmission dead on perfect. With some scopes you'll notice colour fringing which detracts from the colour of the image, but the V4 showed true colour rendition, a flat field and sharp focus.

I also noted that the field of view, whatever the magnification, was large. This is a valuable feature; in my book, the larger the field of view the better.

As the sun went down I checked the Conquest's low-light performance. After cranking the power to 8x to gain a 7mm exit-pupil diameter, the Zeiss impressed me with its capability to detect and successfully engage targets that were invisible to the naked eye.

Properly used, the top magnification of 12x allows you to take more precise aim at small animals, or at big game that is partially hidden by brush or foliage. Finding a path for the bullet through cover becomes easier as you increase power. So does antler judging. You don't always have time to size up a buck with your binoculars, so you drop them and lift your rifle.

While the V4 3-12x56 may not be the top-of-the-line Zeiss riflescope, optically there's not much to find fault with — it is a lotta glass for a moderate amount of cash. ☒



Magnification: 3-12x

Objective lens: 56mm

Light transmission: 90%

Overall length: 368mm

Eye relief: 90mm

Weight: 610g

Adjustments: ¼ MOA

Elevation adjustment: 200cm at 100m

Field of view: 12.7-3.2m at 100m

Exit pupil diameter: 9.2mm at 3x, 4.7mm at 12x

Parallax free: 91.4m (100yd) to infinity

Price: Approx \$1500 but varies

Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies, osaaustralia.com.au

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Sauer 100 test rifle has Zeiss V4 attached using Nikko Stirling Zero-Lok rings

2 Focusing eyepiece of the Zeiss Conquest can be adjusted quickly to produce a sharp image

3 Turrets of the V4 3-12x56 are nicely compact and feature ¼ MOA adjustments. Adjustments can be reset to zero by lifting up the dial and spinning it



3



Spika Drover Hauler pack and frame

A hard-core backpack and frame designed for hunting



1

ON THIS PAGE

1 Spika's Drover pack and frame combo is super-comfortable for going deep into the bush

2 The pack has ample internal storage plus external attachment points and belt pouches. You can also carry a rifle centred on the back.



2

A **BACKPACK** that's been properly designed and constructed is one of life's pleasures, and Spika's Drover Hauler pack and frame bring joy when you're facing the most unpleasant back-country hunting conditions.

This is a hunter's backpack that's every bit as good as some of the best of the big-brand hiking packs, designed not just to be comfortable and cart camping gear but to also carry your rifle and the meat and trophies you're hoping to bring home.

There are two parts to the Drover Hauler system, the frame and the pack, which can be separated. There are two pack sizes — 40 and 80 litres — which both fit to the same frame.

The 40L pack is intended for shorter hunts of a day or two, maybe three, while the 80L one will give you self-sufficiency in the bush for a lot longer. You can buy one frame and both packs, swapping depending on the hunt you're doing.

The one I've been trialling is the 40L pack, and its overall design is exactly the same as the 80.

The pack has one large compartment, a smaller secondary compartment, two pouches on its hip straps, and ammo storage in the hood. There are two external pockets on the sides, plus webbing, straps and loops to attach all manner of things to.

It carries a rifle centred on its back and supported in a fabric boot.

But its real trick for hunters



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SIFA





RIGHT: The system is specifically designed to carry a load of meat in addition to whatever else you've carried in on your hunt

is its frame-mounted meat tray — more of a sling than a tray — which allows you to securely carry any haul of meat in a game bag between the frame and the pack. You could also carry a trophy there.

I have loaded this pack up to my limit with meat, all without having to worry about how to deal with the existing contents of the pack, and carried it out without excessive strain (if you ignore the burning legs and heaving lungs!).

I won't describe how to use it because Spika has excellent instructional videos on its website.

However, I will say you should pay attention to how you get it balanced because I found the added weight and bulk of the meat changed the way the pack hung from the frame and, if I didn't readjust various straps, it increased the load on my shoulders; by easing straps, the balance came good again so that my hips carried most of the weight.

It's all about using the Drover properly, and it's a complex enough setup that you should familiarise yourself with it before you are way out bush with a dead sambar at your feet and a knife in your hand.

There is so much adjustment in the frame and the way the pack attaches that it can be set up to fit almost any adult — and fit well. Again, I won't explain as there's too much to say: watch the videos and take your time to get it right before you head bush.

The main compartment of



It makes it ten times easier to cart out the meat”

the pack opens at the top with a roll that's covered by the removable hood. However, there's also a zip right down its back which I used most of the time for access.

Another zip beside that one opens the secondary storage, which is very handy for keeping the things you reach for most often: snacks or whatever else.

Hangers and a pouch in the main compartment are designed to accommodate a water bladder.

At 40 litres nominal capacity, there's tons of room

for a couple of days out in the scrub with enough basic camping gear and food.

If it rains, the Drover is water resistant to a significant degree but there's a rain cover in a small pocket on the base of the pack.

The whole system is built extremely strongly. The frame has aluminium supports and the main canvas is thick. The zips are YKK and the clips are Duraflex, brands that have a good reputation.

The stitching, seams, cord, everything is specified and finished to a high standard — you can see the pack is built to survive heavy use and to last for years.

It's no lightweight, at about 2.9kg. That's not overly heavy, though, and seems entirely acceptable considering the hard use Spika intends for the Drover.

I've got into the habit of just taking the frame when I'm hunting fallow or goats locally, simply because it makes it ten times easier to cart out the meat. The pack's biggest outing was sambar hunting in remote country, where it was filled for the walk in and loaded with added meat on the way out. It has always performed perfectly.

Several of my mates bought a Spika Drover after seeing me using it. The strength, flexibility and capacity of the 40L Spika Drover Hauler are all very good. It's a fair dinkum backcountry hunting backpack that's exceptionally well designed and executed.

You can find them in gunshops and online at spika.com.au. The 40L pack and frame combo costs \$489.95. The packs are available in olive or Biarri camouflage. 



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1

“

Access for hunting is worth more to us than the landowners could understand”

being useful to a landowner is integral to maintaining solid access and relationships. Take pride in making their life easier and they will appreciate it more than you know. My wife and I have refused payment for firewood loads on many occasions and communicated that access for hunting is worth more to us than they could understand.

We have built our lifestyle around us in a way that sees hunting and other rural pursuits being integral to our existence. Game meat and firewood are as much a part of our lives as commuting to work down the highway to pay the bills. It's what we do and will continue to do for many years to come. Firewood and vac-sealed venison in exchange for unlimited bush access is a good deal in my book.

Until next time, enjoy living your wilderlife. 📍

Follow Dylan on Instagram at ‘_wilderlife_’

Keep your landowners warm

Hunting access is a favour worth returning

IT'S the time of year when rural people are in the groove of winter. I prefer the cool to the hot and that's been mentioned in my column a few times. For me, the idea of being an outdoorsman and living this lifestyle is heavily geared towards cooler climates, when flies aren't a problem and the sun coming up over the hill doesn't force you to retreat to the shade. Fire is heavily rooted in this lifestyle, whether it be for cooking game meat, giving us light or keeping a hunting camp comfortable.

I strive to have the best understanding of my surroundings as possible. It can be difficult for an Australian to know about all the trees in their hunting spots as there are many varieties

and some of them are hard to tell apart. It wasn't until I started to rely on firewood to heat my house over winter that I decided to pay more attention.

Which trees preferred different climates? When did they flower? Which ones suited cooking a wild game feast over the coals the best? Which ones might be suitable for making a bow?

Becoming a firewood aficionado has been a similar journey to immersing myself in archery or knife skills. Research the gear, invest in quality, learn from experts, spend time perfecting the craft and enjoy the benefits of being efficient. The pursuit of excellence in any area is always time well spent but, in this case, we rely on it for warmth in our household.

A wood fire in the lounge room while you watch a rom com with your beloved gives the same gratification as the gentle flicker of ironbark

flame on a frigid winter night in the bush.

Some of the landowners who allow my wife and I access for hunting started to take notice of my firewood obsession and it was only fitting that I offered to fill some of their woodsheds for the winter. Farmers are busy people and when the days are shorter in the cooler months, they are even more time poor. It's a hard pill to swallow, paying for firewood when they have many tonnes lying in their paddocks.

I've mentioned before that

ON THIS PAGE

1 A homestead always needs firewood stacks and Dylan is happy to help build them

2 Removing a dead ironbark tree from a house yard for a farmer



2

The Pixfra logo features the brand name in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'i' in 'Pix' is stylized with a red dot. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is positioned to the upper right of the 'a'.

Pixfra CHIRON C435 Thermal
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THERE'S A NEW KID IN TOWN

Pixfra Thermal Technology

The new Thermal Pixfra CHIRON by Dahua has just arrived. Available in both rail or clip-on versions for whatever your preference maybe. Twin tripod sockets also allows for external mounting on vehicles. The CHIRON will link with you smart phone or tablet for easy live viewing.

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C635(F)	640x512 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>6.5h	35mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1800m
C450(F)	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	50mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	2600m
C435(F)	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	35mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1800m
C425(F)	384x288 12µm	≤30 mK@f/1.0	>7.5h	25mm / F1.0	1440x1080 DISPLAY 0.4"	16GB	1300m

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A friend without a gun licence may still be able to participate in a hunt by spotting for you (though be mindful of the laws regarding this on public land)

Shooting with friends

There are many benefits to bringing a non-shooting mate to the range or out hunting

AMONG all the doom and gloom shooters often have to deal with, it's easy to overlook the countless positives shooting and hunting bring to our lives. Whether it's turning the 10-ring into a ragged series of holes at the range in a competition, bringing down a trophy stag or eliminating a crafty fox that's been terrorising lambs, shooting is a rewarding and enjoyable pastime which everyone, regardless of gender, can participate in equally.

Shooting also shares similar secondary benefits to golfing and fishing — even if you're having an off day and shooting like crap, or the opportunity for a clean, humane shot on your quarry never presents itself — you still get to be outside, enjoying the fresh air and generally being active.

And what's even better than doing those things yourself is doing those things with a mate, or a family member you get on well with.

Taking a mate shooting isn't just about having someone to talk to and share stories with (although that's definitely part of it!) — it's about exposing other people to the reality of responsible firearms ownership. Most people get their knowledge of guns from movies and video games and are often surprised to find out what the reality is when they try it for themselves.

No, they discover, you can't shoot an AR-15 or a pump-action shotgun. No, you can't dual-wield Glock pistols while leaping through the air in slow-motion. No, licensed shooters are not crazy rednecks.

