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THE REPORT

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For the shooting sports to continue in this country, thoughtful, reasonable, and fact-based legislation must be put in place.

Recently, we have seen several states panic and rush through thoughtless laws that haven't really made sense. If your legislation is aimed at an imaginary 'belt-fed shotgun,' you're probably lining up the wrong target. Through our organisation, the Australian Shooters Alliance, we attended a meeting with the federal government early in the year to discuss the then-potential firearm import law changes. When we questioned some of the points, we were answered with: "We are not firearm experts." You can't make this stuff up.

Fortunately for Queensland, we have avoided the worst of it and, as stated by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services Dan Purdie, the Crisafulli LNP Government's response to the tragic Bondi terror attack delivered nation-leading reform to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists and make Queensland safer.

While some parts of the legislation place more burden on law-abiding firearm owners, the bulk of the changes increase punishments on those who do the wrong thing.

"Importantly, the government also recognises the importance of firearm use for livelihoods, which is why we ensured there are appropriate exemptions to the Citizenship test for competition sporting shooters, and those that require firearms for occupational purposes," the Minister said.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank SSAA Queensland for their insights and contribution to the committee process as we continue to strive to make Queensland safer," the minister said.

We are grateful to be living in the most progressive state in the country and happy to say we continue to be 'open for business' to the shooting sports.

Jeff Ross



SSAA Queensland President

Now Australia's largest print circulation hunting, shooting and outdoors magazine!

Volume 2.3

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Letters

Kangaroo leather in Texas

Robert Walkley's article in the February issue of *The Report* brought to mind an episode in a TV travel show, back in the '90s, I think it was. It might have been 'Getaway' but I'm not sure. The female presenter was in Texas and visited a well-known boot manufacturing establishment specifically because they used kangaroo leather in their top-quality products. A well-spoken older gentleman showed her through the whole process, wearing a typical cowboy Stetson plus a snub-nose revolver in a neat little holster on his belt. At the end of the segment, she commented on it and he told her that in that county, any citizen who wished to do so and met certain law-abiding criteria could register with their local sheriff to openly wear a holstered handgun, with the stipulation that it could not be concealed. She asked if there was a significant crime problem making it necessary. He smiled, chuckled, and replied in a beautiful Texas drawl: "Not any more Ma'am...we find that an armed society is a polite society!"

David A, Townsville

Hats off to the author

I wanted to compliment Mr Robert M. Walkley on his excellent piece 'The Horror of Bondi' [March, *The Report*]. Furthermore, his statement on how the Australian shooting community has been a self-regulating group of club members and fellow field shooters is very true.

I've been shooting long guns, sporting clays and handguns for many, many years. We quietly observe new shooters to ensure those people are the people we feel safe to be around. We also provide training and mentorship to ensure safety is paramount. We also are a shooting community that has a social contract with the people we have been shooting with for many years. We socialise on the firing line and at the club BBQ. We are sounding boards for our shooting peers because we care and are there to provide support to our fellow shooters as life happens.

To quote Robert: "Aussie firearms culture, at its best, is built on a sober appreciation of consequence". I could not agree more.

Keep up your excellent work.

Regards, Mike, via email

Forgiveness in aim?

Congratulations on some excellent articles in the March issue of *The Report*, including the one on ethical shot placement. But it left me with a question: what exactly does the phrase 'balance of lethality and forgiveness in aim' mean? Was I the only one left wondering what the heck 'forgiveness' meant in the context of shooting? Is someone able to explain please? Thanks. Tony L., Qld

From the author:

Hi, Tony.

Thank you for your question. The phrase 'balance of lethality and forgiveness in aim' means choosing a shot placement that is highly effective at causing a quick and humane death (that's the lethality part), while also giving you a reasonable margin for small aiming errors without compromising the ethical result (that's the forgiveness part).

Here is a straightforward way to think about it:

A shot aimed directly at the brain in the head is extremely deadly - if you hit perfectly, the animal drops instantly with no suffering. However, the brain is a very small target. If your aim is even slightly off - perhaps because the animal moved a fraction, a gust of wind came through, or you were shooting at a longer distance - you might miss the brain entirely and cause a bad wound instead.

That gives high lethality but almost no forgiveness: there is very little room for error.

In contrast, aiming for the heart and lungs area in the chest (on an animal the size of a deer, for example) is still very deadly because it damages the organs essential for life, such as the heart, lungs or major blood vessels. The key difference is that this target zone is much larger - roughly the size of a dinner plate. If your shot lands a few centimetres high, low, forward or back due to minor inaccuracies in aim, range estimation, animal movement or wind (all common in real hunting situations), you can still hit vital areas and achieve an ethically quick death.

This combination makes it the practical sweet spot that most responsible hunters prefer; it delivers a fast and humane outcome without requiring perfect, sniper-like precision every time.

Thanks again for the question, Tony - it's terrific to hear that the article sparked such thoughtful reflection!

Best regards, Billy

Where's my membership card?

SSAA Queensland orders members' cards weekly, however they can take two to five weeks to arrive in the post box depending on location in the state. While some shooting organisations have gone digital with their membership cards, SSAA Queensland has listened to its members' calls to continue providing a physical card. Should you wish to carry a digital version of the card on your phone, it is suggested you take a photograph on the card and save it to an easily accessible folder on your mobile phone.



Target shooting as genuine reason

Hi. In Queensland, do I need to attend a range in order to keep my firearms licence if I have nominated 'target shooting' as my genuine reason?

Craig M, Qld

From Qld Membership,

Good Afternoon Craig,

Thank you for your enquiry.

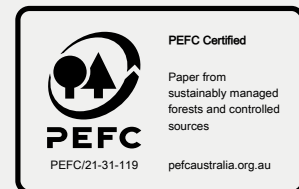
When you become a member of SSAA Qld Inc. you can request to join any club. There are no requirements to only attend that club or participate in shoots.

If your genuine reason is 'SSAA Qld Inc. Membership' then you need to retain Financial Membership to hold your Weapons Licence.

We value your feedback and are happy to answer any questions.

Mail to: SSAA Queensland, Member Letters, PO Box 2443 North Ipswich, Qld 4305 or

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Marlin 

The Marlin 1894 IN .357 MAGNUM

By Billy Allen

The rifle in this review is the Marlin 1894 chambered in .357 Magnum provided by NIOA Australia. This specific example is from the modern production era, after Ruger acquired Marlin in late 2020. Ruger secured the intellectual property, tooling and designs - exclusive to Marlin - and has since focused on reviving the line with improved manufacturing standards and quality control at its facilities. Under Ruger, Marlin has thrived, potentially making it the leading lever-action rifle manufacturer in the industry.

NIOA offers the 1894 Marlin in six configurations to suit various preferences across the Australian market, including: the classic blued timber 1894 with a straight grip; a guide gun in laminated stock with traditional styling; a trapper variant with skinner sights; a dark series with M-LOK slots and tactical features; and the one supplied for testing - a stainless

laminated stock with pistol grip, ghost ring sights and full-length Picatinny rail. This range ensures there's an 1894 for every shooter, from purists to those seeking modern enhancements.

I picked up the new 1894 Marlin, and as soon as I took it from the counter in the shop, it felt immediately right. It balanced perfectly in my hands - carrying some welcome heft with a solid feel for such a compact rifle. Right then, the rifle gave every impression of being built for real use in the field, maneuverable and genuinely enjoyable to handle.

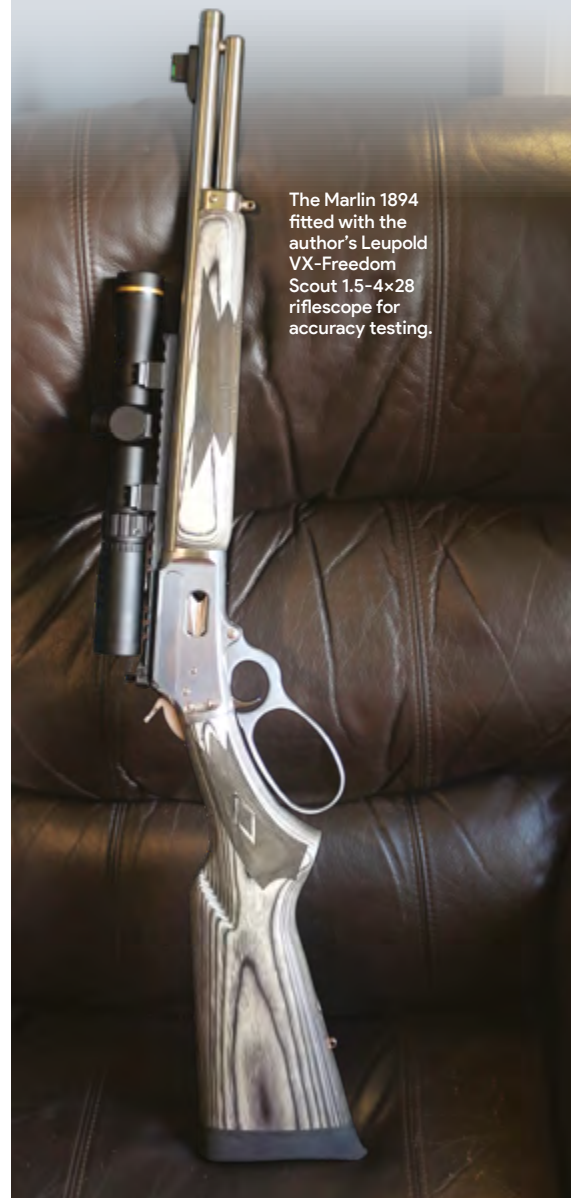
From that very first moment, I sensed this might be one of those test pieces that would be difficult to hand back at the end of the review. It carried like something designed with the Australian bush in mind - compact, well-proportioned and ready for whatever came next.

What follows is a straightforward account of how it performed.

First impressions

Unboxing the Marlin 1894 was like stepping into a piece of firearms' history, but with a contemporary twist. When the rifle arrived, I was immediately struck by its compact design. At just 86cm overall length and with the bare rifle weighing just under 3kgs, it felt balanced and ready for action. Expertly assembled, the stainless-steel barrel, receiver, lever, and trigger guard are the products of precision CNC machining, demonstrating quality craftsmanship.

With a classy look, the grey laminated stock immediately stood out.



The Marlin 1894 fitted with the author's Leupold VX-Freedom Scout 1.5-4x28 riflescope for accuracy testing.

The laser-cut checkering was well-executed, offering a secure grip on the pistol grip and fore end. The checkered panels on the pistol grip and forend provide a secure hold, even in humid Queensland conditions. Quick-detachable sling swivel studs were a thoughtful addition, making it easy to attach a carry sling for long days afield. The soft rubber buttpad promised to tame any recoil, and the fibre optic ghost ring sights, paired with a full-length Picatinny rail, hinted at versatility - whether you prefer iron sights or mounting a scope.

The 1894 exuded a sense of purpose, like a tool designed for use rather than show. Overall, my initial encounter left me eager to take it to the range and see how it performed beyond the workbench.

Technical specs and data

Diving deeper into the Marlin 1894's build, it's clear this rifle is engineered for reliability and performance. Chambered in .357 Magnum, it offers a calibre that's versatile for both recreational shooting and hunting within ethical ranges. The barrel measures 16 inches, crafted from stainless steel via cold hammer forging - a process known for enhancing durability and accuracy. It's threaded at the muzzle, opening up options for muzzle devices.

The receiver, lever and trigger guard plate are all stainless steel, machined with CNC precision for smooth operation. The tubular magazine holds eight rounds, fed through a side-loading gate that's functional, though it requires a bit of practice. The trigger pull averaged around six pounds - crisp enough for deliberate shots without



"The 1894 exuded a sense of purpose, like a tool designed for use rather than show."

The author shooting from the bench, testing the Marlin's accuracy with the scope at 50 yards.

being overly heavy.

The fibre optic ghost ring sights are adjustable: lateral windage shifts easily with a small flat blade screwdriver, while elevation requires loosening a set screw and rotating the aperture up or down. Intuitive and user-friendly, this system reminds me of the XS ghost sight rail on my own Marlin 336. The full-length Picatinny rail accommodates optics seamlessly, making it adaptable for different shooting styles.

In terms of dimensions, the rifle's short stature and light weight make it ideal for confined spaces, but it's built to last. The laminated stock and stainless barrel and action make this rifle impervious to water, opening up use in all weather conditions. The overall construction reflects high standards of quality control. Priced around \$2600, it's positioned at the higher end of the

lever action rifle market, but the investment promises rugged and reliable longevity - potentially spanning a lifetime.

In the field

Taking the Marlin 1894 out for testing was where it truly came alive, transforming from a beautiful-looking rifle into a dynamic shooting companion. I took the 1894 shooting on my family farm and initially mounted my Leupold Scout scope onto the Picatinny rail to get an idea of the rifle's accuracy. At 50 yards on 4x power, the first two groups were MOA - tight clusters that showcased the rifle's inherent accuracy potential. The short barrel and compact design made it effortless to handle, with minimal recoil allowing me to spot impacts and acquire follow-up targets quickly.

THE MARLIN 1894 IN .357 MAGNUM



Testing the rifle's maneuverability in the confined space of a vehicle.

Switching to the open sights, you can easily find the sizable front bead when you shoulder the rifle. If you aim at the 50-yard mark, the bead will cover the vitals of a regular-sized pig, so you would need to hold the bead over the lower half of a pig's vitals, with the rifle sighted in to hit just the top of the bead. Familiarity bred proficiency; by

Billy testing the Marlin with the standard ghost ring sights at 50 yards.