Instead, they can see how much skill is involved in actually hitting a target (especially at longer range) and the safety focus present at ranges, and how the people at ranges are regular folks just like them.

Even while out hunting

there are ways a non-licensed mate can be involved without handling a gun or ammunition. A perfect example is being a spotter by bringing a pair of binoculars and helping you look for game. They might shine the spotlight to light up pest animals at night (where legal), drive the 4WD and, of course, enjoy a delicious meal from your harvest if you've hunted something edible.

While there are some restrictions on how involved someone without a licence can be when hunting on public land, there's still plenty of scope and opportunity to bring a non-shooting friend with you, even if they're only armed with a camera.

Getting friends and family involved in shooting, either at a range or out in the bush, isn't just about having someone to carry your stuff or give you shot-placement information, it's about showing them that

“

Bring a non-shooting friend with you, even if they're only armed with a camera”

shooters are normal people. After all, you're their friend and you're OK, so if you shoot then that means it's a normal thing done by regular people who they actually know, who aren't a social media stereotype.

The important thing is that even if they're not immediately converted and decide to get their own gun licence, they'll at least have a fact-based understanding of what being a responsible, law-abiding shooter involves — and how seriously we take our sport.

So when someone at their work or another social circle starts going on about how guns are only for killing and anyone who wants them is a psycho, they can speak from experience when they say, “No, I've been to the rifle range and they're normal people and there's a huge amount of safety stuff involved,” or, “No, I've been hunting with a licensed mate and they were super respectful of the animal; we cooked it afterwards and it was delicious, too.”

Every bit of positive outreach we do as shooters benefits the entire shooting community — not to mention it's always great to have an excuse to spend time with your mates! ☺

Graham Park is the president of Shooters Union Australia



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WEATHERBY / ZERO TECH PHOTO COMPETITION

WINNER



David Papworth has hit a winner this month after a few previous entries in the Hunter's Gallery competition. He probably doubly deserved it after heading out in -4°C for this hunt! "It paid off with some good hogs," he says. "Alex and I got a double straight up with Fiocchi .308 and .223 ammo." Top job, David!

"I took the Fiocchi and .270 for a late-evening run to the remains of a dead cow and these two boys had made an appearance," John Starr says. "They were swiftly dealt with."



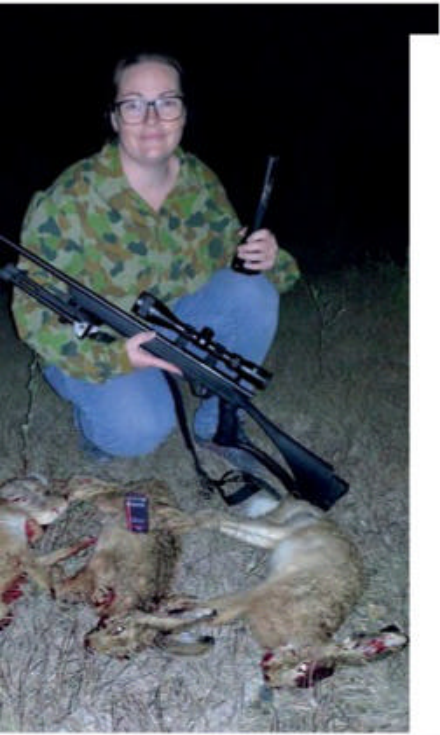
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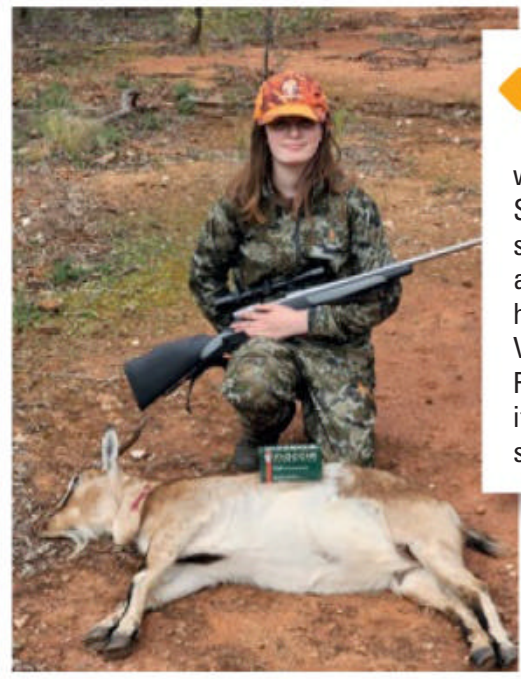
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"Steph and I decided to go for a quick bunny (hare) shoot early one evening to see if we could get a couple for the table and it was a success," Luke Jones says. "We got to a neighbour's block just after dark and loaded up the Fiocchi .22 rounds. Not 10 minutes into our drive around the paddock we saw our first bunny but under the spotlight it took off in a great hurry. About 100m along a freshly mowed fence line we saw our second. Crack! Dropped it with the .22 from about 30m. Almost instantly after that shot another one darted out of the grass in a bit of a panic. Crack! Dropped that one as well. That was easy. Time to head home to process them. On the way out, the first bunny we saw wasn't in so much of a hurry. It was way closer than earlier and didn't seem to be bothered by the light as much. Steph asked if I wanted a shot but as she was on a bit of a roll I said she may as well keep going. Crack! The .22 dropped it at about 40m. Love the Fiocchi ammunition."



Ricky Howell was out hunting at Bourke again with his daughter, Sheridan, who successfully stalked and took this goat using her Weatherby Vanguard in .243. "The Fiocchi ammo dropped it on the spot," Ricky says.

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PLEASE NOTE: this competition is not a game of chance. To achieve entry, photos must be submitted to the satisfaction of the Sporting Shooter editorial team. All entrants must be over 18 years of age and need to be suitably licensed as per individual state firearm regulations and requirements. The firearms will be issued to winners through licensed firearm dealers upon sighting a permit to purchase. Firearm industry staff, paid shooting publication contributors and staff are not eligible to enter this competition. For full terms and conditions please visit sportingshooter.com.au/wfphotocomp

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





“

The stag roared hard for a good 45 minutes while I covered the 2km on foot”

For the life of me I couldn't lay eyes on him. I decided to let out a few hind calls and sure enough the stag stopped roaring. I hoped I hadn't pushed my luck.

Then to my surprise, literally 10m from my position, the stag came into view to my right. I couldn't believe my eyes! He was a free-range 9x8 17-pointer.

I slowly raised my Tikka Hunter in .308 and put the crosshairs right behind his shoulder. The 150gn Core-Lokt did the damage and he was down instantly!

I was still in a state of disbelief when I walked that short distance to see the big red stag lying in front of me. It was my dream and goal all my life to hunt and shoot a majestic stag. All the hard work for a number of years had paid off.

Here he is and I hope you guys enjoy it as much as I did, and that you can sense the respect I have for this amazing animal. 🎯

roaring not far from where I was originally going to hunt the buck, so my plans changed quickly and now my sights were on that red stag.

The stag roared hard for a good 45 minutes while I covered the 2km on foot. I knew he was a good mature stag.

Close now, I crept into the area, which was choked with blackberries and creek gullies.

ABOVE: This incredible stag walked out of the bush just 10 metres from Paul

The 17-point free-ranger

Paul Elder's fallow hunt is interrupted by his dream stag

THE 2023 roar had me very excited this year. I'd driven a lot of kilometres and put up plenty of trail cameras. I knew I was going to be in for a good week's hunting.

After seeing numerous fallow bucks and red stags in the first three days I made a play on a certain fallow that had my attention. I made my way slowly in the car to get to that particular hunting spot around 5am and got all my kit on. As I was locking the vehicle I heard a red stag

THANKS TO



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Understanding optical nomenclature

It's one thing to see the light but do you know the meaning?

AFTER using sporting optics — riflescopes, binoculars and spotting scopes — for seven decades, I have gained a reasonable knowledge of these products and how they work. It is indisputable that optical instruments vary considerably in quality according to their price; there are excellent ones, very good ones and poor ones.

Hunters and shooters reading magazine articles about optics are often confused about the system of terms which forms the nomenclature used to describe how sport optics work. Here's an explanation to help you understand the terms generally applied to riflescopes.

EXIT PUPIL

The exit pupil is the small disc of light that can be seen in the eyepiece of the scope when the optic is held at arm's length and pointed at the sky or a bright light. The size of the exit pupil is a function of both magnification and objective

lens diameter. To determine the diameter of the exit pupil, simply divide the diameter of the objective lens in millimetres by the magnification. Obviously, the exit pupil's size will vary in a variable-power scope as the power is changed.

The size of the exit pupil is important because it tells you how much light is being transmitted to your eye. In normal light the human eye can utilise no more light than is delivered by a 2.5mm exit pupil. However, in the poor light conditions encountered in early morning and late evening, the eye can utilise the light offered by a 5mm exit pupil. Only after dark does the human pupil expand to 7mm.

An exit pupil larger than 5mm is useful in very bad light because it affords considerable latitude in the vertical and lateral placement of the eye in relation to the optical centre of the eyepiece. It makes it easier, thus faster, to align the eye when a shot has to be taken rapidly, like at running game.

EYE RELIEF

Eye relief is the distance behind the ocular lens at which a full field of view can be seen when you look through the eyepiece of a riflescope in order to see the entire field of view. The optimum distance is listed in the scope's specs, but there is usually some latitude so that your eye need not be



“

The size of the exit pupil tells you how much light is being transmitted to your eye”

placed in exactly the same place each time to see the whole field of view.

Scopes made to be mounted ahead of the receiver are designated either IER for intermediate eye relief or XER for extended eye relief. They see most use on handguns or scout-type carbines because they have considerable latitude where eye relief is concerned. Pistol scopes have a maximum eye relief of 56-58cm (22-23”), but some pistol scopes of high

magnification have an intermediate eye relief of about 40-45cm (16-18”).

Long eye relief comes at a price in field of view, but a good-quality hunting scope will have 9-10cm (3½-4”) of eye relief.

EYEPIECE

The eyepiece is also known as the ocular bell. This is the end of the scope nearest your eye; the end you look through. On the majority of scopes the eyepiece is larger than the body

ON THIS SPREAD

1 Scopes used for varmint hunting should have parallax adjustment for shooting at long range. This Zeiss Conquest 6-24x50 has a third turret for this

2 The power ring is located in front of this scope's Continental-style eyepiece, which is rotated to adjust the focus

3 High-magnification variable-power scopes usually have a third turret on the left side for parallax adjustment



INTERNAL ADJUSTMENTS

Internal adjustments are a system whereby the reticle of the scope can be moved to zero the rifle for a specific distance. Screws on the top and side of the scope, contained in turrets integral with the tube, are turned in or out to change the position of the reticle in relation to the optical system. Positive adjustments which move the point of impact of the bullet precise distances each time are usually graduated in ¼-minute clicks. Windage and elevation adjustments are hash-marked and most can be returned to zero after sighting-in.