Loading the Marlin through the side loading gate, using the previous round to hold the gate open.

25 shots, I was consistently able to ring an eight-inch Bisalloy gong offhand at the 50-yard mark. The ghost ring setup proved effective out to around 100 yards, where the .357 Magnum's trajectory arcs noticeably, limiting longer-range precision without optics.

The side loading gate was smooth, and because the spring wasn't overtight on the loading gate, the tubular magazine loaded with ease. The best way to load through a gate, I've found, is to partly insert a round, then use the following bullet to finish pushing it in, leaving the gate ready for the next. Using the loading gate

is a convenient means to load a tubular magazine, but it's not a rapid loading system and requires pausing to reload once the eight-round capacity is depleted.

The rifle's maneuverability shone in practical scenarios. Its compact size made it easy to stow in a vehicle without awkwardness, and I could envision it perched on a quad bike's front rack with no overhang. In thick scrub or confined bush, where space is at a premium, the 1894 would excel, requiring minimal room to shoulder and fire.

Operationally, the lever was slick from the outset, as if already broken in. The stroke was just right - neither too long to cause short-stroking nor cumbersome. I fired just over 100 rounds in my testing, and I can report that there were zero failures to feed, eject or fire; reliability was flawless. The lever's width and rounded edges prevented any discomfort to my knuckles or hand during cycling.

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LRF DXT50



TRAIL 3

Thermal imaging riflescope with LRF
XQ50 | XR50



THE MARLIN 1894 IN .357 MAGNUM



Recoil was negligible, aiding in maintaining the sight picture for successive shots. With eight rounds on tap, it's sufficient for scenarios like shooting multiple pigs on the move, where quick cycling and staying on target prove beneficial. Yet, once empty, reloading the tubular magazine demands effort and time, meaning the shooter will need to stop and insert cartridges individually via the loading gate. This self-limiting aspect curtails extended bursts, promoting strategic use. I find topping off the magazine incrementally after shots is the best approach, ensuring that the tubular magazine never empties completely.

The cross-bolt safety proved useful during unloading; it prevents the hammer from being able to strike the firing pin when emptying the tube magazine. This process means a live round is chambered with the hammer cocked, but I feel secure in this process utilising the added protection given by the cross-bolt safety. However, I prefer to carry a lever action in the field with the hammer set at half-cock without using the cross-bolt safety.

By the time I had fired 50 rounds, I was sold; the 1894 was quick, accurate and fun to shoot. It handled like a natural extension, proving its worth in varied field conditions.

Final thoughts

Wrapping up my time with the Marlin 1894, it's hard not to rave about its charms. This is a fantastic plinking rifle - fun, easy to manipulate and chambered in .357 Magnum, where ammunition remains reasonably affordable compared to other pistol-calibre options. Within 100 yards, it delivers solid stopping power on pig-sized game, making it economical and effective for hunters.

Its short, handy profile excels in tight spots: vehicles, quad bikes, or navigating dense scrub. Reliability was absolute across all functions, with excellent scoped accuracy and dependable open-sight performance once acclimated. Manufactured to the highest standards with outstanding quality control, it's a rifle built to endure.

At around \$2600, it's a premium purchase, but one that justifies the cost through longevity and performance. Returning it after testing was tough - it was handy, great-looking, and perfectly reliable. For shooters and hunters seeking a blend of heritage and practicality, the Marlin 1894 in .357 Magnum is a compelling choice. ☺

Billy taking the Marlin 1894 into the field for practical testing and a quick hunt around the family farm.



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The hunting retail landscape was changing, but the soul of the sport remains rooted in the field. Recognising a growing need for authentic, experience-led guidance, a group of lifelong outdoorsmen stepped forward to bridge the gap. They operate on the belief that the best advice doesn't come from a manual, but from years spent in the high country and a deep-seated respect for the hunt. Their mission is to ensure that the practical wisdom of the bush remains at the heart of every conversation and every piece of gear they provide. Venture Hunting and Outdoors was created to be the answer. This was not a rebrand of an existing model, but a business built differently from the start.



The foundation was laid by Tim Nielsen and a core group of enthusiasts, whose leadership and personal commitment provided the driving force for the brand. Drawing on a deep-seated connection with the wild and a proven track record of success with sister brand Adreno Ocean Outfitters, Tim identified an urgent gap in the market. He saw a need for specialist equipment backed by genuine service and a return to retail led by expertise. By personally backing the vision and taking the initial risk, he established a high standard for what an Australian hunting store should be.

Under his guidance, Venture has grown into a collective effort, powered by a team of more than 50 enthusiasts whose experience stretches across every corner of the Australian outdoors.

Today, that vision is operational across an online store as well as two locations in Springwood, Queensland, and Hamilton, Victoria. The team includes qualified firearms instructors and butchers, outback guides and hunters with lifetimes of experience across remote terrain on multiple continents. It features archery specialists who tune numerous bows each day and zoologists with fieldcraft honed over seasons in the Kimberley. Between them, they cover archery, rifle hunting, backcountry travel, spearfishing and wild game processing. This depth of experience is the entire point of the business. It allows the Venture team to offer guidance and support for a hunting experience that spans from the initial planning stages to the final meal preparation.

This field-tested knowledge informs everything on the shelves. Brands like Pnuma, Eberlestock, Beretta, Tikka, Hikmicro and Hoyt are not selected to fill space. They are chosen because the team has used them in the rugged Australian terrain and knows exactly where they hold up. This practical insight shapes the advice every customer receives, whether they are gearing up for a first hunt or preparing for a remote expedition where the right equipment is a necessity. The stores are set up to be practical and considered, built around helping people make informed decisions rather than simply moving product.

Community sits at the centre of the Venture mission. The business fosters connection through free events and workshops designed to pass down essential skills that are becoming harder to find. These initiatives range

from technical sessions on how to cape a deer for taxidermy mounting to the Women Who Venture panel nights. Furthermore, the annual Hunt Fest brings people together for a weekend of activities, prizes, and education that reflects the soul of the lifestyle. These gatherings demonstrate that Venture is more than a retail space: it is a hub for education and support.

Venture is also a vocal advocate for the industry. The organisation works to improve public perception by highlighting the role of hunting in conservation, sustainability, and the health benefits of sourcing wild food. These are not marketing slogans, but core values built into the daily operations of the business. The team takes the responsibility of protecting hunting in Australia seriously and this consideration influences every decision made at a corporate level.

The tagline, **Define Your Pursuit**, represents a philosophy of empowerment. Venture does not tell customers what their journey should look like. Every person who walks through the doors is on a unique path, whether they are scaling a ridgeline for the first time or have been harvesting game for decades. The role of Venture is to support that journey with the right knowledge, the right gear, and a team that understands what pursuit really means. It is a professional home for those who value authenticity, built by people who live the lifestyle for people who live the lifestyle.

To meet the team
and explore more
of the values
behind the brand



VENTURE
HUNTING & OUTDOORS



RIFLE REFORM FOR QANTAS




By Sam Talbot

A couple of months ago we received a message from one of our members about the choice of rifle image used by Qantas on its declaration form. Essentially, when you travel with Qantas and declare whether you're travelling with a firearm or not, they use an image of a 'scary' looking rifle, sort of resembling an AR-15. Of course, that's not very common in Australia and paints a negative image. Naturally, the Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA) wrote to Qantas about this and received a very pleasing reply.

Firearms and ammunition

We may agree to carry firearms and ammunition for hunting or sporting purposes as checked baggage. If we do, these items must be packed in accordance with all applicable national and international laws and regulations.

Guns, rifles and pistols 

You have read and understood the restrictions on dangerous goods.

Are you travelling with any dangerous goods?

Yes, I'm travelling with dangerous goods

No, I'm not travelling with dangerous goods

Check In

Cancel

The current form, as of writing.

Here's some of our correspondence:

Declaration form

Dear Qantas,


I am writing on behalf of the Australian Shooter's Alliance, a subsidiary of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia - Queensland.

Our staff and many members have travelled with Qantas for many years, both professionally and privately. We sincerely appreciate the assistance your team has consistently provided in safely transporting firearms and ammunition for lawful sporting purposes. Many competitive athletes rely on Qantas to attend events across Australia, and your support has enabled participation in a sport that remains one of Australia's most successful Olympic disciplines.

We would like to offer one constructive suggestion regarding the 'Firearms and Ammunition - Dangerous Goods' declaration form.

While the handgun silhouette used on the form is appropriate, the rifle image currently displayed does not accurately reflect the type of firearms most commonly used and transported by Australian sporting shooters. A bolt-action rifle would be a more representative and recognisable example for the majority of competitors and hunters who utilise your services. SSAA Queensland alone boasts more than 80,000 members.

We have attached an example image for your consideration.



Our suggestion for the re-designed rifle.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of Australia's sporting community. We appreciate your time and consideration of this suggestion.

SSAA Queensland

We will continue discussing with Qantas and will look forward to a productive and successful relationship with them. While it may seem like a minor thing, making sure the public's perception of sport shooting

The reply from Qantas:

RE: Declaration form

We appreciate you taking the time to share this thoughtful feedback, and for the ongoing trust the Australian Shooter's Alliance and SSAA Queensland have placed in Qantas over the years. We truly appreciate your long-standing relationship with us and the important role we play in supporting your members' travel, whether for competitions, training, or personal commitments.

We're also grateful for your kind acknowledgement of our teams who assist with the safe transport of firearms and ammunition. It's encouraging to know that our support helps athletes and sporting shooters continue participating in one of Australia's most accomplished and respected sporting disciplines.

We've reviewed your suggestion regarding the 'Firearms and Ammunition - Dangerous Goods' declaration form, particularly the imagery used. Your point about the rifle silhouette not accurately reflecting the firearms most commonly transported by Australian sporting shooters is well taken. A bolt action rifle is indeed a more representative example for many competitors and hunters, and we appreciate you bringing this to our attention.

Thank you as well for providing an example image - it's extremely helpful. We will share your recommendation with the appropriate teams for review as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure our materials are clear, relevant and aligned with the needs of our customers.

 Kind regards,
Qantas Customer Care

"We appreciate you taking the time to share this thoughtful feedback, and for the ongoing trust the Australian Shooter's Alliance and SSAA Queensland have placed in Qantas over the years."

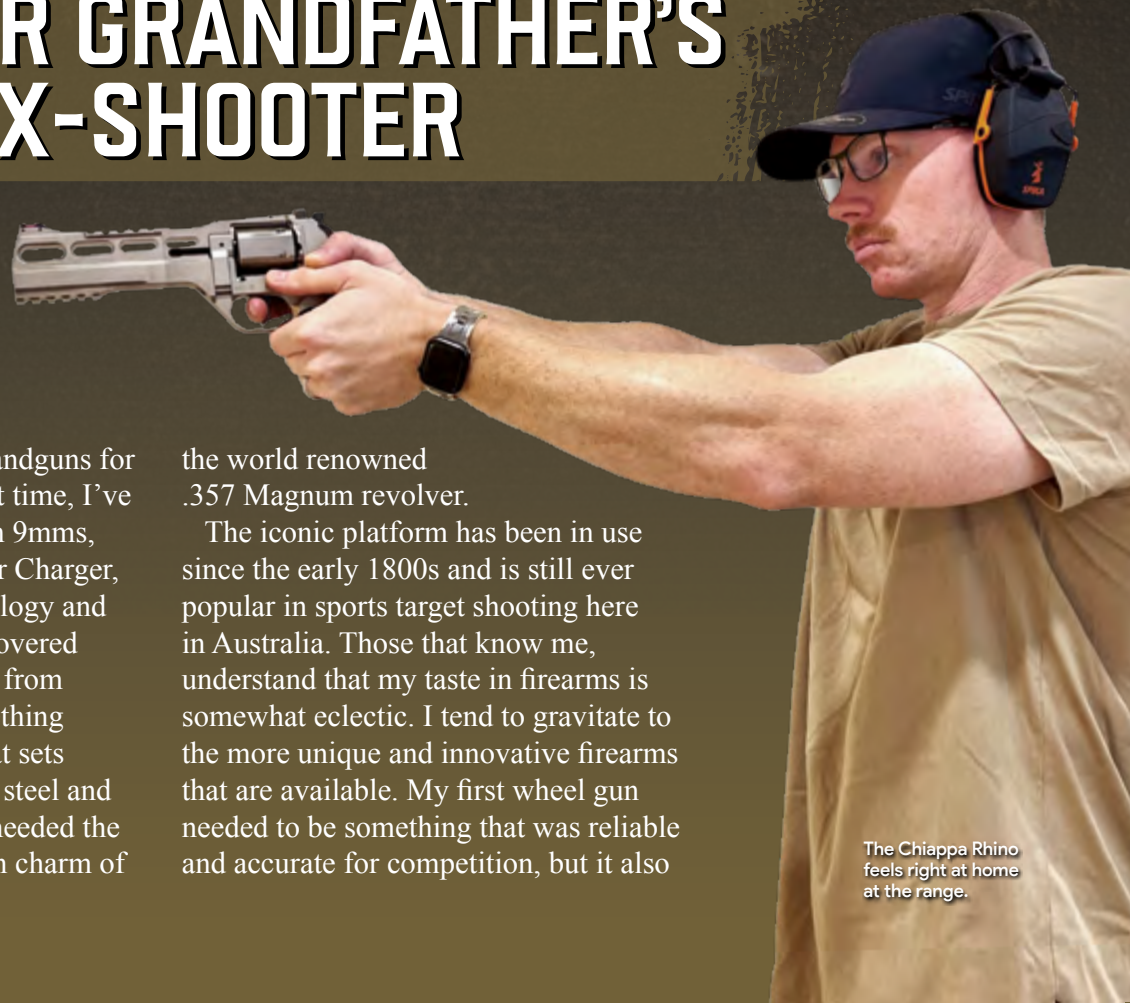
is accurate is very important and we will continue to correct it wherever we can.
If you have any ideas or suggestions like this one, let us know: news@ssaaqlld.org.au

THE CHIAPPA



RHINO 60 DS

NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER'S SIX-SHOOTER



By Zach Bianchi

I have only been shooting handguns for a few years now and in that time, I've stocked my Spika safe with 9mms, 1911s and even a .22 Ruger Charger, all modern marvels of technology and engineering. However, I discovered there was something missing from my collection. I needed something with character, something that sets itself apart from all the black steel and polymer frames. I realised I needed the rugged reliability and western charm of

the world renowned .357 Magnum revolver.