RETICLE

This device is placed in a riflescope to facilitate aiming at your target. There are a variety of different reticles available today, but the so-called 'plex' type is most popular with hunters. Because European reticles are normally

positioned in front of the erector tube (in the first plane) they must be finer than second-plane reticles. Otherwise they'd appear too bulky even at the low end of a variable scope's power range. Making mechanical reticles slender enough is difficult, so today most scope makers etch the reticle on glass.

ILLUMINATED RETICLE

Electronically illuminated reticles have become modestly popular because they show up quickly in dim light. A battery compartment adds a little extra weight and bulk to a scope and requires another dial. Lighted reticles in scopes (and red dot sights) have rheostats which vary the brightness.

Dark conditions need less illumination for the reticle to show up, while bright sunlight requires that you keep the brightness high and reduce it as light fades. A glowing reticle can dilate your eye,

of the scope but smaller than the objective. It is a separate section attached to the scope using very fine threads.

The eyepiece can be rotated to focus the optic for the individual user. Some scopes lock the setting with a threaded ring, while others have a European-style fast-focusing eyepiece.

FIELD OF VIEW

The field of view (FOV) is the diameter of the circular field seen when you look through the scope — how broad your view is. The field is sometimes expressed as an angle, but more commonly it is described as a number of metres or feet at 100 metres/yards.

The field of view grows narrower as power is

increased. A generous field allows you to get on target quickly and stay with moving animals.

For any magnification, FOV varies within a pretty broad range. FOV is one leg of an 'optical triangle' whose other corners are magnification and eye relief. Just as you can change the shape of the triangle, so engineers can manipulate field and power and eye relief to achieve the desired effect.

Riflescopes, because of their long eye relief requirements, become 'wide angle' with narrower fields of view. A fixed-power scope is a wide-angle model if its apparent field is 26 degrees; a variable scope meets the standard at 23 degrees.

making the target harder to see. The halo effect can also compromise precision.

RETICLE SUBTENSION

This is the area on a target 100 metres or yards away that's covered by the reticle. When a crosswire is said to subtend half an inch it will cover half an inch at 100 yards, and a one-minute dot will subtend a circle approximately one inch in diameter at 100 yards.

For any of the various plex reticles, two subtension figures are given, one for the fine centre crosswire and another for the thicker outside bars.

LENS COATINGS

Today most scopes have lenses which are multi-coated with several microscopic layers of an anti-reflective agent. Usually magnesium fluoride is applied to every glass-to-air lens surfaces to reduce reflections and increase light transmission.

Not all the light entering a scope reaches your eye. But when the lenses are properly coated, the proportion getting through is more than 90 percent. These coatings enhance the image you see by increasing light transmission and reducing light reflection inside the scope to improve image contrast.

Many cheap scopes are said to be multi-coated, but may have only two or three layers, while good scopes will have a dozen or more. Shoddy coatings can easily be detected by looking through several



ABOVE: This extended eye-relief scope is mounted on the barrel of a Ruger M77 Frontier carbine

different brands of scopes and comparing the image seen.

OBJECTIVE LENS

This is the lens on the front of the scope farthest from your eye. The size of the objective lens is critical to the size of the exit pupil and is always given in millimetres. If a scope is listed as an 8x56, the 8x designates the magnification, and 56 is the diameter of the objective lens.

PARALLAX

This is a condition that exists when the image being seen through a riflescope doesn't fall squarely on the reticle. Parallax can be detected by moving your eye right and left and up and down as you look at a target through the scope. If the image seems to move in relation to the reticle, parallax is present.

Most hunting scopes are set to be parallax-free at 100 or 150 yards. Scopes designed for rimfire rifles are usually corrected for parallax at 50 or 75

yards. Some big-game variables with high magnification have parallax adjustment in a third turret so you can program the scope for zero parallax at the range you want to shoot.

If your eye is centred on the axis of the scope, you needn't worry about parallax, no matter what the range. Or if your eye is off-centre when you're shooting over a zero-parallax distance, you don't have to worry either. Parallax becomes a problem only when you're looking into the scope from an angle at a very close or distant object.

POWER

The word power refers to the magnification of a scope — the number of times larger the object appears when viewed through the optic as compared with when it is viewed with the unaided eye. Power is usually expressed as a numeral followed by the letter 'x', for times. A 10x scope, for example, magnifies the object being viewed 10 times.

VARIABLE AND ZOOM

Both these terms mean the same thing — that the magnification of the scope can be varied between two extremes by the user. If a rifle scope is listed as being a 2-10x42 variable, this means that the magnification can be varied from 2x on the low end to 10x on the high end by simply rotating a ring located ahead of the eyepiece.

FIXED POWER

A fixed-power scope is one whose magnification is fixed and cannot be varied by the shooter.

TUBE DIAMETER

This refers to the diameter of the scope body — that section between the objective and eyepiece. The distance in front and behind the turrets can be shorter or longer to suit different length rifle actions.

COLLIMATION

Collimation is the process of aligning two optical axes so that they are parallel, or aligning the optical axis of an instrument with a physical axis. In our context, it's the preliminary steps of zeroing a rifle using an optical device such as a boresight attached to a rifle's muzzle to assist with collimating a scope.

I hope this glossary helps you better understand the meanings of the various terms used to describe a riflescope. 🎯



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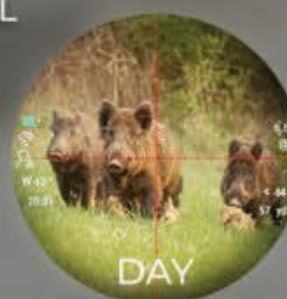
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AFRICAN HUNTING





The struggle for sable

Kevin White battles shale and thorns in pursuit of scimitar horns

To start at the start, the plan was for a lion hunt in South Africa but we'll come to that in a later issue. It seemed like a waste of a good time to travel halfway around the world and fire only a couple of shots. Thus, the hunt for some plains game was conceived as an add-on to the lion. What better game to target on a hunt for the King of Beasts than that very regal-looking animal, the sable antelope?

SABLE bulls have jet-black bodies, white bellies and white faces with dramatic black stripes running vertically down their faces. Scimitar-shaped horns curve back from their heads towards the rear. These horns are heavily ridged and on a representative trophy will be about a metre long (40") around the curve. A male weighs 250kg, stands about 140cm tall and present a very noble appearance.

A guide to trophy size is that the horns will reach back, above the withers, when the animal is standing, looking forward. This will indicate a mature, shootable trophy.

The sable eats mainly grass and will rarely be found more than three kilometres from water. They are found in open woodland or near grassveld with medium to tall grass.

Sable are hunted, like most antelope, by spot and stalk, either by driving feeding grounds or glassing from high ground and stalking close for the shot. Many concessions have hides built near salt licks or water points for the use of bow hunters. This method will often offer a shot at 20 to 50 metres and is very often successful but isn't very exciting. The need for a great deal of patience and the ability to sit noiselessly is paramount.

LEFT: Kevin's hard-hunted sable was worth every thorn stab along the way



FAST FACTS

MAKING IT ALL HAPPEN

My outfitter on this hunt was White Lion Safaris, Ricus de Villiers being the principal. White Lion hunts the full list of South African game and offers hunting on a number of different concessions. See whitelionsafaris.com.

I can't recommend White Lion too strongly. Everything flowed flawlessly from pick-up to drop-off. Great hunting concessions, knowledgeable professional hunters, luxurious accommodation and food. An outstanding hunting experience.

My taxidermy was handled by African Traders Online. They did the work very capably and professionally in meeting quoted completion times. The principal, Pieter Swart, is the president of the South African Taxidermists' Association. See afrikantradersonline.com.

Export clearance and shipping at the SA end was done by Colleen Stanley at SBS Logistics. See sbslogistics.co.za.

Entry at the Australian end was sorted out by Raitt International Freight. Lauren Raitt will clear trophies through Australian Customs and either deliver to your door or have the shipment ready for you to pick up from their warehouse. See rait.com.au.

All of these companies displayed professional behaviour and commercial integrity in getting their varied portions of the work done. They were available with advice and updates of work in progress.

In the hunt for my lion, I had first thought to use my .458 Win Mag that I use for sambar. Discussion with several folks — particularly both my outfitter and my Professional Hunter — all indicated that the .375 Holland and Holland was made for lion and, being very versatile, was a good rifle for the larger antelope also.

Too many rifles are never enough, so I started the search for a .375 H&H. Usedguns showed a Weatherby Mk V Dangerous Game model, complete with a dedicated Leupold 3-8x scope in Leupold Q/D rings. She was living with a

collector in Queensland and had never been fired. This was my chance to consummate my long-held passion for Weatherbys, as yet unfulfilled. The rifle arrived just in time to make a little reloadable brass.

Then the country shut down for COVID until 2022.

Fortunately, my outfitter, White Lion Safaris, held a credit on my deposit and would hold the spot until Australia started flying again. White Lion never missed a beat. As soon as I proposed a date, it was set. So here I was, near Kimberly in South Africa! There was Jaco, my

PH, with his apprentice, Lorenzo, and me.

We had been circling through the flat, dry, tangled thorn bush country for a few hours now, without cutting track or flushing any living thing. We were hunting a concession that had produced good heads in the past. It was about 11am and the heat was building. The feeling was that everything was bedded. The mid-August day was sunny but not yet baking.

Thoughts of a handsome South African brunch were clouding my judgment and



1



2



3

ON THIS SPREAD

1 A sable out in the grassveld presents an easy shot but not quite the trophy Kevin was after

2 Jaco checks out some sable spoor

3 It mightn't look it from outside, but the hunting accommodation was luxurious!

4 Every inch a mature bull: the metre-long horns are magnificent

I'm sure the other two were having similarly impure thoughts. Up at 5.30, cup of coffee and a rusk then into the bush at shooting light. Jaco sent Lorenzo up a kopje behind us, to scout a place to glass from after lunch. Climbing hills is what apprentices are made for. We'll eat.

We turned toward the hunting bukkie (ute) and started the long walk to breakfast. We had only covered half a kilometre when a breathless Lorenzo caught us up to say he'd not only found a good spot but a good sable! Was that alright? (This is why he's an apprentice.)