The iconic platform has been in use since the early 1800s and is still ever popular in sports target shooting here in Australia. Those that know me, understand that my taste in firearms is somewhat eclectic. I tend to gravitate to the more unique and innovative firearms that are available. My first wheel gun needed to be something that was reliable and accurate for competition, but it also

The Chiappa Rhino feels right at home at the range.

needed to stand out from the crowd whilst still being aesthetically pleasing. Pretty soon my search landed me on the unquestionably unique, Chiappa Rhino 60 DS chambered in .357 Magnum.

After reaching out to the good folks at TSA (Tasco Sales Australia) and expressing my admiration for the design of the Chiappa Rhino, they offered to send me their demo model that I could try before I buy my own; I didn't waste a moment and jumped at the opportunity. Before I knew it my PTA was approved and the Rhino 60 DS was waiting for me at my local gun shop to be collected and taken straight to the range.

The .357 Magnum chambering allows the use of the softer shooting .38 Special rounds, which are the same physical dimensions (aside from case length) but have a much smaller powder load resulting in reduced power and recoil. I picked up a box of 38s for the range, but I had to grab a box of .357 Mag too, right? The PMC Bronze 158-grain jacketed soft points leave the muzzle at 1471 feet per second, with 759 foot pound of energy; these would really test the recoil control and accuracy of both myself and the Chiappa Rhino.

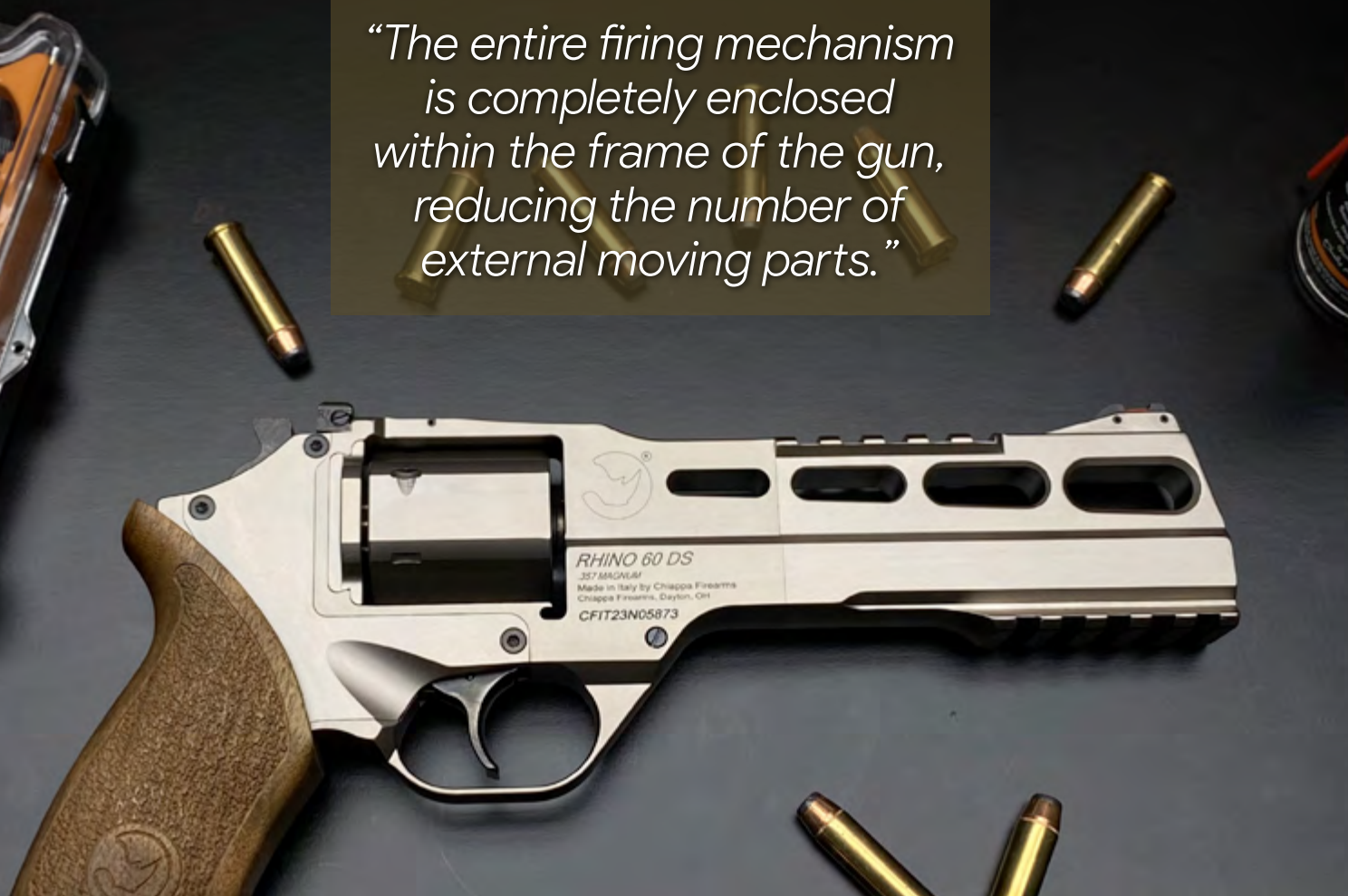
After arriving at the range and setting my target at the 10m mark, I found myself studying and admiring the traditional yet somewhat futuristic look of the barrel and frame of the Rhino. The stainless steel is softened by a subtle matte finish and complimented by a warm timber grip, which finishes a little shorter than you would expect but gives you enough purchase to feel confident behind the gun. The angle of the grip aligns your forearm perfectly to maximise recoil absorption and minimise muzzle rise. The most notable and ingenious design feature of the Chiappa Rhino is the fact that it fires from the bottom of the cylinder, making the six-inch barrel's bore axis incredibly low and drastically improves recoil control.

Being a traditional six-shot revolver, I loaded the first cylinder and decided to test myself in double action mode. Although the pull weight is heavy in double action, I found the trigger very smooth and didn't have as much travel as I expected. I was accompanied by other shooters at the range with their various Glocks and CZs chambered in 9mm, which filled the range with a consistent 'pop, pop, pop'. I thoroughly enjoyed breaking



The Chiappa Rhino fresh out of the premium plastic hard case with a moon clip loaded and ready to have some fun.

“The entire firing mechanism is completely enclosed within the frame of the gun, reducing the number of external moving parts.”



that monotony with the .357 Rhino’s commanding ‘BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!’ Something that will never fail to put a smile on my face.

The recoil of the relatively high-powered .357 Magnum rounds was so efficiently mitigated by the low bore axis and refined grip angle that not only did all six shots hit the target, but they also landed within the 9 and 10 score rings! Not bad for my first time shooting a revolver, especially one in this calibre.

I decided to fine tune my group size and fire the next string in single action mode by manually cocking the hammer back, which rotates the cylinder and sets the trigger ready to fire. This is when I discovered yet another innovative and unique design feature of the Rhino 60 DS. The external ‘hammer’ is in fact a snag-resistant cocking device that returns to position once the internal hammer is set. The entire firing mechanism is completely enclosed within the frame of the gun, reducing the number of external moving parts.

There is also a visible cocked status indicator beside the cocking lever, which is a nice touch.

Firing in single action mode, I was treated to a very light trigger pull with absolutely no trigger creep. As a result, my accuracy increased and I found five out of six shots landing in the centre ring, a testament to the crisp break of the Rhino’s trigger and the smooth operation of the internal firing mechanism. I found the bright fibre optic front and rear sights on the Rhino 60 DS an absolute joy to use at the range and the rear sight is very easily adjustable. Although the Rhino has a top rail for optics, I have no intention of adding a red dot, as it is simply not needed. I feel that mounting electronic sights on the Rhino would interfere with the traditional aesthetics of this modern engineering masterpiece. There is also a picatinny rail found below the barrel for mounting other accessories such as a light, bipod or a foregrip if you feel that way inclined.

The Chiappa Rhino weighs about 930 grams, which is very typical for a large revolver and feels right at home in the hand. For comparison, this is considerably lighter than most steel 1911 format handguns such as the CZ Shadow 2, which is 1.3kg.

I am a huge fan of the Chiappa Rhino’s low bore axis design, resulting in amazing recoil control and minimal muzzle rise. Aesthetically, the team at Chiappa have nailed it. I love the unusual, futuristic twist on this iconic platform that draws interest at the range and stands out from all my other firearms. I think the Chiappa Rhino 60 DS is great for those who are looking for maximum control and accuracy for competitions while also having a fun, unique looking range gun that turns heads and is a great conversation starter.

The provided moon clips fit seamlessly in the cylinder, and the fibre optic sights are bright and easy to use.



I was very happy with my score, as it was my first time shooting a revolver, especially one of this calibre.

Although somewhat expensive, retailing at around \$2299 (shop around for the best deal), the accuracy and recoil control is outstanding. Time will tell on the longevity of the internal firing mechanism and the ease of access to those components but that is the price you pay for such an innovative and well thought out design.

Would I buy it? Absolutely, without a doubt! This happy shooter gives it a solid 9/10. ©

Chiappa Rhino 60 DS specs

- Barrel Length:** 6 inches (152mm)
- Overall Weight:** 930g
- Cylinder Capacity:** 6 shots
- Frame Material:** 7075-T6 aluminium alloy with steel barrel and cylinder
- Sights:** Front and rear fibre optic sights with adjustable rear sights

POSTAL SHOOTS



Compete across the state without leaving your local club.

Competition By Sam Talbot

without the commute

To compete with the best, you often have to travel to a specific championship, and sometimes that is hundreds or thousands of kilometres away. Well, there's another way to compete and it doesn't even involve a long drive or a full weekend away.

Across a number of disciplines, SSAA Queensland offers postal shoots - a format that allows members to compete with practically anyone else without ever leaving their local range. Postal shoots are a popular way for shooters to get recognition and to test their skills against others from across the country.

Postal shoots are straightforward; it's right there in the name. Competitors shoot a designated course of fire under official discipline rules - usually as part of a local completion. Then targets are signed off by a Range Officer or authorised club official and submitted to the relevant coordinator for scoring and grading.

While flexible, postal shoots maintain the same standards of fairness and oversight as other sanctioned competitions. Courses of fire must be completed in accordance with official discipline rulebooks. Targets are verified and signed off before submission. Results are collated centrally and medals or awards are issued by grade and category where applicable. Also note, not all disciplines can run postal shoots due to the nature of their competition.

Postal shoots usually span several months if not a full year.



What's available?

Some ongoing and upcoming postal events:

- NRA Pistol Metallic Silhouette conducts four postal events annually, one each quarter.
- Big Game and Hunting Rifle run its postal shoot the entire length of the year.
- Combined Services just wrapped up their recent Postal Shoot in mid-April. Results can be found under their discipline page on the SSAA Queensland website.



See even more events at <https://saaqlld.org.au/events/>

Sometimes it's not the distance that makes it hard to get to a competition, but it's the timing. Weekends can often be the busiest time for people and can make it difficult to get to a competition. However, postal shoots usually span multiple months, if not the full year. As long as your score is shot in the designated time period, you can participate.

For regional and remote members in particular, postal shoots provide a genuine pathway into broader competition without the time and expense of travel. Postal shoots can also serve as an excellent stepping stone for newer competitors. Shooting under formal rules, having targets verified and submitting results introduces shooters to the competitive framework of their discipline and gives them an idea about the broader competition.

Whether you are an experienced competitor looking to stay sharp or a member considering your first formal event, a postal shoot may be the perfect way for you to become competitive.

Postal shoots are run across a number of SSAA disciplines throughout the year. To see any upcoming or ongoing postal competitions, head to saaqlld.org.au and look under Disciplines - Events. ☺

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SSAA SARINA



The new 200m firing line.

By Sam Talbot

Earlier this year, SSAA Sarina celebrated an important milestone with the official opening of its new 200-metre range, attended by SSAA Queensland President Jeff Ross and Vice President Shane McEwan.

The new facility, named the Merv Linthwaite 200 Metre Range, represents nearly eight years of planning and countless hours of volunteering by branch members. The new range complements the club's existing 50- and 100-metre facilities, allowing Sarina shooters to enjoy a wider variety of rifle disciplines and opening the door for larger competitions in the future.

The history of SSAA Sarina stretches back more than four decades. The branch held its inaugural meeting in February 1982 under the name Pioneer Valley Pistol Club and had a 50-metre range at Grasstree Beach where members enjoyed shooting for many years.

In 1999 the club lost access to that site when the land was sold for residential development. Members continued shooting at neighbouring clubs while searching for a new location to establish a permanent range.

That opportunity eventually arrived in 2001, when the Linthwaite family offered approximately 10 acres of land near Koumala for the development of a new shooting facility. With the support of members and volunteers, a new range was quickly developed and officially opened in October 2002 as SSAA Sarina Branch Inc.

The club has continued to grow steadily since then and today the branch has around 75 annual range pass holders and more than 300 affiliated SSAA members, including several women and a small but enthusiastic group of junior shooters.

Shooters take part in a wide variety of shooting disciplines, including pistol matches, rifle shooting, clay target events, single action shooting and rimfire metallic silhouette competitions. The branch is also looking to expand its activities further, with plans to introduce hunting rifle events in the future – especially now with the 200m range.

Beyond regular competition shoots, SSAA Sarina has a strong reputation for its community events. Since 1983, the branch has hosted the ANZAC Memorial Shield shoot - an annual competition that brings together shooters from Sarina and neighbouring clubs. The range also hosts charity fundraising shoots, with proceeds recently donated to the Cancer Council.

The Sarina facility itself includes a clubhouse with kitchen and training areas, shaded outdoor seating and camping space for visiting shooters. The range also operates off the grid on solar power, and the surrounding property has become home to a small wildlife sanctuary where wallabies frequently appear around the grounds.

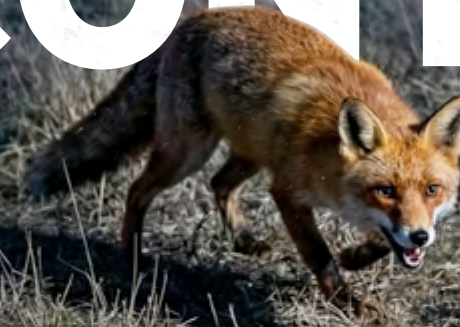
Looking ahead, the branch hopes to continue improving its facilities, with plans to eventually install electronic targets on the 200-metre range and upgrade amenities as funding becomes available.

SSAA Sarina is a monument to the dedication and hard work of its members. The opening of the Merv Linthwaite 200-metre range is another chapter in the story of a club built by volunteers and supported by a strong local shooting community. ©



Left to right - Tony Watson, Jeff Ross (Qld President), Ernie Basita (Sarina President), Ron Brown (Sarina Vic President), Robyn Brown (Sarina Secretary), Megan Boyle (Sarina Treasurer), Shane McEwan (VP Qld).

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ZeroTech 1-4x24 Prism Sight



The 1.4x24 Prism Sight is a quality piece of kit.

By Brad Allen

Finally, the long-awaited ZeroTech Thrive HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight has arrived for review from Tasco Sales Australia. Prism sights have been around for quite some time now, but only in ‘fixed’ magnification models, as till now, technology wasn’t able to accommodate a variable power option. However, the technical engineers at ZeroTech are leaders in their field and have engineered a way to overcome this issue with the result being the new Thrive HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight.

Many shooters and hunters believe that they need more power than the 4x maximum that this new sight offers, but I beg to differ. On far more occasions than I care to remember, I’ve witnessed hunting rifles that were horribly ‘over scoped’. I came from an era when the vast majority of hunters used fixed power scopes. It was common to see 2.5x, 3x or 4x scopes on rimfire rifles, 4x and 6x scopes on hunting rifles (depending on the range that game was expected to be intercepted) and 8x scopes on long range target and roo shooting rifles for spot lighting; and those ‘fixed’ scope powers worked just fine and still do.

The truth is, if you’re hunting for pigs or other game animals in thicker country, where shots could be taken from two to 200 yards, a 1-4 variable optic is possibly one of the most versatile choices for your rifle. At 1x, with a wide field of view, it’s easy to shoot fast with both eyes open. At the other end of the spectrum, 4x is generally enough for any longer shots. In reality, most game animals are taken at distances well under 200 yards. All of this in a small, well-balanced package. The advent of ‘prism sights’ and ‘red dot sights’ just



Battery compartment is situated behind the windage adjustment turret.

gives us more of a good thing, in a package that is usually smaller and lighter than the average scope of the same power.

Out of the box, just like all other ZeroTech products that I’ve reviewed, the ZeroTech Thrive HD 1-4x24 projects quality. It’s definitely a solid piece of kit, manufactured to military specs and would easily fulfill its duty on any AR type rifle for hunting, law enforcement, military or competition use. The mounting system of the Prism Sight is a quick-release picatinny type, well suited to AR and other tactical style rifles. The quick-release lever can be easily swapped out for a ‘spare’ in the box that reverses the direction that it closes and locks.

My only concern was the height of the mount, which on my Chimera .223 placed the sight at about the same height as a ‘high’ mounted scope which made it necessary for me to use a padded cheek rest extension to gain the necessary cheek weld to the stock. Clearly, the high mount is designed to complement AR type rifles which need a higher mounted optic than a standard bolt action type rifle. The Thrive HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight would be a perfect match for any tactical style rifle like the Wedgetail MPR, SCSA Taipan

“Out of the box, just like all other ZeroTech products that I’ve reviewed, the ZeroTech Thrive HD 1-4x24 projects quality.”

pump, and the Warwick WFA1&2 straight pull, especially those with adjustable height cheek rests.

The lenses of the prism sight were crisp and clear from edge to edge and the power change ring, which unlike most others is situated on the front objective of the optic, was smooth and easy to change. Not being a fan of first focal plane scopes, I’m happy to report that the Thrive HD 1-4 has the reticule situated in the second focal plane, meaning that the reticule remains the same size throughout the power range of the optic and all adjustments and measurements are in good old,



The author drawing a bead on a fallow doe for practice.

easy to understand, MOA and it has a very usable 3” of eye relief.

The reticule is ZeroTech’s tried and true RAP-R model, which has thicker side bars leading into a central semi-circle and dot, which also has a fine central cross with hash marks for windage and elevation hold over. The semi-circle part of the reticule naturally draws your eye to the centre of the reticule, which can be illuminated in either red or green for shooting in lower light conditions; however, it works just fine ‘in the black’ without it. The optic has 100 MOA of elevation travel and adjustments are in 0.5 MOA clicks and the turret caps incorporate an outer ‘ridge’ that mates with the turret slot to assist with adjustment. The optic is finished in a tough matt black coating.

After removing the scope from my .223 Chimera, it was an easy operation to fit the ZeroTech to the picatinny rail via its in-built picatinny rail mount. Once the throw lever is latched down, it is held in place by a very well-designed locking latch. For the type of rifle this optic was designed for, a locking latch of this type is a mandatory safety feature. The field of view of the optic is quite generous at 131.3ft or 43.7m at 100yds on 1x and 10.4m or 31.4ft on 4x. At 1x and with both eyes open, any feral encountered at close range would be in mortal danger! I eagerly awaited a trip to my rifle range to put the ZeroTech through its paces.

As expected, there were no surprises at the range. I used my old Tasco bore sighter to get the optic in the ‘Zero’ ballpark at 25yds before moving the target out to 100yds. On 4x, the RAP-R reticule performed exceptionally well, with the shooter’s eye instinctively being drawn to the centre semi-circle of the reticule to facilitate fast accurate shots. The ‘fine’ central X



ZeroTech's clamp mount attached and detached easily from the rifle.

inside the central semi-circle then facilitates more precise shooting. All in all, it's a well-balanced reticule for a multitude of practical uses.

I managed a quick morning hunt with the Chimera and ZeroTech on a mate's property not far from town. But as luck would have it, the only mob of hogs I saw were crossing the road into the neighbour's property as I arrived and two fallow does I put up on a walk along the creek both had fawns at foot, so no shot there either. I did, however, use the opportunity to 'draw a bead' on one of the does at 80yds with the ZeroTech on 4x, where the wide

field of view, clear lenses and RAP-R reticule excelled. Had she been a 'shooter', I would have easily had meat in the freezer.

The ZeroTech Thrive HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight is definitely an impressive and useful piece of kit. As with all ZeroTech optics, it has a lifetime warranty (Any Owner/Any Problem/Always Covered) and for a Chinese manufactured product, it is extremely well made and finished. The optic is easy to use (mount and adjust) and has quality lenses and coatings. My only criticism would be that for it to be used on traditional hunting rifles, a lower mounting system would be of immense benefit. I have since

been reliably informed that the HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight uses an 'ACOG mini-style mounting footprint', which is compatible with a wide variety of aftermarket mounts and risers of varying heights which may remedy that situation.

At the time of writing, several of my local gun shops were selling this optic for around \$800, which is good value for money, but check with your local dealers for their best prices. So, if you're in the market for a prism, red dot or LPVO sight, the ZeroTech Thrive HD 1-4x24 Prism Sight is well worth your consideration, as it could be just the optic you're looking for. 🎯



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THE PIG THAT ALMOST KILLED ME

By Brendan Jones

In Australian environmental and agricultural systems, destructive feral pigs are considered especially heinous. In North QLD the dedicated hunters that pursue these swine are members of an elite squad known as the Special Piggies Unit. These are their stories.

‘DUN-DUN!’



The pig that almost killed me. He fell victim to one last pause to look over his shoulder and a 123gr SP from the Ruger Ranch in 7.62x39mm.

Townsville - Friday, January 17

With the BOM forecasting a heatwave and potential for Townsville's hottest January day on record come Sunday, most sane humans were arranging to be anywhere but outside. We, on the other hand, were planning to hunt the easiest pigs to ever be shot, as they sheltered from the heat in shrinking muddy puddles of an almost dry creek. Besides, how much trouble can you get into on a quick hunt almost within Uber-eats delivery range? (Insert your favourite proverb about complacency here.)

Townsville - Sunday, January 19

Dave and I rendezvoused before driving to the property. It was definitely hot, but it's the humidity that's the issue in tropical North Queensland. Today had plenty of both. The term 'creek' up here refers to something made up of between 225 per cent and less than 0.1 per cent water, depending on timing. Two months into a rain-free wet season meant we'd be walking a dry creek bottom where water would've been metres over our heads previously and could be again in the coming weeks.

Undisclosed property - Sunday, January 19

1149: We dropped my car at the planned line and drove up to our starting point in Dave's. We aren't completely stupid (despite what this story might lead you to believe). We knew it was hot and avoiding backtracking was the cunning plan to cheat the heat. Bring in one giant yellow ball of burning gas in the sky, do your worst.

1200: High noon was a dramatic time to start our walk, and as we got the gear out of the Jimny, I was already thirsty. Pre-hydrating is a good idea when planning on working in the heat, something I had forgotten about. "Ahh well, it'll only take an hour to walk a couple of km" I thought.

1201: At the one-minute mark I was wondering if I had enough water. I didn't want to finish with oodles of excess weighing me down, but I may have misjudged it.



Dave inspecting a shady hidey-hole that might have produced some shelter from the heat on any other day.



Small pockets of rapidly drying water in the height of a summer heatwave formed the basis of the cunning plan.

1204: At this point I knew I hadn't brought enough water.

1210: I began to regret my choice of hat, which was linked to my choice of hearing protection. The winding and tight nature of the dry creek channel meant pigs might explode from cover and disappear seconds later, leaving precious time to don ear protection. As such, I had elected to wear electronic earmuffs the entire time. Additionally, by dialling them up to 11, I would be able to hear a pig snoring 7km away. The creek line was affording a lot less shade than I expected, and my cap worn to accommodate the earmuffs wasn't up to the task.

1216: It was at this point I was regretting my choice of pants. Usually, a loud advocate of shorts for hunting, in a moment of weakness I had chosen some long heavy trousers. I believed their out-of-print camo pattern would perfectly match the season and vegetation. Despite providing my bottom half with near invisibility, these pants were also beginning to cook me.

1302: At the one-hour mark I realised my timeframe estimation was a little off. Judging by Google maps, we were less than halfway. Problem was, this misestimation factored heavily in my water allocation. Also, the rising temperature meant we would still be out when it peaked. The twists and turns and the scorching loose sand was killing progress.

1347: The first signs of life were a pair of dogs we spooked. Obviously, not many animals were silly enough to be out in this heat. We decided to play a distress call to see if any others would pop out. Simply happy to stop, I felt cool relief wash over me like a wave as I tore off my earmuffs. Later Googling revealed that human ears share the same blood supply as the hypothalamus, the part of the brain that controls body temperature regulation. In hindsight, I should have just left the muffs off, but that's hindsight.



Another stagnant pool that looks very inviting when in the early stages of heat stroke.

1348: Thinking it would help me feel better, I ate a whole packet of beef jerky and half a bag of salted peanuts while we stood around listening to the dulcet tones of dying rabbits. With neither foods being known for their high moisture content, a wiser choice might have been watermelon and cucumber.

1359: Giving up on calling, I put my ear-warmers back on and we continued the trudge that was beginning to feel like a trek across the surface of the sun. Immediately, I drank the rest of my water rations, triggered no doubt by my dehydrated body trying to digest all the dry salty food. Upon later reflection, my body was likely diverting blood flow away from my skin, where it was attempting to cool itself, to my stomach and intestines that had kicked out of fasting into digestion. This, combined with the air temperature rapidly approaching its zenith, meant I was approaching spontaneous combustion.

Dante's Inferno - Sunday, January 19

1405: At this point I entered the hurt locker. I felt like I was glowing, radiating heat from my body. A headache was building and each step was an effort. Instead of being autonomous, picking a path around obstacles was like solving for pi to the 1000th decimal place. And each miscalculation and subsequent backtrack resulted in getting uncharacteristically agitated and angry.