With some disappointment, we turned from the smell of cookie's treats and began the climb through the clawing, scratching bush that covered the steep, loose shingle slope. Each step threatened to telegraph a warning as shingle grated on shingle under our feet. Every step a potential alarm bell as we climbed. Thorn bush tore at my clothes

and again offered an excellent chance of alarming the quarry.

It's impossible to describe how easy and completely you can get engulfed in these thorns. On my first morning out, Jaco said, "You're wearing shorts? You'll get skinned."

I pointed out that he was wearing shorts and that I hunt in shorts all around the place.

"Yes," he said, "but I know how to move to avoid the thorns."

Unfortunately, he was right. Lorenzo followed me in the line, spending more time de-hooking me than spotting for game. Even relatively heavy cotton duck was not impervious to the thorn.

The loose shingle was rocking and rattling under our feet, threatening to betray our presence. Progress was slow, easing through black thorn bushes that hindered our progress and no less noisy than the shale, rattling across my clothes even when it didn't tie me up. Sable have very acute hearing and even

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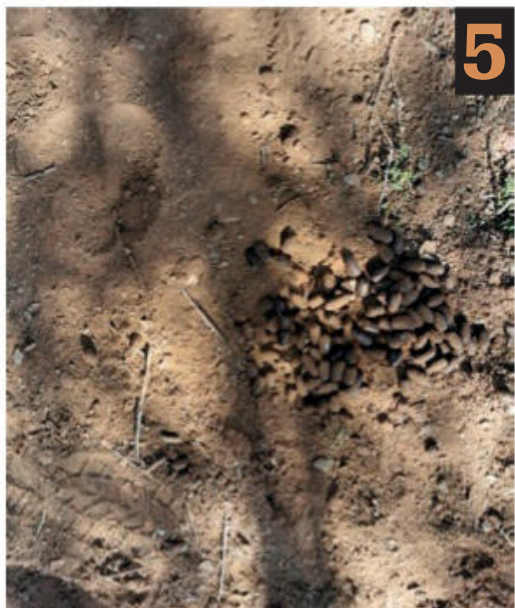


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ON THIS PAGE

5 Sable sign

6 A young male sable, yet to develop its black coat and full horns

300 metres isn't an adequate buffer for noisy progress.

Finally we caught a break by finding a game trail, giving us a path through the thorn. We could traverse the kopje at a level allowing us to look down into the thorn on the flat. Minutes inched by as we half crawled around, crouching to gain cover from the thorn, contorting ourselves to avoid the hooks. Keeping your legs free, you suddenly loose your hat, all the time dreading the scrape of shingle on shingle. It's impossible to describe how tenacious this black thorn is.

Peering around and through the thorn, which stood about two metres high, we saw a sable morph into partial view. He was about 200m out and withers-deep in thorn. He looked to be carrying about 30" of horn — a lesser bull and I thought we'd been wasting our time. I could've been getting fed!

I queried the stalk with Jaco. He

signed that another, bigger bull was under the bank in front of us. Painstakingly, we inched toward the edge and a small camel thorn tree that did as much to shield the antelope as it did to mask us.

We froze in mid-crouch as suddenly a magnificent black shape materialised from the scrub. Jet black in the sunlight, the size of a pony, with a white face, dramatically striped with black. Long scimitar horns curved back behind his elegant head. Every bit of 40" of heavily ridged magic to set heart rates soaring and put accurate shooting at risk.

Brunch forgotten. Remember to breathe. Just a slight hint of wind was quartering across us and worrying me that it might turn or otherwise give him some hint of our presence. All the spikes and scrapes of the ascent forgotten. How do we consolidate our position and get the shot?

Two days ago we had stood in mist for at least an hour waiting for a pair of these beautiful animals to present a shot. We were brought undone by a passing stampede of wildebeest, alarmed by and running from something only their imaginations could conjure.

Time drew out. We silently shifted our weight and turned our bodies to relieve muscle cramps.

The big sable moved to face right to left, to our front about 90m out, still steeply down hill. Jaco motioned me forward and set the sticks. I placed the rifle against my shoulder and put the reticle behind the rear edge of his shoulder and above the 'elbow'. The sable's heart is a little further back than many animals'. Suddenly the .375 bellowed and the sable lurched into a staggering half-circle run, putting another 50m between us before stopping in bush.

I immediately put another shot in and he hit the ground and rolled, his white belly showing clearly through the bush.

Caution must be used when approaching wounded sable. They have a reputation of becoming quite aggressive when injured and will try to impale an attacker on their formidable horns. Approach

only from the back and rear. As a rule of thumb, not only for sable, it should be considered that a 'sitting' animal has the strength to rise. Only an animal lying on its side should be considered past dangerous but even then, approached from the rear.

I covered him for another five minutes, then we carefully made our way down the slope. 

Next issue we follow Kevin as he hunts Cape eland, the massive grey ghosts of the veld, in the lead-up to his hunt for the King of Beasts.

FAST FACTS

.375 H&H PERFORMANCE

One of the 300gn Nosler projectiles had exited the sable, the other was found in the far-side shoulder, having completely destroyed it. The core of the front half was fragmented and only the jacket, peeled back like a banana skin, remained attached to the rear section, completely intact. Total retained weight was 205gn.

One of the benefits of the .375 H&H is its versatility, brought about by its comparative flat trajectory for a dangerous game cartridge. Its trajectory is about the same as a 180gn .30-06 load. The .375 H&H pushes a 300gn projectile out of the muzzle at 2500fps.

It shoots considerably flatter than the .400s and larger calibres. This gives you a little more chance with longer shots in case the job goes south with the first shot. It also allows the rifle to be used on the larger antelope, which sometimes require shots at longer range.



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PEST CONTROL





The price of fresh eggs is constant vigilance,
reckons Mick Matheson, as he culls invading foxes

Household foxes

Foxy the chicken is long gone but her memory lives on. She became famous in these pages a decade ago as the chicken saved from the jaws of death. She'd been firmly gripped in the teeth of a fox that made the fatal mistake of looking back, giving me a fleeting moment to put a bullet into its neck. Despite puncture wounds on both sides of her spine, Foxy lived and laid for another few years.

LEFT: A bit of early-morning whistling brought out the final fox ... for now



“

The rifle was in the safe when I walked outside and was confronted by the fox”

The day after we'd discovered the fox had taken the chicken, I was sitting at my desk, banging away on the keyboard with a deadline overshadowing everything. You know how it is when you're utterly focused but slowly, over time, a nagging noise finally gets to you? It was a young goat. It was close by and would not stop calling. Baa, baa, baa all the time. I tried to ignore it but failed.

Concentration gone, I looked out to see this young billy in the creek paddock with the sheep. The sheep didn't care. The goat was stuck on the wrong side of the fence and was left behind when its herd wandered further up the creek. I shot the noisy bugger.

No pointing wasting it. I left it down the far end of the paddock, chest opened to let the odour out and bring the fox in.

That worked like a charm. After dinner, I shone the red light and two bright eyes reflected back. This time I didn't lose any time because I already had the rifle with me. The fox was oblivious to the red beam as I took aim and fired what felt like a perfect shot.

When I got a good view again the fox was gone. I hadn't heard a hit and I suddenly had my doubts.

ON THIS PAGE

1 A couple of steers admire Mick's handiwork. The chooks were even more impressed!

2 Most of the foxes were shot at night under the light

WE'D moved into the property three days beforehand and had lost two chooks already. Subsequently, we worked on the chook yard's fences. I hammered the foxes, wiping out whole dens of young ones as well as the adults, to the point where foxes have been a rare sight. We never lost another chicken. Until now.

A fox took one of our young hens. I was gutted, partly because it was my fault. Despite shooting half a dozen young foxes over the summer as well as an adult vixen that I took to be their mother, I'd been taunted by one I couldn't get.

Under the light at night, I'd seen

it a few times. Twice I'd had a shot and missed — the second time being only two nights before the chook was taken. That incident was almost comical. The rifle was in the safe when I walked outside before bed with the torch and was confronted by the fox just outside the garden fence, staring back at me. I quietly slipped inside then took forever to get the rifle and ammo out of the safe. And attach the torch to the scope. And get back out. And find the fox again.

It was on the move and not stopping this time. I tried to lead it and took a shot as it darted into the long grass but no joy.



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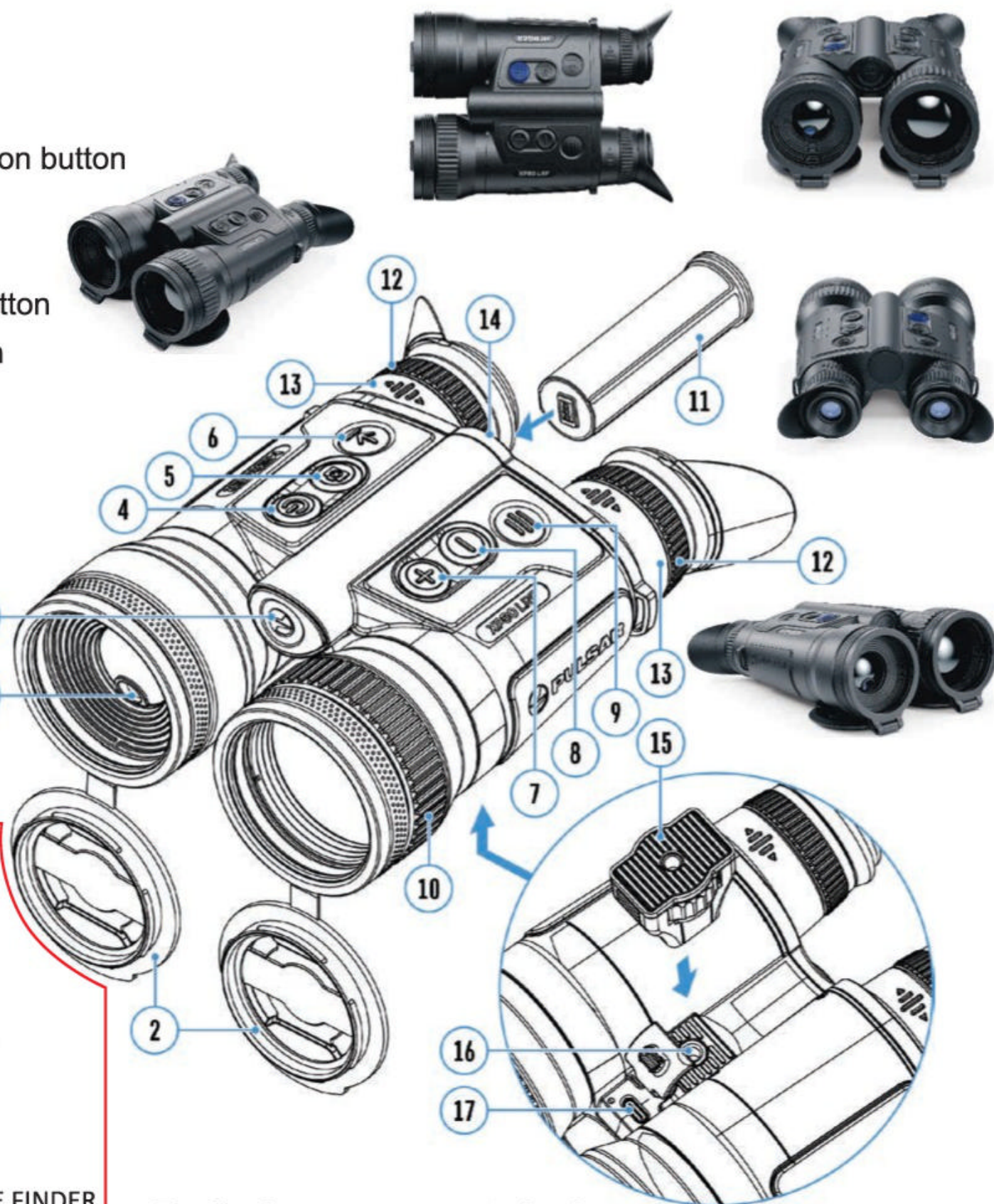
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I didn't know it at the time, but it was a good shot, hitting the fox in the shoulder and killing it instantly.