1411: I began to loathe my backpack. Now all but empty, it was acting like a layer of insulative whale blubber. Combined with the earmuffs and long pants, I felt like I was dressed for the snow. I started to fantasize about chucking the bag Olympic hammer-throw style off into the scrub, never to be seen again.

1420: By this point I had long stopped caring if we saw a pig. As a matter of fact, I would have preferred we didn't see one. Finding a pig seemed like a major inconvenience that would only delay getting to my car - a car cached with an oasis-like esky, overflowing with icy Powerade and chilled sparking water infused with lime.

1422: Knowing I couldn't afford any additional physical exertion, the mantra 'Don't chase any pigs, don't chase any pigs' was playing on repeat in my head.

1423: "Pig!" yelled Dave from 20m in front. A boar had exploded from cover only to disappear up the bank before he could get a shot off. Instinctively, I chased. Turning right I performed a hill sprint up the steep bank through head-high weeds and prickly bush.



Evidence of a similar, albeit not so hot, creek walk from years gone by.

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THE PIG THAT ALMOST KILLED ME

On top of the bank, expecting to see the pig disappearing down a game trail, I was confronted with a gully. Two seconds later, I caught my first glimpse of the boar cresting the far side before disappearing. I barrelled down into the gully and then back up for a second hill sprint. At the top I found myself on the spine between the last gully and an even deeper one. The boar was again summiting the far side simultaneously. I braced off a sapling and hoped for the classic boar 'look back, as he peaked. He obliged, and I dropped him with a single 40m shot from the 7.62x39mm. Not taking any chances, I shot the already dead pig again for insurance and then a third time for spite.

????: It is at this point my memory of the remainder of the afternoon's events becomes hazy. Photos of the dead boar on my camera mean I must have walked down and up the last gully, before retuning back, but I have no recollection of any of it.

1426: Dave recalls a few minutes after hearing the shots I came crashing back down into the creek. At which point I excitedly retold the events in an unintelligible manner, complete with excited arm waving and slurred speech. I then allegedly cut off the legs of my pants (told you I felt strongly about shorts).

1427: It was at this point, from his experience in the ADF working in the Top End and the Middle East, Dave realised I was suffering a more serious case of the same heat stroke he was experiencing mild symptoms of. Coaxing me into

the small puddle of dirty water the pig had been wallowing in, Dave began figuring out the best way to describe to the triple zero operator how to find us, and what locked gates they would need to plough through.

1442: Having improved somewhat from my piggy-style wallowing, Dave decided to hold off pulling the emergency services ripcord until we got back to the nearby vehicle to reassess the situation.

1455: My memory starts to fade back in at my car, where frozen water bottles under my armpits, back of neck and groin helped bring my core temperature down closer to normal. Resting in the shade, iced up and rehydrating, I felt better with each passing second.



After the eventful trip, a bulk box of chemical ice packs was ordered off Amazon to aid in reducing anyone's core temperature if such a need should arise in future.

1512: Noticing my new shorts, I snapped a final picture for posterity's sake. We packed up and drove to collect Dave's car, three hours after we started, thus ending the tale of the pig that almost killed me. ☺



This little pig taught the author a valuable lesson.



In heat of the moment (pun of course intended) the author deemed it a good idea to ruin a pair of pants in a hope of cooling down. Fortunately, he also had the presence of mind to capture the aftermath on camera.



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FINDING STILLNESS IN MOONIE

My first deer hunt

By Suzie Stitt

I'm a new member of SSAA Queensland, and I was lucky enough to be invited on a hunting trip out to Moonie. I went in unsure of what to expect especially considering I don't even like baiting my own hook when fishing, but the weekend ended up being one of the most grounding and memorable experiences of my life.

I've always appreciated Australia's landscape but seeing it through the stillness of the bush was something entirely different. Cold dawn air, deer roaring in the distance and the complete removal from everyday noise gave me a sense of peace I didn't realise I'd been missing.

Although I'm new to hunting, rifles have always been part of my life. I grew up around guns, and my dad held the Australian BR30 record in the 1990s at the Bowen Shooting Range. Outside of hunting, life is full: I run, I renovate houses, I run an HR consulting company and I'm a mum of two boys who already enjoy hearing my stories and tasting the venison from the trip. They polished off the 'reindeer' meatballs and bolognese, and my parents turned the loins into a curry. The rest became breakfast patties, sausages and jerky, nothing went to waste.

What has really drawn me into hunting is the stillness. No phone reception, no emails, no notifications. Just the bush, the nighttime cold and the sounds of deer moving through scrub. Hunting strips life back to basics and, as someone who normally juggles business ownership, parenting and a fast-paced routine, the simplicity was refreshing.

I grew up in Bowen until the late 90s, then Caloundra, and now Brisbane. Between my business and raising two boys, spare time is rare. So, when the stars aligned with a free weekend, good weather and the right company, I took the opportunity.

"Hunting strips life back to basics..."

"As soon as we drove over a small rise, the paddock opened up."

Not long after arriving at the property, we saw two deer, which felt like a promising start. Ironically, they were the last deer we'd see for days. We set up a simple camp away from everything and settled into the peaceful rhythm of the bush. Without distractions, even the cold nights felt comforting. I'd packed proper meals before we left - homemade sausage 'McMuffins' for breakfast, slow-cooked pulled pork po-boys (New Orleans style) for lunch and dinner and a fully stocked afternoon platter.

Despite hours of walking, we saw nothing after that first sighting. There were literally no signs of life. By Saturday night, I wondered whether I'd scared everything off or whether my friend had exaggerated how many deer usually appeared. But the quiet forced me to appreciate the trip in a different way.

By Sunday morning we decided to give it one last effort. Hunting teaches patience, hope without expectation and, at 38, I'm still learning those lessons. Around 10am, my friend suggested checking a gate in a far back paddock. It felt like a long shot, but we went anyway before calling it a day. As soon as we drove over a small rise, the paddock opened up.

There were deer everywhere - dozens of them. The adrenaline hit instantly. For the first time, I understood the excitement experienced hunters talk about. When it came time to take my first shot, I wanted it to matter. Taking an animal's life is significant, and I had seen how seriously my friend approached it. I positioned the .243 Tikka through the sunroof of his



FINDING STILLNESS IN MOONIE



Walking the paddocks and enjoying the space to breathe.

300 Series, steadied myself and took the shot. Clean. Quick. Ethical. Exactly what I hoped for, and I was told it was a 10/10 shot!

As we walked the paddock afterwards, something small but meaningful happened. I spotted a perfectly heart-shaped leaf on the ground. It sounds simple, but in that moment, it felt like a quiet affirmation that I was exactly where I was meant to be. I took it home and my friend ended up having it framed as a reminder of peace, possibility and the memory of that weekend. I've even considered having the leaf tattooed, not as a tribute to the hunt itself, but to what the experience represented: peace, clarity, hope and stillness.



Bringing home the bacon... so to speak.

Later, my friend made me a necklace using the antler tip and the casing from my shot. I've had countless comments on it and just smile and say, "It's a .243 Winchester, baby."

That trip gave me more than venison. It gave me space to breathe, to slow down and to reconnect with a part of myself I hadn't realised I'd neglected. For someone whose life is normally loud, busy and fast-moving, that weekend in the bush was honest, grounding and unforgettable.

It was the beginning of a passion I intend to carry with me for many years to come. I am looking forward to my next trip coming up in January down in Emerald Hill! 🍷

A small, but meaningful find.



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REVIEW

ATN BlazeHunter 635LRF



The ATN BlazeHunter 635LRF comes packaged well, with a range of useful accessories, most notably a case and a spare battery.

By **Brendan Jones**

INTRODUCTION

ATN Corp (American Technology Network) is a U.S. company founded in 1995, with dual headquarters, in Doral, Florida and Sophia, Bulgaria (ATN Europe). ATN currently produces a range of digital smart optics, day/night digital scopes and thermal devices. Thermal offerings include monoculars, binoculars, scopes and clip-ons. The subject of this review is the 'BlazeHunter' thermal monocular series, specifically the '635LRF' model.

DESCRIPTION

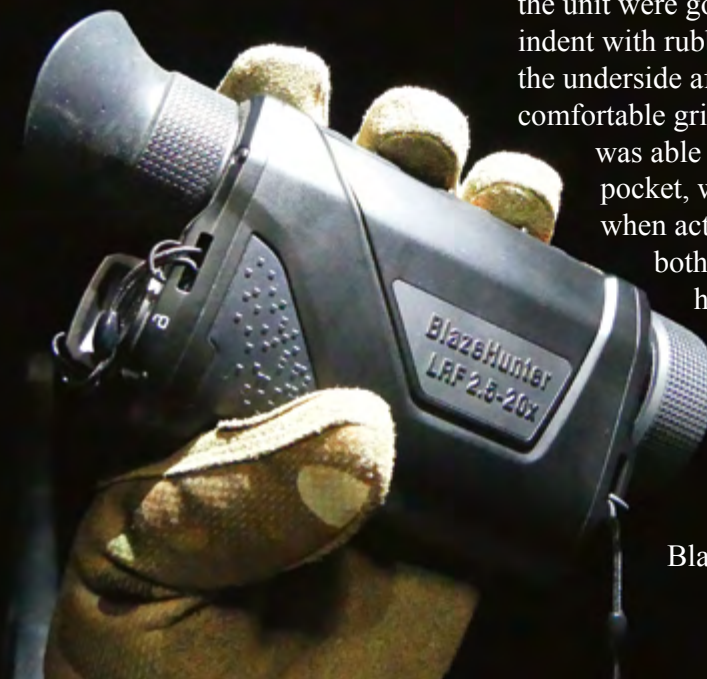
First impressions of the review item were very good, with the sturdy glossy cardboard box giving a premium feel. Opening the magnetic flap revealed a semi-ridged moulded case, two batteries, a dual charger, USB A to C cable, hand strap, long strap for the case, a soft bag, lens cloth and instruction booklet, additional to the thermal unit itself. The device also comes with a three-year warranty.

The BlazeHunter 635LRF adopts the classic rangefinder form-factor typical for thermal monoculars (the other common style being the torpedo/cigar

shape), with the magnesium alloy body measuring 170mm long, 55mm wide and 75mm tall. The test unit weighed 420g as fielded, with battery inserted, lens cap and hand strap attached. On the left-hand side a covered USB-C port allows for downloading video and images, facilitating firmware updates and charging. The top of the unit has four rubberised buttons for controlling the device. The rear of the unit has the eyepiece with soft rubber eye cup, a ring for focusing the 1440x1080 OLED display, and an o-ring sealed twist cap for inserting the 18650-style battery. Up front, a 35mm lens provides a 2.5x base magnification, with up to 20x digital, and is focused with a rubberised ring. Below the front lens, hidden behind a nondescript glossy black window, is the laser range finder emitter and receiver, sold as being 1000m capable. The underside has a ¼-20 threaded hole for mounting.

Housed behind the front lens is an uncooled 640x512 resolution, 12um pitch sensor with a NETD

The BlazeHunter adopts the rangefinder formfactor and fits comfortably in the hand.



rating of <18mK. The monocular has six colour profiles and a refresh rate of 50hz. It also possesses Wi-Fi capability to enable streaming up to four devices simultaneously, and 32gb of internal memory to facilitate the storage of video and still images.

TESTING

Field testing was undertaken across multiple trips with an excess of 45hrs uptime. The ergonomics of the unit were good, with a thumb indent with rubber stippling on the underside affording a secure, comfortable grip. The unit also was able to fit into a breast pocket, which was handy when activities required both hands free. The hand strap can be moved to the opposite side, and with the control buttons all on the top it means the BlazeHunter can be

used ambidextrously. Menu system was a standard layout and as one familiar with thermal products, I was able to navigate and utilise 90 per cent of the functions without consulting the product manual.

The 640 resolution, <18mK sensor provided a crisp, clear image. Adjustability of screen brightness as well as image brightness, contrast and sharpening level allowed for ample adjustment and fine tuning to achieve the best picture possible for different conditions. One of the night's testing saw us come across a small mob of pigs feeding among a herd of cattle mixed with wallabies. The pigs were instantly identified and distinguished from the other animals at about 300m from a moving vehicle on a dirt track. The benefit of a high-resolution thermal like this isn't so much how far away you can detect a heat signature (detection range classed as 2000 yards), but how quickly and confidently you can determine what it is.

The 2.5x base magnification was good, with much more than 2.5x in handhelds giving too narrow a field of view in my opinion. Using high amounts of digital zoom saw the typical image degradation, but the lower levels were usable due to the high resolution of the sensor. The unit has two scene modes: Standard and Vegetation. In North Queensland, in September to October I found the 'Vegetation' setting too sensitive with trees, termite mounds and bare ground holding too much heat in the first half of the night, but 'Standard' mode was fine.

Of the six colour palettes, black hot or white hot provided the highest level of detail, which is standard for thermal devices. I found green monochrome to be the best for my use style when handheld, and used that almost exclusively, with sepia a close second. Green produces less eye strain and fatigue than white or black-hot, but still a good level of detail. When remote mounted and streaming, white-hot was the go-to. Colour palettes are a matter of personal preference, and users should find something suitable with six to choose from.

The current trend of hidden LRF on handhelds is a win for consumers. Hunters no longer have to trade off the added bulk of an LRF module sticking out the side or top with the added functionality. The trade-off now is solely one of cost. The LRF was quick and responsive. A rough test



The reliable Wi-Fi streaming from the BlazeHunter meant mounting it to a Smartrest SpydaBot Sting H2O (from EagleEye Hunting Gear) on the roof of the vehicle was an effective night-hunting strategy.

"The pigs were instantly identified and distinguished from the other animals at about 300m from a moving vehicle on a dirt track."

using metal post distance markers at 100m intervals at the local water town supply showed it accurate out to 700m, at which point my ability to hit the posts became inconsistent. Aiming for a larger hard target got returns at the specified one-kilometre range, though small, soft furry targets will be less. One thing to note is with the positioning of the LRF under the lens, it is possible to block the rangefinder if you have your fingers or thumb on the lens focus ring, returning a confusing blank reading. This is more user error, but a point to remember.

The ATN Blaze App was used to connect via Wi-Fi to a range of Apple and Samsung devices during testing. While it worked on both iOS and Android, at the time of testing, initial pairing was a smoother experience on iOS, though I was informed ATN's software team are working on updates and bug fixes. A good point to remember for thermal users regardless of brand, check for firmware and app updates regularly. Sometimes a firmware update can improve image quality significantly, especially if you purchase a device very early in its release cycle. The claim of being able to stream to four devices simultaneously wasn't tested but did connect to two simultaneously with no issues.



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Streaming was stable, with three-hour continuous sessions without any dropouts being achieved on multiple occasions. This meant the BlazeHunter proved useful for remote vehicle mounting on a Lightforce spotlight handle and a Spydabot Sting H20 motorised remote controlled mount, with a live view on phones and tablets from inside the vehicle. While streaming, any video or images recorded save directly to the phone or tablet, adding a level of convenience without the need to download the images off the handheld later. This can also prove useful for sending real-time video updates to friends who are stuck on a date night instead of out hunting.

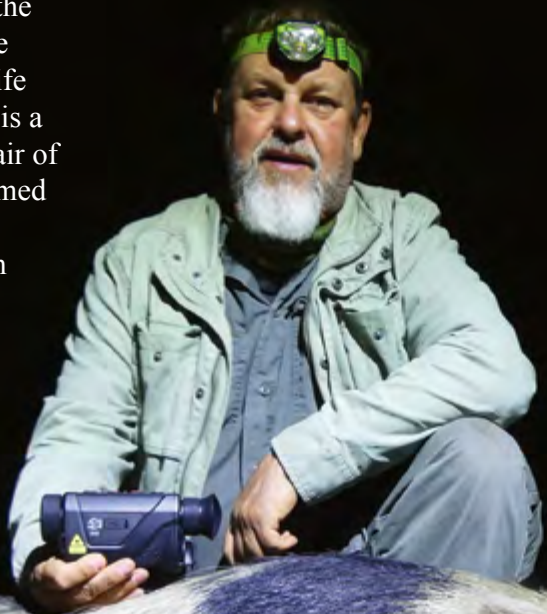
Battery life of the 18650-pattern battery was good. Some of the marketing around the device mentions 14 hours battery life but specifies elsewhere this is a combined number for the pair of provided batteries. The claimed seven hours per battery was achieved during testing with limited amounts of range finding and no streaming.



Spraying the unit with a hose while turned on didn't cause any problems thanks to its IP67 rating.

Of course, as the use of the rangefinder increases and Wi-Fi streaming is employed, battery life will suffer.

Only very light rain was experienced on one occasion during testing, which proved no match for the IP67 rating, and dust was of no issue. Five minutes of being sprayed with the garden hose while turned on also didn't phase the unit.



CONCLUSION AND AVAILABILITY

Overall, the ATN BlazeHunter 635LRF worked well, had good battery life and the picture produced by the 640-class sensor was crisp and clear, as should be expected with this resolution and NETD rating. The LRF functionality, reliable streaming and solid build quality make for a versatile product suitable for a range of use cases. The inclusion of a second battery, quality dual charger and a hard case provide a turnkey solution, ready to take to the field without the need to buy anything else.

The test unit was loaned for review by the Outpost in Rockhampton and is listed on their website for \$3,499 at the time of writing. Other models of BlazeHunter monocular with different sensor sizes, base magnifications and LRF presence/absence are also available. ©

A nice spotty boar taken during testing. The BlazeHunter was used to spot this pig feeding among some cattle and stalk into range.

VALE IAN THOMPSON

10 JANUARY 2026

Earlier this year, Ian Thompson, one of Australia's most knowledgeable ballistics experts, passed away. Ian wrote on 'basic ballistics' for 31 years in various magazines and even wrote a book, *Ballistic Allsorts*. He retired from writing in 2019, surmising he'd written more than 300 articles on the subject, predominantly edited by Jennifer Martens and Tim Bannister, now editors of *The Report*. Both Jennifer and Tim say Ian's writing taught them a great deal about a topic they knew little about when first starting out as editors of a firearms magazine.

The majority of Ian's working life was as a senior consultant with the small arms testing division at the Defence Research establishment in Salisbury, South Australia. He spent three years in Bangkok with the Military Research and Defence Centre and he was a firearms lecturer for 25 years, teaching about licensing and gun safety at TAFE, youth clubs and scouts. The shooting community is certainly poorer without him.

Ian is survived by his wife April and children Ann, Peter and Wendy. He was 93 years old. We offer our condolences to his family and friends. ©



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Getting down and dirty with

CAN-AM'S 2026 OFFROAD TRIO

By Peter Jackson

When it comes to traversing Australia's rugged backcountry - whether it's hauling gear to a distant firing point, sneaking quietly through thick scrub on a sunrise stalk or ripping a trail just for the pure thrill of it - the right side-by-side can make all the difference.

In 2026, Can-Am has sharpened its focus on performance, durability and user-friendly engineering with three standout contenders: the work-centric *Defender*, the high-performance *Maverick* and the versatile *Commander*. Each model wears the Can-Am badge with a clear purpose - but also with the same

rugged DNA that's earned this brand a solid foothold with Australians who live life off the beaten track.

Across the next few pages, we'll dive deep into price, dependability and how these machines handle the bush - particularly how quietly they move when stealth matters, and how confidently they tackle terrain that would leave lesser machines begging for mercy. Whether you're chasing game, exploring your patch of paradise or simply needing a reliable partner for the long haul, this lineup has something worth your attention.

Buckle up; it's time to see what each of the 2026 Can-Am models really brings to the dirt.



Can-Am Maverick 2026.

2026 CAN-AM DEFENDER

The Hardworking Bush Hauler

Price: The Defender lineup kicks off at around \$24,999 RRP for the base utility model, with the all-new HD11 variants starting at roughly \$32,399 and climbing to \$56,699 for fully equipped six-seat Lone Star cab versions.

Dependability: Built on decades of Rotax engine and chassis engineering, the 2026 Defender range is designed to be a rugged utility workhorse that lasts. Can-Am reports extensive testing and a reworked platform intended for demanding farm, hunting and property-work duties. The heavy-duty frame, selectable gear modes and excellent tow/payload capacities mean fewer breakdowns deep in the scrub.

Quietness in the Bush: In an era where UTV noise and vibration are often overlooked, the 2026 Defender makes a noteworthy leap. Revisions to the intake, driveline and exhaust - combined with improved fan controls - noticeably reduce cabin noise and vibration. Test riders have noted a genuinely quieter, more comfortable environment on long rides, which is a boon when you're tracking game or quietly repositioning on country.

Verdict: For shooters and work-minded outdoors-folk who want something that will spend more time earning its keep than lying in the sheds, the Defender strikes one of the best balance sheets between price, durability and daily comfort on the rough stuff.

Rating: ★★★★★☆



2026 Defender.

2026 CAN-AM MAVERICK

The High-Performance Trail Dominator

Price: The sport-oriented Maverick X3 starts around \$48,399 for the base model, with fully-spec MAX X RS variants around \$51,999+ in Australia.

Dependability: The Maverick profile is less about slow, dependable drudgery and more about *relentless off-road capability*. Turbocharged Rotax engines, advanced CVT and Smart-Lok differentials are proven hardware across years of competition and utility use - and the Maverick's engineering pedigree shows. Regular service and high-quality components mean fewer surprises if maintained properly. But - it's a performance SxS first. If your idea of reliability is 'will get me deep into the ranges quickly and back without drama,' the Maverick delivers. If you want a quiet, low-stress workhorse, it's a different kettle of fish.

Quietness in the Bush: At higher RPM and with its turbocharged profile, the Maverick is *not* the quietest on the trail. Expect a throaty mechanical note compared to the Defender's smoother, subdued Rotax tones - particularly on high-speed trail sections or dunes. It is refined for what it does, just louder than the utility-centric models.

Ride Feel: Independent long-travel suspension, wide stance and torque-heavy engines make the Maverick a joy on rough terrain - it floats over 'whoops that'd jar lesser rigs'. That said, at slower bushwalking speeds when stealth is desired, the sport-tuned setup still feels confident but not as hushed as a dedicated utility.

Verdict: Pure fun. Not pure stealth. For shooters and adventurers who want *speed, capability* and exhilarating terrain conquest - *and* are willing to pay a premium - the Maverick is hard to beat.

Rating: ★★★★★☆

MAVERICK R model.



2026 CAN-AM COMMANDER

The Versatile Middle Ground

Price: The Commander starts at about \$28,799 for the DPS 700, with mid-range and high-spec MAX and XT variants nudging into the \$40k+ band.

Dependability: Think of the Commander as the jack-of-all-trails' sibling. Built around dependable Rotax engines and dynamic power steering, it's less extreme than a Maverick but more agile than the average work UTV. Its towing and load capacity also stack up well for property duties or weekend hunts.

Like all Can-Am SxS platforms, the Commander carries a three-year unlimited-km powertrain warranty, which gives buyers confidence in long-term use.

Quietness in the Bush:

The Commander's quieter nature slots it between its siblings - better than a Maverick under normal trail use, but not as hushed as the Defender's new refinements. When navigating pepper trees and fire trails well away from houses and campers, its engine and driveline noise are well-controlled without needing ear defenders.

Versatility: Its best trick is balancing play and work. Want to haul gear one day, explore winding bush tracks the next? The Commander does both without feeling over- or under-powered.

Verdict: For shooters and outdoor enthusiasts who want *one machine that does nearly everything* without splashing into high sport performance pricing, the Commander is a sensible choice.

Rating: ★★★★★



Commander Can-Am 2026.



Model	Best For	Starting Price (AUD)	Quiet in the Bush	Dependability
Defender	Work, hauling, hunting access	~\$24.9k - \$56.6k	★★★★☆	★★★★★
Maverick	Performance trail riding	~\$48.4k - \$52k+	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Commander	All-rounder utility + trail	~\$28.8k - \$40k+	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

The Can-Am Defender side-by-side (UTV): The Lights are on, and everyone is getting home with the new Can-Am models.



FINAL THOUGHTS FOR THE OUTDOOR SHOOTER

Summary: If you want something that *gets into country quietly and keeps going day after day*, the 2026 Defender is the pick for most shooters and outdoor workers. The Commander is the great all-rounder for mixed use, and the Maverick shines when *thrills and performance* are part of the mission.

Many thanks to Can-Am Dealer Nik Page at FNQ Hub in Atherton, North Queensland for his assistance with the images. ©

Latest at Queensland SHOOTERS SUPPLIES

The system costs about \$300. It could be your first, complementary or last line of defence.



The app lets you know when the sensor has picked something up.

There's always something new on the shelves at SSAA Queensland's one-stop shop, Queensland Shooter Supplies. Plus, SSAA members get 10% off!

Among the latest arrivals is the Simtek StealthAlert – an off-grid and portable alarm system with a lithium battery that can last up to a year. The system is about the size of a softball and can be used in gun safes at home or on a vehicle, caravans, boats or anywhere else you need the extra protection.

Also just in, is the Kogan hat, ideal for combining sun protection with hearing protection – great for shooting, tradesmen and long days outside. The simple flaps on either side of the hat means you get broad-brim protection while still being able to wear over-ear earmuffs or headphones.

Also, thermal technology continues to draw plenty of interest. With both ThermNight and ThermTec units available, the team is seeing more shooters step into the space as prices become increasingly accessible. Multi-spectral options are now available from around the \$2,000 mark, opening the door for more hunters to take advantage of the technology.

On the firearms front, reliable favourites remain in demand. Rifles from Lithgow Arms and Tikka continue to move, with the LA102 proving especially popular among local shooters.

If you need advice with hunting or any other shooting activities, go see Neil, Jeremy and Chris at Queensland Shooter Supplies. ©



The LA102 from Lithgow is proving to be a longstanding favourite.

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By Ben Allen

In my work as a wildlife biologist, I spend a lot of time studying dingo behaviour and ecology. I am constantly amazed by dingoes' keen senses, skills and abilities. Sneaking up on them is no easy task.

On one occasion in the Sturt Stony Desert, on a livestock property, we had trapped several dingoes and fitted them with GPS tracking collars. After many months, the automatic collar release mechanism failed, yet we were still required to retrieve the valuable collars – a task much easier said than done.

Re-trapping a dingo a second time is a very tall ask and the livestock-producing landholder also preferred we remove the dingo. So, the best tool for this job became the trusty .22-250, which is fast, flat and reliable at achieving an instantly humane outcome. But no firearm in the world could overcome the issues I faced.

My biggest problem was getting past the dingoes' eyes, ears and noses. Top-predators like dingoes don't make it to the pinnacle of the food chain because their senses are dull; they get there because their senses are top notch.

Challenge accepted.

Dingoes' vision is what we might call near-sighted and they're very poor at distinguishing colour. But



A bearded dragon soaking in the desert sun.