Fixing a white light to the rifle, I went to check, but I was only just out of the yard when the torch picked up the glaring green of fox eyes in the middle of the paddock. I thought it was the same fox I'd just shot at. Either way, it needed shooting!

It trotted off as I knelt to aim. It was 50m and going away at a slight angle. I fired and this time I saw the hit. The fox whirled around and thrashed on the ground, then got up and charged towards the creek. I cycled the bolt but lost sight of the animal.

Scanning the paddock for it, I saw bright eyes way over on the far fence, moving away from the creek. Another fox? Caught in the strong, white beam, it stopped and looked back. From a kneeling position, knowing this was a 130m shot, I gave myself a short but stern talking to, breathed, aimed carefully, concentrated on trigger release and fired. Whump. Dead fox. Yay!

So now I thought I'd missed one, wounded one and killed one. Not an outcome to boast about, or so it seemed.

The dead fox, as it turned out, was also the wounded one. Great! And the missed fox, I soon discovered, was stone-cold dead by the goat. More greatness! They were two healthy adult males.

I spent time in the next few mornings whistling foxes near the creek, not expecting much luck,



“

The missed fox, I discovered, was stone-cold dead by the goat”

but one came in and I bagged it. Everything seemed to go quiet after that.

Despite shining the light around frequently, we haven't seen any more eyes shining back at night. I've even put out another goat carcass but nothing has touched it. We haven't lost another chicken.

I suspect that'll be the last of the foxes for a while, though I'm still

going to be vigilant. Our chooks are part of the family, after all.

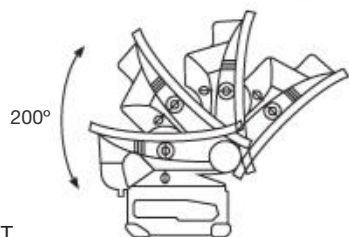
For a bit over a decade we've kept our little bit of land fairly fox-free by constantly persecuting them. Sure, they keep coming and always will, but they are not a constant threat and aren't the problem some of our neighbours have. You can't tell me that hunting doesn't have an impact on feral pests. I've seen how effective it can be. 🇺🇸

ABOVE: The goat carcass was a perfect lure for at least a couple of foxes



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CUSTOM RIFLES

Marcus O'Dean decides to turn his Savage beast into a sporting beauty



The seven year itch

Seven years ago, I swapped a 1917 Lithgow heavy-barrelled target rifle for a cut-down No 4 Savage sporter conversion by Roly

Muscat. It had an 18-inch barrel with an SLR flash eliminator on the muzzle (for balance, I think) and a nasty, hard synthetic stock. A nice Hillver bridge mount was firmly locked on. It shot beautifully with a wide range of bullets and took goats, rusa and foxes on several hunts.

ORIGINALLY, I mounted a 40-year old Kahles 4x scope, then replaced it with a Bushnell Elite 3-9x40. They both worked well. Nuff said.

I got an itch to improve velocity and performance by replacing the short barrel with an original 25.2-inch factory barrel. Gunsmith mate Tom Smith of T-Bone Shipwrighting came to the rescue with an unused Sportco chambered barrel (complete with bayonet lugs) and removed the old barrel to install it.

We worked through a few teething issues with it and my subsequent accuracy tests revealed the new setup to be every bit as accurate as it



MAIN: The much-altered Savage No 4 sporter in its very tastefully configured livery

RIGHT: On a Victorian meat-gathering expedition for Christmas, Marcus decked a couple of hinds at 120 and 150 metres from crossed sticks under a Z-Vision red-filtered torch. Both were neck shots, one with a 160gn Atomic and the other with a 215 Woodleigh

was before, but with only marginal increases in velocities across the projectile and load spectrum I had previously used.

A few years later, having seen beautiful Lee Speed sporters and other lovely walnut-stocked Lee Enfield conversions on YouTube — damn you, YouTube; you reduce my bank balance routinely — I wanted to put a nice sporter forend and butt on the rifle. A few phone calls and 30km on the odometer netted me a lovely pale walnut Monte Carlo-styled buttstock for \$30 from David and Ken at Western Firearms. A rifle-club friend, Warwick Sharpe, gave me a





ON THIS PAGE

1 Marcus shoots the No 4 in its original short-barrelled guise

2 The original 10-round magazine was replaced with a cut-off five-round magazine

3 The revamped rifle shoots well under MOA with Speer 150-grainers, Woodleigh 174s and Woodleigh 215s

“

The compact low-power scope is a beautiful aesthetic match for the rifle”

reddish-stained original No 4 Mk 2 forend.

I got them both home and sanded off the old finishes with gradually finer grades. Now the tricky bit — matching the tone and colour of the two stock components. Using Feast Watson walnut stain on a rag, I incrementally darkened the buttstock with a few coats and lightly applied one coat to the forend, coming up with what I considered to be a reasonable match.

Then I used turps to dilute a small container of Feast Watson satin-finish tung oil for floors, which I brushed on before sun drying and lightly rubbing with steel wool. I repeated the process until I'd applied nine coats, though

without sanding for the last two. The oil I used was from a 20-year-old tin but I have not been able to find this same satin-finished oil in web searches or at the hardware store. My four-litre tin is still half full and will see me out.

Realising that a Mark 2 forend has a gaping maw where the recoil 'draws' should seat I enlisted Tom at T-Bone to reconfigure the trigger guard and recoil shoulder bedding sooner rather than later and, while he was at it, bed the forend and rails in the Bisley method.

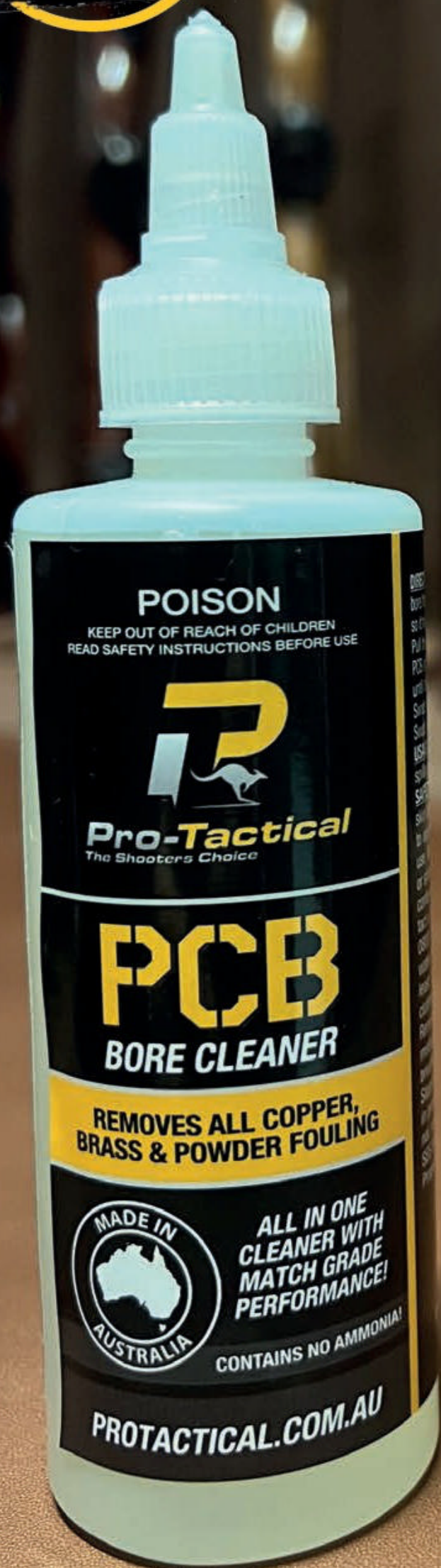
I had done this myself on full-wood Savages and Fazakerly No 4s. Seriously sub-MOA results ensued. I was consistently able to hit stationary clay targets at 800 yards on still days shooting 174gn Sierra Match Kings. However, my work inside and out-of-sight left a lot to be desired.

With Tom's work done, my accuracy tests to date have been very gratifying, as hoped and expected.

I wanted a compact low-power variable to fit the one-inch rings



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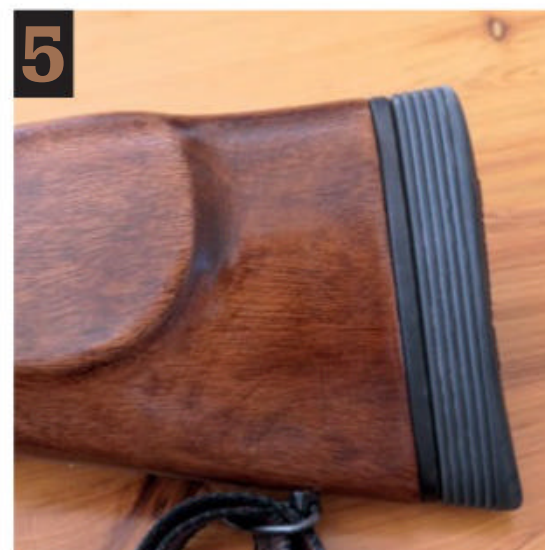


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“

My sporter is more accurate than necessary and a pleasure to behold”



ON THIS PAGE

4 The No 4 now has a new Sportco five-groove barrel. 'RM31' is the original modification stamp by ace gunsmith of yore, Roly Muscat, who did much work on this rifle over 15 years

5 The Limbsaver recoil pad is an almost perfect fit on the butt

6 The butt dries in the sun during its nine-coat finishing process

7 Marcus colour-matched and oiled a new buttstock and forend to replace the ugly black synthetic number

and bought a new-condition Leupold VX Freedom 1.5-4x20 riflescope from a nice fellow in Melbourne for reasonable money. Trying to get something similar now is like hunting for unicorns. It is a beautiful aesthetic match for the rifle and the adjustment turrets have huge repeatable elevation-adjustment range of 125 MOA and magnificently visible numbers on the turrets which are protected by screw-on caps. Bore sighting was a simple matter and the 13.3mm exit pupil at 1.5 power is amazingly accommodating.

The magazine was my next quest. Not *Sporting Shooter*, but the box you stuff bullets in. The cheapest five-round, almost-flush magazine I could reliably find

online was £150, so I asked my go-to guy at the rifle club, Warwick. The next Saturday he turned up at the range with one. It feeds beautifully, so now I have the choice of five- and 10-round magazines to take bush or shoot service optic or F-Class (maybe).

What now? In its immediate future, I see some fair-chase goat, fallow and sambar hunting, as long as my knees hold out. In its latest configuration, my sporter has proven to be nice to carry afield, more accurate than necessary and a pleasure to behold.

What next? I may take a few inches off the forend and beavertail it, install uniform sling swivel studs and crop the barrel 2.5 inches. Maybe... ☒





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Ridgeline Steady Shot gun rest

When sighting in a firearm, a solid, steady rest is a must for that accurate shot. To achieve this, Ridgeline has released the Steady Shot gun rest, a weighted shooting platform for comfort and accuracy. Its forend rest and, in particular, its butt rest hold the firearm in place and absorb much of the recoil. The rest features elevation adjustment in two points, using threads: the rear foot can be shortened or extended, and there's a collar to raise and lower the forend.

The unit's base is made up of two trays that are adjustable to accommodate many different types of weights. Testing has shown that lead shot absorbs the

most recoil per kilogram, but sandbags or common weights will work also. While the Steady Shot works fine without weights, shooting with more weight will absorb most of the recoil and assist in providing repeatable accuracy in your shooting.

I found the Steady Rest particularly useful when sighting in and shooting for groups while testing loads, as the combination of weight and a rear stock cradle made each shot super steady. Its recommended retail price is \$299.95 but shop around.

Ask to see them at your local gun shop or visit ridgelineclothing.com.au.

AccuSharp Diamond Steel

AccuSharp is an American-based company that offers a huge selection of knife-sharpening alternatives for the home, kitchen and outdoors. Its Diamond Sharpening Steel will re-align and hone a knife's edge. In fact, as few as 10 strokes on this diamond-coated steel is often all it takes to touch up a dull blade. Very well constructed, it has a rubber over-moulded handle ensuring a secure grip, with added collar guard for safety.

The steel features diamond-dust particles embedded into the surface, which impart a rough texture to the steel and hence make the task simple and easy.

Featuring a 23cm (9") steel length, this diamond steel takes up very little room in my pack and is ideal for a quick touch-up of my knives when at home or in the field butchering a load of venison.

AccuSharp also offers a mini Diamond Rod sharpener that works on all knives and even serrated blades.

Ask to see the full range of AccuSharp knife-sharpening alternatives at your local gun shop or visit osaaustralia.com.au for more information.



Bushnell Fusion X 10x42 rangefinding binoculars



With Bushnell's Fusion X 10x42 rangefinding binoculars you can range out to 1600m with accurate precision. Featuring the Activesync display setup in red and black for all-day visibility, these binoculars have a high-definition optical system for clarity and low-light performance in the field. Its fully multi-coated lenses with BK7 prisms provide enhanced clarity in the field to clearly identify and range your target. Of waterproof construction, these binoculars also offer an IPX7 rating and EXO Barrier coating technology for lens protection in the toughest weather conditions.

With both bow and rifle ballistic modes, these binoculars will display the true ballistic distance of your shot, whether shooting up or down hill. Rifle mode provides trajectory correction via the ballistic data you input for the cartridge you're using.

Superb ranging accuracy and quality optics combine to make the new Bushnell Fusion X 10x42s a two-in-one solution for finding and ranging game in the field. These affordable rangefinding binoculars are well worth a look.

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

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Dagga Boy, Volume 1

Rigby has announced the release of a new limited-edition book, *Dagga Boy, Volume 1*, featuring hunting stories as part of a project to promote ethical, sustainable hunting in Africa. *Dagga Boy* is the ultimate coffee table book for anyone who has experienced the magic of a buffalo hunt or those for whom bagging a buffalo is a life-long dream.

Limited to just 1000 copies, the book features over 70 stories interspersed with beautiful photography and details of the outfitters and professional hunters involved.

The Biennial Dagga Boy project is designed to gather scientific data and highlight the importance of valuing a buffalo's age more than its inches. The aim is to promote ethical hunting and ensure a healthier, stronger population of all six species of African buffalo by focusing on old and broken-horned bulls who have passed breeding age.

For more information or to secure one for yourself, contact Pro-Tactical via email: tom@protactical.com.au.

Accura gun cases

The new Accura range of gun cases is made in Italy and comes in a variety of sizes. Made of lightweight polymer with metal hinges, they are strong and feature egg-foam inserts to hold firearms in place and keep them safe from knocks and bumps. Available from pistol size through to larger tactical and target rifles, there's sure to be a model to suit your firearm.

The smallest model is the Accura pistol case, featuring two combo locks; it is 37.5x28x13cm in size. Next is a take-down shotgun case measuring 97x25x10cm, with four catches. The single rifle case is 125x35x11cm; the double case is 130x35x12cm and the extra-large case is 140x30x11cm, and all have four catches, two combo locks and egg-foam lining.

Very well priced, Accura gun cases are available at many local gun shops or also through the Hunting Depot at huntingdepot.com.au.



GRS Fenris stocks

The Fenris is a great value, fully adjustable stock with a super-strong body made with reinforced fibreglass. This stock has an adjustable length of pull and cheekpiece for faster and more accurate shots, and both adjustments can be done quickly with the SpeedLock system. It also has an ergonomic honeycomb grip that's designed to help you with recoil absorption. The Fenris stock is versatile enough to handle all hunting and shooting situations and will fit all body types.

Other features include low-maintenance synthetic material, bedding installed as standard to prevent flexing and reduce movement, and an option to fit a height-adjustment recoil pad for when you're shooting prone.

It's ideal for calibers up to .375 H&H.

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



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Ridgeline game bags

These very compact, lightweight game bags by Ridgeline are designed to protect game meat from dirt, flies and other creepy crawlies while transporting meat from field to fridge. I often take legs and backstraps when out hunting and find these fine polyester game bags ideal in size. What's more, they are re-useable by simply giving them a quick cold wash and letting them drip dry. Sewn at one end and open at the other, these bags are approximately 35x75cm but will expand to considerably more — big enough to hold a leg or shoulder of venison. Ridgeline offers them in a two-pack for a recommended \$19.95.

Those game bags are lightweight and

convenient to drop in the bottom of your pack when you're hunting but if you need more, Ridgeline also has a much larger, heavy-duty game bag in its range. It can be used to bag an entire carcass while out in the field to protect it from flies and other insects. It includes practical ties to completely seal the bag while hanging overnight.

The heavy-duty bag is constructed from an extremely durable, highly breathable material and it is a cavernous 1.5x2 metres in size. Machine washable and also reusable, it retails for about \$35.

See them at your local gun shop or visit ridgelineclothing.com.au.

Bushnell binocular harness

This new Bushnell binocular harness is designed to open with one hand and features magnetic closure for fast access to binoculars. It's made of a soft-touch, durable fabric that reduces noise in the field. This fabric also provides water resistance and the inside of the pack is lined with lens-cleaning material that will protect your binocular glass.

Featuring a sleek design, it makes binoculars easy to carry and is fully adjustable, with offset buckles to allow the harness to clip into itself, creating a stand-alone harness that can be used if the pack is not needed.

Tested to fit most binoculars — including, of course, Bushnell's roof optics in 12x50 configuration — the pack includes a riser for smaller binoculars that allows them to sit at the top where they are easier to pull out.

Ask to see the Bushnell bino harness at your local gun shop or visit sporting.nioa.com.au.



Stealthcam Fusion

Stealthcam has a new addition to its trail camera line-up, the Fusion. Featuring cutting-edge detection technology and unparalleled ease of use, this innovative camera is designed to keep you informed of the whereabouts of game, and one step ahead of it. The wireless Fusion camera has an impressive array of features, including: high-resolution image capture, lightning-fast trigger speed, and a robust, wireless 4G

connection that delivers immediate updates straight to your mobile device. It has quick-scan QR setup.

The new Stealthcam Fusion is rugged, weatherproof and ensures reliable performance in any weather conditions, while the intuitive user interface makes the unit easy to set up and customise according to your specific needs. With photo and video capability, this new addition to the Stealthcam range with mobile-network capability allows photos to be transmitted while the game is still there and hence provides you with real-time notifications.

To find out more ask at your local gun shop or visit tsaoutdoors.com.au.





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Reloading the .300 PRC for hunting

Built for long-range target shooting, the .300 PRC can be an excellent hunting cartridge

BOASTING a water capacity of 88 grains of water against 89.2gn for the .30 Newton, the .300 PRC could well be the reincarnation of this 110-year-old cartridge. They even look enough alike to be twins! Both have big, fat rimless cases with a reasonably sharp shoulder and similar body dimensions. The .30 Newton's neck length is 7.87mm (.310") against 7.81mm (.307") and case length is only 1.52mm (0.06") shorter. These are minor differences.

Having almost identical powder capacity, the same charges of a particular powder should give almost the same muzzle velocities. That's something we'll look into as we go about developing hunting loads for the new .300 PRC.