SNEAKING UP ON A DINGO

In Queensland dingoes are protected in national parks, such as K'gari, but classified as a 'restricted invasive animal' outside of them.

they can see exceptionally well in the dark and they are far more sensitive to movement than us – shift or adjust your position while they're looking at you, and you're cooked.

Dingoes' hearing is incredible. They can hear much quieter noises than most animals, from further away and with pinpoint locational accuracy. Forget sneezing or coughing, just stepping on some dry grass or moving the gravel under your boot is more than enough to raise the alarm.

Their eyesight and hearing are problems enough, but a dingo's nose is by far the biggest obstacle. Dogs can easily smell into the parts-per-billion, and some studies have them smelling into the parts-per-trillion. To put this into perspective, imagine lining up one trillion grains of sand in a row,

touching just one of them and then watching the dog correctly select the one grain you touched. Hiding from a dingo's nose is not even something Tom Cruise and his 'Mission Impossible' team could pull off.

To successfully sneak up on a collared dingo, I needed desert camouflage clothing, the wind and sun in my favour, and I needed a lot of time. I also needed a healthy dose of luck.

The collared dingo was sleeping out in the middle of a stony gibber flat and approaching unseen was out of the question. Leaving the car by a fence post in the care of a bearded dragon, I had a lot of ground to cross with no cover whatsoever, and I thought there was just no way I could ever get close enough.

But the wind was in my face, and

“My biggest problem was getting past the dingoes' eyes, ears and noses.”

Two local dingoes who saw me long before I saw them.



the setting sun was at my back, so with a nod to Lady Luck I started to move in.

Wild dingoes are restless sleepers, especially ones that have been trapped before, so when his head was down, I moved and when it was up, I stopped. I closed the gap to about 200m, evidently too fast or noisy, and he raised his head and looked directly at me. I paused, motionless, as if I was one of Dr Who's 'weeping angels', waiting for the dingo to look away or close his eyes.

After staring directly at each other for a time, he put his head back down. The desert camo just paid for itself.

I digress for a moment to highlight that even though I am well within range, a single, humane headshot requires hitting a target the size of a golf ball, on a sleeping



The Sturt Stony Desert didn't offer any help with cover during my stalk.

dingo that is laying very flat among the obstructing stones, and wearing an expensive collar containing precious data only centimeters from where I am aiming. Getting this wrong is either going to waste the data or cause the dingo to suffer, and I don't want either of those things.

I continued, and the same thing happened two or three more times as I inched closer and closer. I locked eyes with the dingo several times, but he didn't recognise me.

SNEAKING UP ON A DINGO

I recall thinking how awesome it was to be experiencing first-hand just how effective camouflage is in a raw one-on-one contest of the senses. I imagined to myself that the dingo was thinking 'I could

have sworn that bush was further away when I last saw it'.

Eventually, I took a knee, sat back on my foot, raised the rifle and then waited, about 50 yards away. I slowly scanned the dingo through the scope and trained the crosshairs on my target zone, finger on the trigger. But the dingo had laid with his belly facing me and his head

pointing away. His shoulder and the collar under his chin were directly in my firing line.

For what felt like a lifetime, I sat there waiting for any bit of movement that would give me a clear shot. He looked up again, and I pulled the trigger.

Satisfied in a job well done without data loss or suffering for the dingo, I took a moment to appreciate that I had spent over an hour just meters away in full view of Australia's most skilled hunter and bested him. I learned that good data doesn't come easy, that patience is a virtue, and that everything needs to be in your favour if you're to have any hope of sneaking up on a dingo.

I also learned how helpful it would have been to mark the car's position on a GPS before I wandered off into the Sturt Stony Desert. 📍

WFSA

Connecting Queensland to the World

(What is the WFSA?)



S SAA Queensland recently became a member of the World Forum on Shooting Activities (WFSA), strengthening our international connections and creating opportunities to share information with organisations around the world facing many of the same challenges as shooting sports in Australia do.

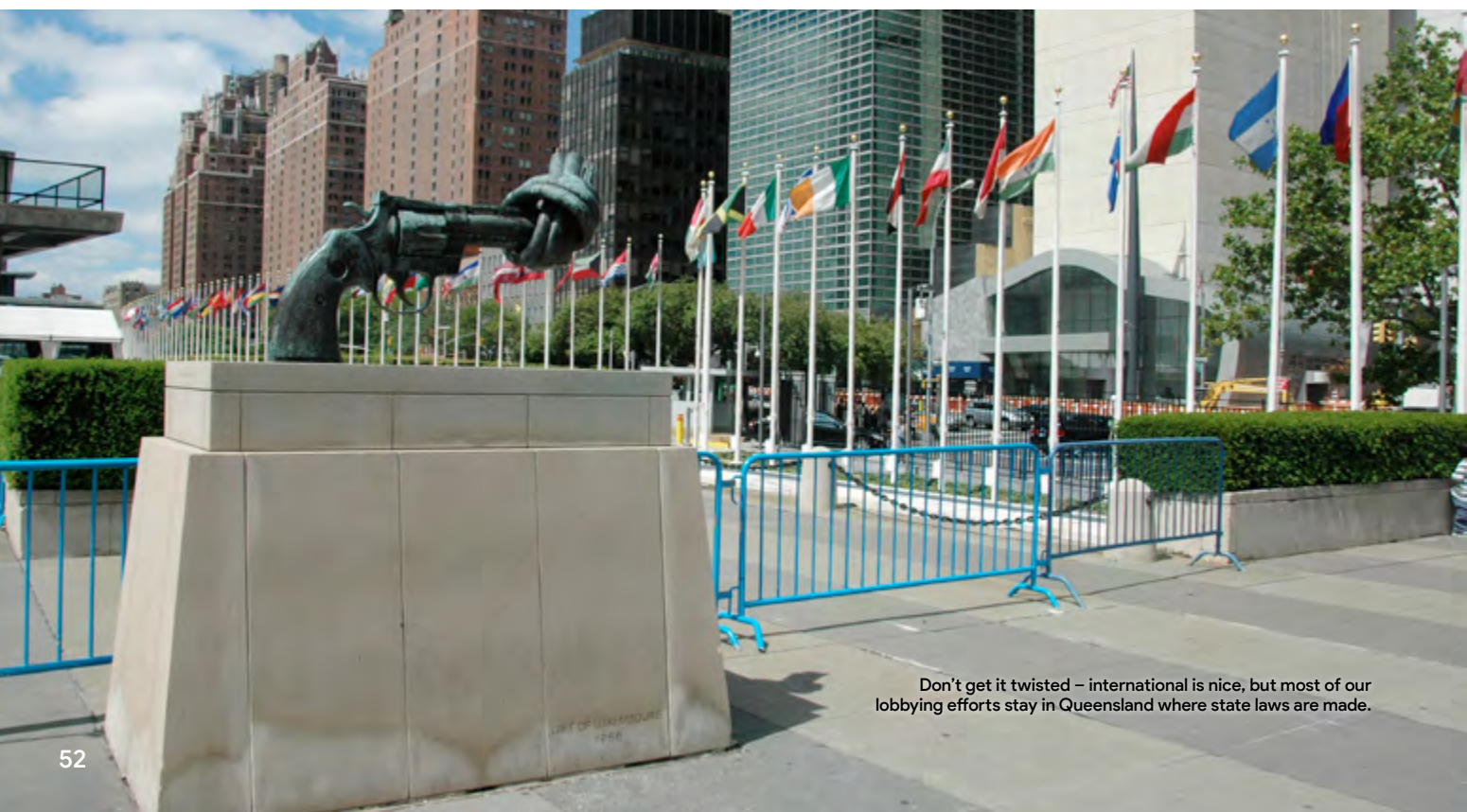
International competitions and sending our athletes overseas are parts of the puzzle, but it's also important for the shooting sports to maintain international connections and advocacy work. The WFSA plays a critical role in bringing together organisations from across the globe to discuss the issues affecting shooters, hunters and firearms owners.

The WFSA was established in 1997 and is a non-government organisation with official consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This means it can lobby and work at the UN whether others like it or not. The organisation

has spoken at all five of the UN's Small Arms Conferences. All this allows the WFSA to participate in many discussions at an international level and provide expertise on matters relating to civilian firearms ownership, hunting, conservation and the shooting sports.

Still today, the WFSA represents a broad coalition of organisations from across the world. Members include international sporting federations, conservation groups, firearms industry bodies and national shooting organisations. Through this network, the forum provides a platform for sharing information, coordinating responses to global policy developments and ensuring the voices of shooters are heard in international discussions in a variety of ways.

The work of the forum mostly focuses on areas such as environmental regulation, international trade, lead ammunition policy, wildlife conservation and firearms legislation. While many of these issues are debated



Don't get it twisted – international is nice, but most of our lobbying efforts stay in Queensland where state laws are made.



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domestically within individual countries, they are increasingly influenced by international frameworks and agreements. For example, what happens in other Commonwealth countries usually has an impact on how lawmakers here think and act. By participating in these discussions, we gain insight into what the future might hold, which in turn helps us ensure that decisions affecting shooters are informed by practical experience and commonsense.

SSAA Queensland's connection to the WFSA is not new. Long-time contributors to the shooting sports Bob Green and Tim Bannister have both been involved with the organisation for many years and have helped build relationships between Australian shooters and the international community. They have both even been to and advocated at the United Nations, helping to prevent some baffling restrictions and poor policy, such as the proposed individual marking of cartridges or banning hunting rifles.

SSAA Queensland and its national and now international arm, the Australian Shooters Alliance, will use its new membership to stay informed about developments in other countries to help shooters here at home. For example, the use of lead continues to be a hot topic in England and so it wouldn't be a surprise to us if that became a topic here as well, eventually. Through our WFSA connections we will have the advantage of what our peers have researched and already figured out in their respective territories.

For SSAA Queensland, participation in the WFSA is another way of ensuring that the shooting sports remain well represented, both domestically and internationally. By building strong relationships with organisations across the globe, we can better understand emerging issues, contribute to informed discussions and help safeguard the future of the shooting sports. 🌐



WFSA sends representatives to the United Nations.



Australia signed the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013 and meetings continue at the UN to add amendments.

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FUEL CRISIS

By Ted Springs

At the time of writing, the ongoing fuel crisis is biting for shooters across Queensland. With many shooters and hunters based in regional areas, and most activities requiring travel, rising fuel costs and uncertainty around supply are beginning to impact participation.

Some state championships have already been postponed, particularly those scheduled at more remote branches. If the situation continues, SSAA Queensland may need to think strategically about where major events are held. One option is to favour more central locations to make travel easier for the greatest number of competitors and reduce the risk of fuel shortages.

Hunters are also feeling the effects. Members have reported cutting back on trips or staying closer to home, with some deciding it is simply not worth the risk or cost to travel long distances.

“People are having to decide which shoots they really want to do and maybe skip some others. Even though Queenslanders are used to long distances, some people are definitely feeling it more, especially those up north,” said SSAA Queensland General Manager Bob Green.

While rising prices are a factor, fuel security is emerging as just as much of a concern.

“A few people have dropped out of shoots, not because of the cost, but it was the fuel security. People aren't sure if they will be able to fill up again when they go to a regional

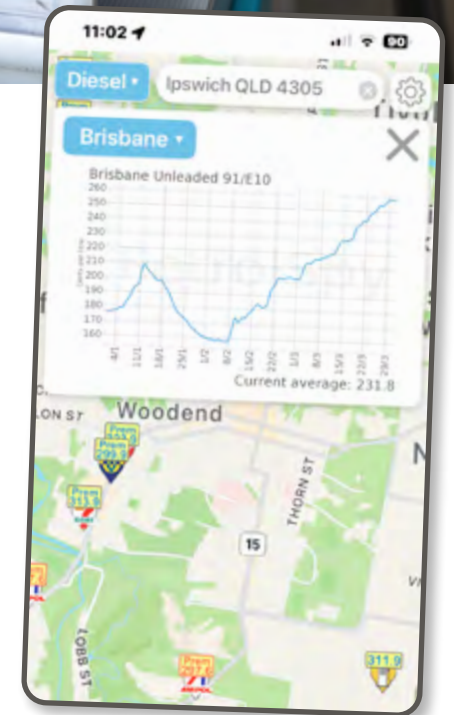
HITS SHOOTERS



place,” said Mick Norris, SSAA Queensland Senior Vice President (Northern Region Development). “The price is a concern, but the fuel security is a very serious issue.”

One example can be seen with this year's Queensland State Championships for Single Action Shooting, which will be held at Gladstone. While fuel availability is less of a concern in a larger regional centre, many competitors will still be travelling more than 1,000 kilometres to attend. With fuel prices roughly double what they were just a few months ago, the cost of making that trip has increased significantly.

The impact is also being felt at club level. Some branches are reporting a drop in canteen sales, as shooters look to save money by bringing their own food rather than buying meals on site.



If the current conditions continue, both clubs and competitors may need to adapt. That could mean fewer trips, more carefully chosen events, or a shift towards hosting major competitions in locations that are easier to access. 🌐

Rut Ready Workshop & Film Screening with Twin Elements

By Karoline Wasiak

Venture Hunting & Outdoors recently hosted its highly anticipated 'Rut Ready' night in partnership with Twin Elements. The event was designed to educate, inspire and prepare hunters for the upcoming deer rut seasons. Held at Venture's Springwood megastore, the evening drew a packed crowd of around 170 passionate hunters, highlighting both the popularity of the rut period and the strong community spirit within Australia's hunting scene.

The night featured James and Ayden Doumts, the twin brothers behind Twin Elements, who are not only acclaimed bowhunters and filmmakers but also qualified veterinarians. Their unique combination of field experience and scientific knowledge set the tone for a presentation that was both practical and deeply informative.