The only place where the two rounds differ widely is in overall cartridge length — the Newton's loaded length being a modest 81.28mm (3.20") against 93.98mm (3.700") for the PRC. A modern design, the .300 PRC seats long, heavy-for-calibre, high-ballistic coefficient bullets so far out of the neck of the case that the bullet base is level with or just below the base of the neck and does not encroach into the powder space. Chambers are cut to keep the bullets in close alignment with the lede and barrels have the fast 1:8 twist needed to stabilise heavy .30-calibre long-range bullets.

Based on the non-belted .375

Ruger case necked down, the .300 PRC has a standard 13.51mm (.532") magnum bolt face and a 30-degree shoulder. Seating long extended-range bullets out maximises case capacity, making it perfectly suited for slow powders such as AR2213sc, AR2217, AR2225 and Reloder 26 — if you can get any.

Handloaders who are hunters can utilise a broad range of .30-calibre bullets weighing from 125 to 230 grains, challenging the capabilities of both larger and smaller calibres.

In my experience, no other .30 magnum cartridge surpasses the .300 Weatherby for everything from deer to moose, and African game ranging from big cats to the largest plains game like eland. Just like the .300 Weatherby, the .300 PRC is well-suited to the role of an all-around big-game rifle, at least where the game of this continent is concerned. There's no disputing the popular appeal of the one-rifle concept, and loading the .300 PRC to best realise this role is what many hunters will be interested in.

By way of comparison, the water capacity of a .300 Weatherby case filled to the base of the neck averages 92.7gn whereas the .300 Winchester Magnum holds 83.2gn, and the .308 Norma Magnum 81.2gn — which



The .300 PRC bears a close resemblance to the ancient .30 Newton, which came out well before its time and is a practically identical design



The .300 PRC design differs from Hornady's other popular cartridges, the 6.5 Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC"

places the .300 PRC somewhere about the middle of the pack. The main difference between the big .30s, however, is that the majority were designed as hunting cartridges, whereas the .300 PRC was designed with long-range target shooting in mind, with hunting a secondary consideration.

In the years post-dating the .30 Newton, belted cartridges dominated the magnum rifle scene until the .300 Remington Ultra Magnum came along in 1999 and started the rush to developing rimless magnums. This caused belted cases to

become universally reviled by US gunwriters. In all honesty, I've never struck any problems with belted cartridges, but do admit to a preference for the rimless variety.

Development of the .300 PRC started around the same time that the 6.5 Creedmoor came along, but it wasn't offered commercially until over a decade later. The .300 PRC started life as the personal wildcat of Hornady engineer Joe Thielen, when he began modifying the .375 Ruger case for use in long-range benchrest matches.

Eventually, he necked the case down to .30 calibre, set the shoulder back about 1.59mm (.0625") to gain a one-calibre (.308") neck length. He used it in the original configuration for long-range benchrest matches throughout 2007, but it wasn't until years later when ELR (extended long-range) type matches gained in popularity, along with specific military needs, that Hornady launched the cartridge onto the commercial market.

The .300 PRC design differs from Hornady's other popular

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cartridges, the 6.5 Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC. Hornady decided to shorten the case length and seat the bullet out farther so that its base was level with the bottom of the case neck or just slightly below, so that it didn't intrude into the powder space, making room for more powder. This was accomplished by giving the chamber nearly 6mm (¼") of freebore and making it only .020mm (.0008") larger than the normal diameter of a .308 calibre bullet.

This allows a bullet leaving the case neck to have some free travel before it engages the lands. This permits it to be driven at higher velocities without exceeding safe pressure limits. Minimal clearance ensures there's nil runout and that the bullet will be perfectly aligned when it enters the rifling. The lede angle is a generous 1.5 degrees.

Long-range efficiency demands that bullets have the highest possible practical ballistic properties, in terms of both sectional density and coefficient of form (streamlined shape). Such bullets are long with tapering ogives and, especially if they have boat-tail bases, a relatively short full-diameter mid-section. These bullets are designed to provide and retain as much of their velocity as possible away out yonder.

Hornady ELD Match, Sierra Tipped MatchKing, Berger VLD Target and Nosler AccuBond Long Range are just a few fine examples of competition bullets designed to hold up over the long haul and give sub-MOA or finer accuracy.

Simon-pure hunting bullets have different shapes — round-nose, semi-spitzer and spitzer. They are shorter overall than target bullets and usually have larger amounts of bearing surface which calls for a different seating depth. Thus overall cartridge length with

hunting bullets will be shorter than the .300 PRC's factory COL of 93.98mm (3.700"). This will, in turn, increase the amount of freebore, but shouldn't pose any problems feeding from the magazine.

Most bullet makers produce hunting bullets for .30 magnums in three popular weights — 165, 180 and 200gn — making it possible for handloaders to select the one they feel is best suited to the game being sought. With the exception of Hornady's 180 and 220gn Interlocks, which are too blunt to hold up over the long haul, the ogive or nose shape of the preferred 165, 180 and 200gn hunting bullets is a spitzer shape like the Speer Hot-Cor and most others.

With a sectional density of .301 and a ballistic coefficient of .478, the 200gn Speer is a prime choice for a large-game load in the .300 PRC. However, most deer hunters prefer a properly structured 165 or 180gn spitzer over anything heavier.

The recent upsurge in long-range load and calibre development has paralleled efforts to successfully produce more specialised 'all-purpose' types of hunting bullets. All major bullet makers have by now devised satisfactory methods of expansion control for big-game bullets, like the

Leading Edge, for example, but they are also likely to include at least one or two mono-metal bullets in their range.

With this type of bullet, expansion is normally promoted by having a cavity or 'hollow' in the centre of the tip, whose purpose is to trap air. This trapped air becomes highly compressed when the point ploughs into the target, and this built-up air pressure greatly assists in promoting rapid bullet expansion. This design has been used by makers such as Sierra, which supports the theory that a cavity in the nose of a small-calibre high-velocity bullet often improves its accuracy.

For use in big-game shooting, however, the hollow-point bullet has lost ground as it often produces excessively violent expansion under high-velocity impact conditions and lacks penetration. Mono-metal bullets like Barnes' XTR and the Atomic 29 use hollow-points, but Barnes' Maximum Range X-Bullet and others use a streamlined plastic tip to initiate expansion, and weight retention is high.

The choice of a hunting bullet is horses for courses, as obviously not all desirable qualities can successfully be incorporated in a single hunting bullet and, this being

the case, the choice should be based on a bullet of suitable weight and construction which delivers the correct balance of expansion and penetration for the size and toughness of the game.

In considering the .300 PRC for all-round shooting of heavy game and what it takes to make reasonably certain of a sure kill under average hunting conditions, I feel that anything less than the 165-168gn bullet is inadequate. With anything smaller, the lower ballistic coefficient causes retained energy to be rather poor when it reaches the reasonable maximum hunting range of 400yd (about 360m). This eliminates its ability to penetrate heavy bone and muscle, even if it is a controlled-expansion design.

By my rule of thumb, the only exceptions would be a mono-metal design weighing 150-155gn for deer species such as fallow and rusa.

The 165gn can be driven at 3250fps but is the least effective. That's only 100fps faster than the 180gn and there is so little difference in drop at 400yd that you'd never notice it.

The best all-round weight for shooting of all sizes of Australian deer at all ranges is the 180gn, which hits harder, penetrates deeper and holds up better. In the .300 PRC, loaded to 3100fps, it delivers 200-400ft-lb more energy than a 165gn bullet. Sectional density is also high enough to give deep penetration from a controlled-expansion bullet.

The ideal bullet, however, for shooting of heavy game like, say, a sambar stag at normal ranges is a 200gn spitzer or semi-spitzer. The Speer SP Hot-Cor and Lapua



LEFT: The most efficient powders for the large capacity .300 PRC case are ultra-slow numbers like AR2217, AR2225 and Reloder 26

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are good examples of this type. Assuming bullet shape is equal, the 200gn at 3000fps will have almost the same impact point at 400yd as a 180gn spitzer at 3100fps, dropping only one inch more. But it will hit with about 200ft-lb more energy than the 180gn, will give even deeper penetration and have more bone smashing ability.

Just about every major bullet maker lists controlled-expansion bullets in different weights in .30 calibre, so you have a wide range to choose from and you'll rarely be disappointed with their performance. Basically, it is simply a matter of matching bullet weight to the size of the game.

The .300 PRC has the fast twist of 1:8 rather than the standard 1:10 or 1:9 twist of the other big .30s, but I've never known spinning a bullet faster to have the ruinous effect upon accuracy that too-slow a twist does.

You do not have to splurge on premium bullets for deer, but the 165, 180 and 200gn bullets comprise the most practical weights. They should have jackets of sufficient thickness to withstand the enormous rotational torque imparted by the rifling and high velocity, then hold together under the stresses of impact and penetration.

Now, what about powders? The .300 PRC's case volume is perfectly suited for a range of

slow-burning powders. AR2213sc works reasonably well with 150gn bullets, but slower ADI propellants — AR2217 and AR2225 — are better adapted for the 180 and 200 grainers. Alas, the powder that is really outstanding in the .300 PRC to accelerate things along, Reloader 26, proved to be unprocurable.

Following my usual practice, I primed my loads with CCI 250 magnum primers. This big case filled with slow-burning powders requires the longer-duration flame of magnum primers, both for efficiency as well as uniformity.

Most .300 PRC shooters will probably buy factory loaded cartridges and save the brass for reloading. This is probably the best procedure, as in doing so you establish a 'norm' to compete against. Cases are fire-formed to fit your individual chamber and they are uniform, so that you can mike the expansion ring on the base of a case fired with a factory load and use this measurement as a guide when working up loads.

To reload the .300 PRC for hunting, a special die set was not necessary, so I obtained a Lee die set. You can choose to full-length or neck-size for your individual rifle and I chose to neck-size only.

A useful point to remember when handloading the .300 PRC is: Keep a close check on case length at least every five



Four hunting bullets that will handle a wide range of big game animals (left to right): 155gn Atomic 29, 168gn Ballistic Silvertip, 180gn Norma PPC and 200gn Lapua Mega

firings, or as often as necessary to keep them from stretching beyond the maximum allowable length of 65.53mm (2.580"). Overlong cases cause increased pressures and may also affect accuracy.

Good terminal performance on game — particularly heavy muscled, big-boned big game — is achieved by bullet design characteristics far different from those incorporated into match-type bullets which have thin jackets and soft cores. Hunting bullets designed for a variety of big game have heavier jackets, bonded cores of multiple hardness and

mechanical core-locking devices swaged into the jacket. Hence it is more practical to concentrate your efforts on a few projectiles which offer the kind of on-game performance you'll need for each specific species.

Shooters only need two or three good loads for the .300 PRC for hunting different size game, so I worked up loads with AR2217 and AR2225 with the 155gn Atomic 29, 168gn Hornady SST, 180gn Norma PPC and 200gn Lapua Mega. The results in the table show a considerable velocity loss, which may be attributed to the short 22" barrel of the test rifle, together with the increased amount of free travel with shorter bullets.

It was no surprise that this particular rifle digested the maximum charges listed by Hodgdon for longer, heavier bullets without the least sign of high pressure. The .300 PRC was chambered and throated to handle long, heavy bullets for long-range target shooting, which appears to affect its performance as a hunting cartridge. 

HUNTING LOADS FOR THE .300 PRC					
Bullet	Powder	Charge (gn)	Velocity (fps)	Accuracy (inch)	COL (inch)
Atomic 29 155gn	AR2217	89	3276	0.55	3.491
Hornady 168gn SST	AR2217	87	3058	0.66	3.521
Hornady 168gn SST	AR2225	87	3044	0.70	3.521
Norma 180gn PPC	AR2217	81	2794	0.75	3.408
Norma 180gn PPC	AR2225	80	2773	0.89	3.408
Lapua 200gn Mega	AR2217	81	2822	0.72	3.374
Lapua 200gn Mega	AR2225	77	2770	0.75	3.374

All four bullets gave sub-MOA accuracy for 5-shot groups in the Gunwerks ClymR, and pressures were normal. The short 22" barrel and extra amount of free travel with short hunting bullets results in mild pressures and a considerable velocity loss. The results with the 180gn Norma bullet were puzzling when compared to Hodgdon's data.

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Book and rifle

The stories of the past still inform the culture of hunting today

HOW'S your knowledge of hunting trivia?

"I am a well-regarded hunter and author. I was born in Wales in 1937. My family moved to Australia in 1953. I worked in the Australian outback and then at the age of 23 settled in New Zealand. In New Zealand I worked as a deer culler with the Government Forest Service. During my life I wrote over 50 books. Some say *Pack and Rifle* is the book that started a lot of people's interest in hunting and has inspired generations of hunters to experience all that hunting and the outdoors has to offer. Who am I?"

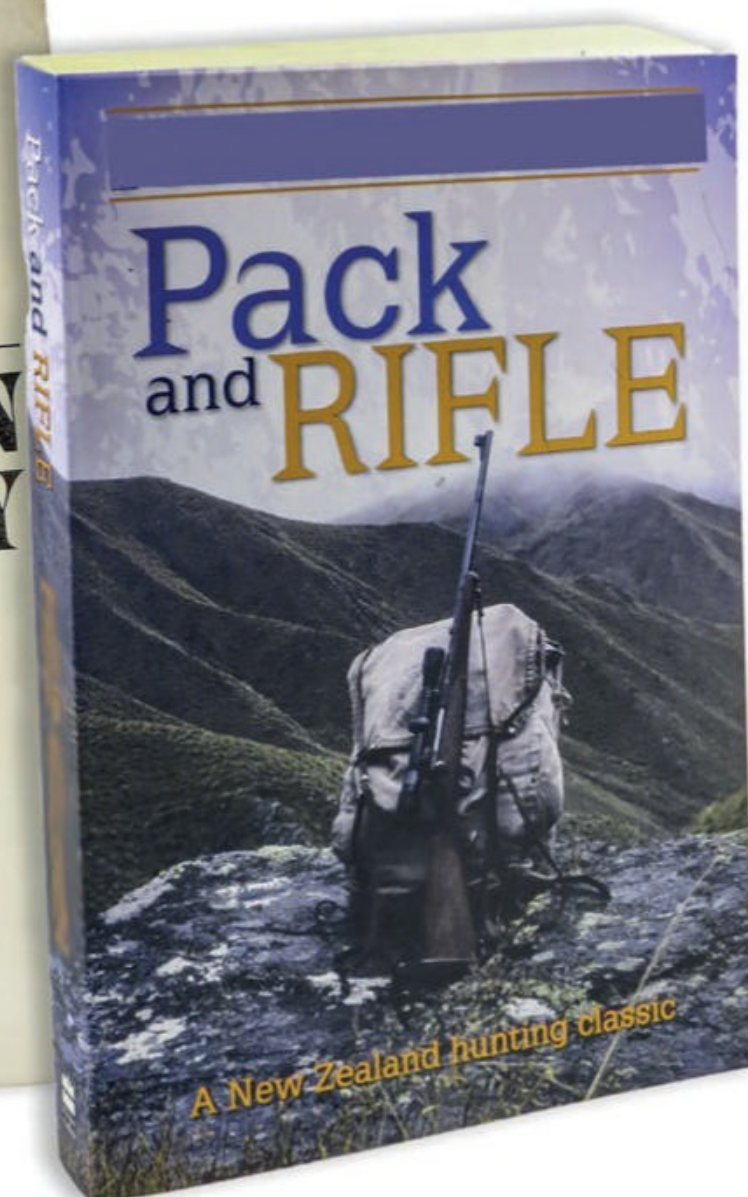
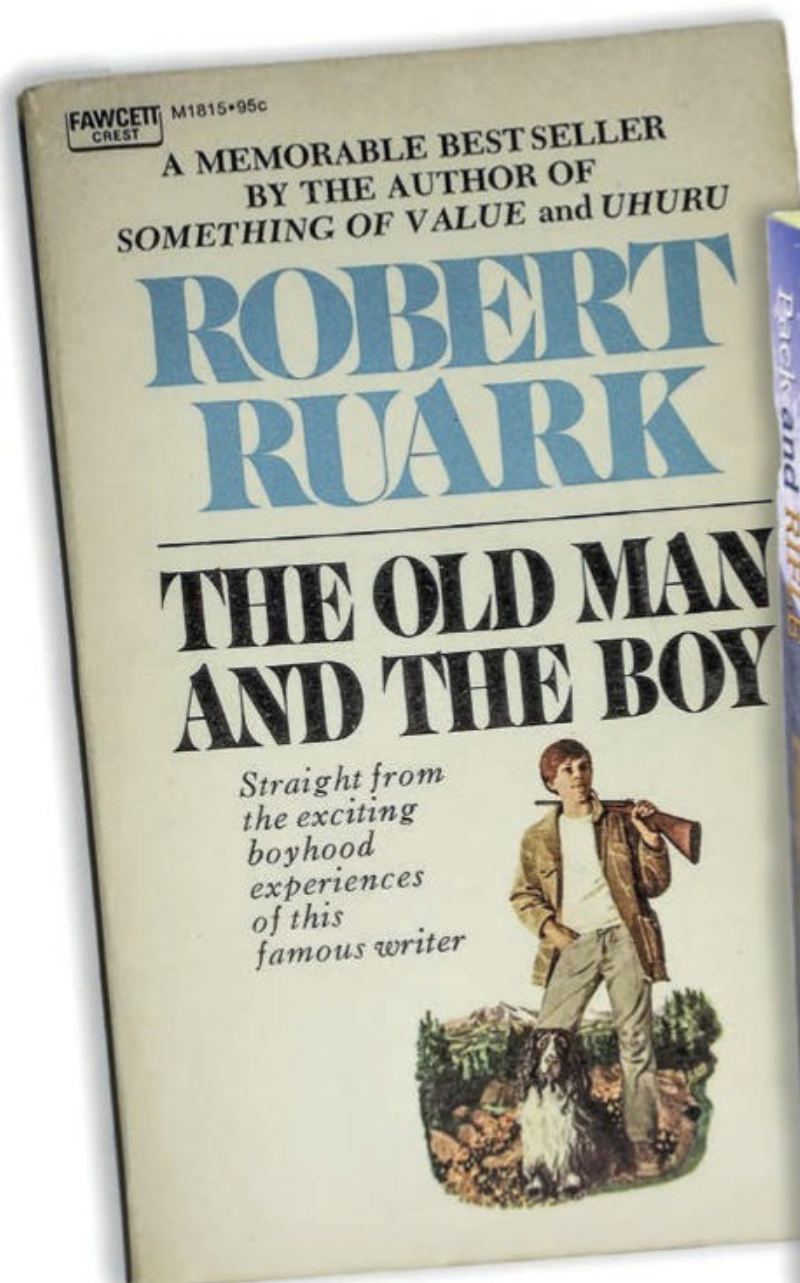
A lot of hunting knowledge comes from being in the field, from trial and error and from practice, practice, practice.

Walking the field while looking for game signs or studying trail camera images can teach a hunter so much about the patterns and characteristics of particular game. It takes plenty of experience and experimentation when hunting. Small things like walking into the wind, watching where you walk, not dragging your feet or slamming car doors all come with time and experience.

Hunters will learn the best in the field, but there are other ways we can learn things without leaving the comfort of the house.

This topic recently came up at one of my hunting club's meetings, where we played hunting trivia.

One of our topics was 'Who Am I?' This was by far the most interesting topic of the



Pack and Rifle is a hunting classic. So too are many of Ruark's works



Hunters will learn the best in the field, but there are other ways we can learn"

night, especially hearing the conversations that occurred and the obvious divide between the young and the old hunters.

Not that I am calling Old Pop old, but I remember growing up watching him read all these old books from all of these accomplished hunters. When I first moved out of home, I remember looking at all the books and wondering which ones I could take for

myself without him noticing. He noticed. Very quickly.

Reading these books has opened my eyes to other cultures that are involved with hunting as well as methods and other game. One of my favourite hunting books is Robert Ruark's *The Old Man and the Boy*.

The answer for my above question is Philip Holden, author of *Pack & Rifle* and *Hunting & High Country*.

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WINNER



"On a warm autumn afternoon, it was the perfect opportunity to sneak up to a gully that I knew held water to see if I could find a pig soaking up the April sunshine," **Nick Dwan** says. "Sure enough, after a quick, quiet stalk this boar presented itself and was taken down quickly with the .223." Nick is with his young nephew, Jax Glasby, who was stoked with the outcome.

John Starr says the past few weeks have been good for big pigs. "This rough fella caught a pill from the old Stevens 22-250 and it did its job nicely," he tells us.





Carl Daniel had success on a pig-hunting trip at Hughenden. "Caught this bloke having a dip in the dam," he says. "One shot from my trusty .223 and photo time!"

These were just two of the pigs **Michael Sergi** got on a hunting and fishing trip around Darwin recently. "Needless to say they didn't know what was coming when they got hit with the .270 Binelli Lupo," he says.



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