A huge thank you goes to Dustyn Oloman, the in-store bow hunting expert from Venture Hunting & Outdoors for hosting the event and sharing his own intel, advice and experiences with the captivated crowd.

The night began with the premiere screening of a cinematic highlight film showcasing rut hunts from the previous season. The 20-minute

Ayden Doumts, one half of the Twin Elements boys.

production immersed attendees in the intensity of the roar, featuring dramatic encounters with red stags and fallow bucks during peak breeding activity. For many, the footage served as both motivation and a reminder of what

makes the rut such a thrilling time to be in the bush.

Following the film, the evening transitioned into an in-depth live Q&A session, widely regarded as the highlight of the event. Attendees had the opportunity to ask detailed questions covering everything from scouting strategies and property access to calling techniques and hunting mature animals. The discussion aimed to 'cut through the noise' and deliver actionable advice hunters could apply immediately in the coming season.

One of the most significant takeaways centred on shot placement for red deer: specifically, the target triangle of the humerus, scapular and upper leg bone. Drawing on their veterinary background, the boys from Twin Elements explained that many hunters mistakenly aim too far back behind the front leg, risking liver shots rather than quick, ethical kills. Instead, they recommended aiming further forward to target the heart, which sits protected behind the humerus. This anatomical insight challenged common assumptions and reinforced the importance of understanding the specific physiology of Australian game species.

Gear selection was another key topic. James, Ayden and Dustyn discussed the benefits of heavy arrow setups and higher draw weights for penetrating bone on large stags, sharing the exact specifications used during their filmed hunts. This provided attendees with a realistic benchmark for equipment capable of handling big-game bowhunting conditions.

The night proved to be very popular. Be sure to sign up to Venture Hunting & Outdoors' newsletter so you don't miss out on their next great event.



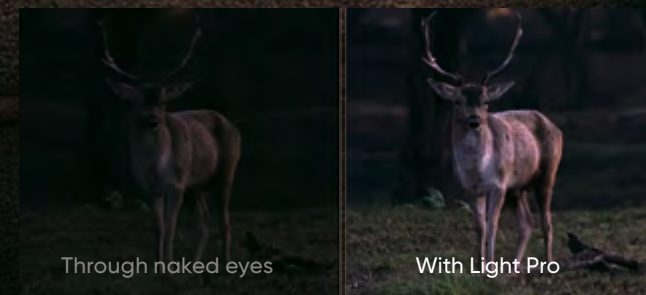
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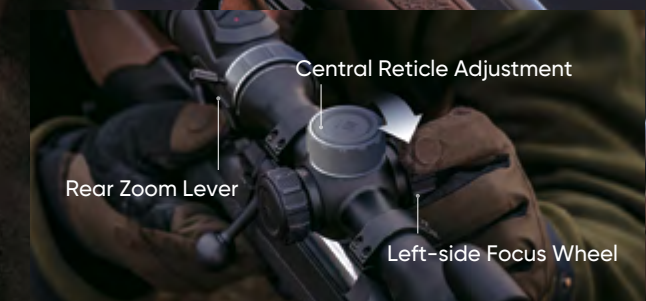
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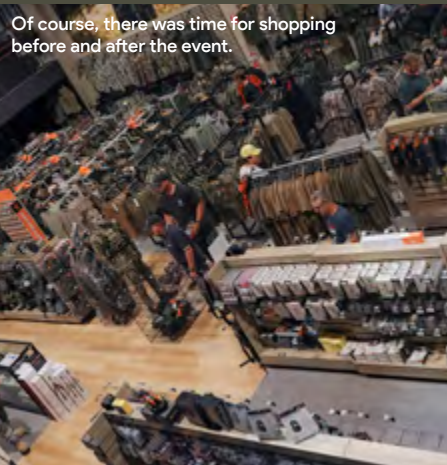
VENTURE HUNTING

Beyond technical knowledge, the event emphasised preparation, ethics and respect for the animals pursued. Hunters left not only with practical tactics for the rut such as calling strategies, scouting methods and understanding behavioural phases, but also with renewed enthusiasm for the season ahead.

In summary, the night covered

- Why shot placement on Australian deer is often misunderstood.
- Where the heart actually sits (and why 'behind the crease' can be too far back).
- Arrow weight, broadheads and taking quartering shots.
- How to get permission on private property (and why effort matters).
- Roars vs hind calls and how to read the situation.
- How rut timing changes by region, density, feed and temperature.
- When to move, when to stay quiet and why mid-morning can be 'kill time'.
- The ethics and use of thermals.
- Elk vs red deer: similarities and differences.
- Meat care, aging and whether rut animals really taste different.

Of course, there was time for shopping before and after the event.



Ultimately, the Rut Ready night exemplified Venture Hunting & Outdoors' commitment to building a knowledgeable hunting community rather than simply retailing gear. By combining education, entertainment and direct interaction with experienced hunters, the event delivered genuine value to everyone who came along. As the roar approaches, those who attended are now better equipped mentally, technically and emotionally to make the most of one of the most exciting periods on the Australian hunting calendar.

If the turnout and feedback are any indication, Rut Ready has firmly established itself as a must-attend preseason event for serious deer hunters.

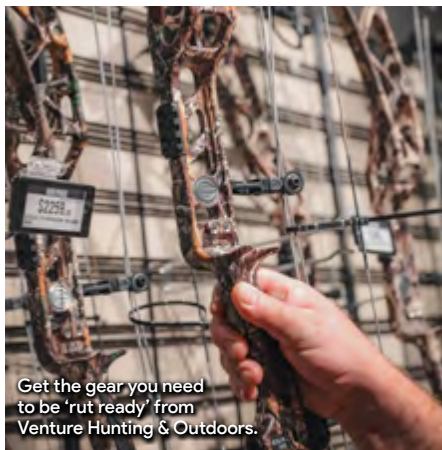
Follow the boys from Twin Elements on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to see their adventures, and be sure to sign up to the newsletters that Venture Hunting & Outdoors send out so that you don't miss the next event.

To view footage from the night, specifically the Q&A, head over to the Venture Hunting & Outdoors YouTube channel: @VentureHuntingandOutdoors



The boys from Twin Elements sharing their 'rut roar' knowledge to the crowd.

"Beyond technical knowledge, the event emphasised preparation, ethics and respect for the animals pursued."



Get the gear you need to be 'rut ready' from Venture Hunting & Outdoors.

REVIEW

NATECHRONY CHRONOGRAPH

An essential piece of kit for any air gunner

By Jon McCarthy, SSAA Queensland Air Rifle Chairman

Test conducted by:

Jared McCarthy - Current Australian Field Target team member and former national FT champion

Chris Dale - Multiple Field Target Australian champion and former Australian team member

The Report was recently given the NateChrony chronograph to review, and I was pleased to be able to assist the team in testing this unit.

Firstly, I met Nate in 2024 and was truly impressed by his knowledge and the development of his product. As he built this chronograph from the ground up, he truly knows everything there is to know about it, which is very important when it comes to product back up.

First things first; everything you need comes in the box, as long as you order the correct adaptor(s) you need. Nate supplied all his adapters with the review units. As I chose to do the review at the National Air Field Target (FT) Championships, there were at least 50 air guns on site and, with the numerous adaptors, there wasn't a rifle I couldn't fit the NateChrony to. The other reason I chose to do review at the Nationals was that I had access to the members of the Australian FT team, who could assist in evaluation. FT uses low-

power air guns, so projectile speed is very important.

Once fitted to the air rifle, we fired about 30 shots, together with two other radar style chronographs. The results spoke for themselves; basically, every shot read the same. There were no issues whatsoever. I would recommend using a tablet with this product, as reading the results on a phone is a little difficult due to size. But that could just be me getting old.

We then tested the new Steady Shot feature, which keeps track of how steady you are holding the gun. This works extremely well and definitely helps you work out which style of hold/stance works best for you.

The software is very easy to use and keeps track of your shots and 'hold over' extremely well. Once set up, its light, straightforward and overall a very handy addition to any air gunner's toolbox.

During the testing, I did speak to one person who had purchased a NateChrony from Nate and could not get it to work. Once I showed him how to set it up, it was all good, though I must admit I had to contact Nate and ask him couple of questions. Again, probably just me and the other testers getting too old. I do think written instructions would help. I also think a rechargeable internal battery would make the unit a lot more user friendly, if possible.

The NateChrony is, in general, a great product at a great price. If you take your air gunning seriously, this product is a must.



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PROs

- Great price between \$205 - \$220
- Easy to fit to any air gun
- Very accurate
- Steady Shot feature is very handy, especially for new shooters
- Super portable.

CONs

- Needs to be hooked up to a power supply
- The cable it comes with is too short
- Set up is little hard to work out; written instructions would be great.

Specifications:

- **Accuracy:** Calibrated to be within 1fps of actual pellet speed at 1,000fps
- **Resolution:** <0.1fps shot to shot at 1,000fps
- Air powered guns only
- CO2 power can cause vapour and is not recommended
- **Maximum calibre:** ~45-50 cal (depending on power)
- **Maximum power:** 150 fpe

Included with the NateChrony Chronograph:

- **Premium USB Cable:** A quality braided USB-C to USB-A/C cable, with a 90degree connector
- **The Software:** Either the standard software or the Airsoft version of software
- **Barrel Adapters:** Each NateChrony comes with two 1/2 UNF threaded barrel adapters to attach it to your rifle; you can also purchase Variable Barrel Adapters in four different sizes: 25-8mm, 35-15mm, 45-15mm, 55-18mm (cost between \$15-20 AUD)
- **Safety Carabiner:** Allows you to secure the chrony for added safety or convenience
- **Soft Case:** A carrying pouch to put it in
- **Test Pellet:** A plastic pellet for the drop test
- **Phillips Driver:** A Phillips driver for the adapter grub screw

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Deporte

HOW SSAA QUEENSLAND PROTECTS YOU



By Sam Talbot

Some members have asked how the SSAA Queensland Deporte Mutual Liability Protection and Firearms Protection work and why they were created. Here's what you need to know.

Unlike traditional insurance companies, which are designed to generate profits for shareholders, Deporte Mutual operates for the benefit of its members. Any surplus funds are reinvested back into improving risk management and strengthening protection for the shooting community.

The mutual itself is run day-to-day by a management team that coordinates between the fund, claim managers, risk surveyors and reinsurers. Oversight is provided by a board that includes representatives from Steadfast ART PTY Limited and SSAA Queensland, helping strong governance and clear communication between all parties involved.

Out in the bush or on the range, with Deporte Mutual, you get the protect you need.

Deporte Mutual is structured as a Discretionary Mutual Fund (DMF), which operates differently from a traditional insurance company. DMFs are generally subject to a different regulatory framework and can have lower tax burdens, although they are still subject to oversight and scrutiny, including from ASIC.

Importantly, the mutual was created to provide stable and reliable coverage for sports shooting and hunting. In recent years many traditional insurers have withdrawn from these areas or significantly increased premiums, making it more difficult for clubs and organisations to obtain appropriate cover.

To further protect members, the mutual also purchases reinsurance. This provides an additional layer of financial protection for claims that exceed the mutual's own retained risk.

Overall, the aim is simple: a member-focused system designed to support and protect the shooting community.



VERSATILITY

was the middle name of the

LEWIS GUN

By Tom Lewis

Although last issue we covered a sub-machine gun, the Owen, that's not to say there wasn't a well-understood need for a machine gun from the early days of the Australian armed forces. Indeed, it's worth a pause before we get into one of their early light weapons – the Lewis gun –

to ponder why the machine gun overall got such a shaky start. Automatic fire was realised from the mid-19th century to be something worth having on the battlefield. Repeated and concentrated fire would be a most useful weapon, and several manufacturers of note agreed. Names such as Gatling, Vickers, Browning and Maxim echo down the ages, part of an annoying military myth set which keeps on going even today. This is the sort of theme that contains such phrases as 'lions led by donkeys'; 'all officers are idiots', and 'why didn't the military minds get it right?' Why indeed didn't senior military clods see that automatic weapons were a great invention, and why weren't they employed sooner? A case in point might be General Armstrong Custer, who indeed made a couple of classic mistakes.

Relying on poor intelligence, he disturbed a camp of 2,000 Indians in the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana, surprising a force 150 per cent larger than first thought. What's worse, he had split his command into three a little while before the assault. Custer and his 210 men were wiped out, with only one possible man surviving 'Custer's Last Stand'. But if he had taken his two Gatling guns with him, would he have been saved? Here's the case in point. Fully automatic guns were indeed a great invention in the science of war. But the early ones were, in most commanders' eyes, more trouble than they were worth. They were heavy, unreliable, demanded specialist soldiers, 'wasted ammunition' said some; and indeed, were difficult to understand in how



Men of the 28th Battalion of the 2nd Australian Division practising Lewis gun drill in France.

"Fully automatic guns were indeed a great invention in the science of war."

best to deploy them, which is in enfilade fire directed along the enemy's longest front.

That was then, as they say, and in the early years of the Australian forces, this is now. Australians serving in the Boer War had automatic weapons, and indeed one Aussie soldier whose name survives – Breaker Morant – albeit for some in infamy, famously got behind a machinegun in an attack on the prison where he was being held for war crimes, although his valiant effort wasn't enough to save him. But it is to the lighter Lewis gun we shall first turn, with its unique and distinctive circular drum magazine mounted atop of the breech.

Jump forward into the Great War of 1914-1918, and machine guns had started to come of age. Infantry battalions of 1,000 men were

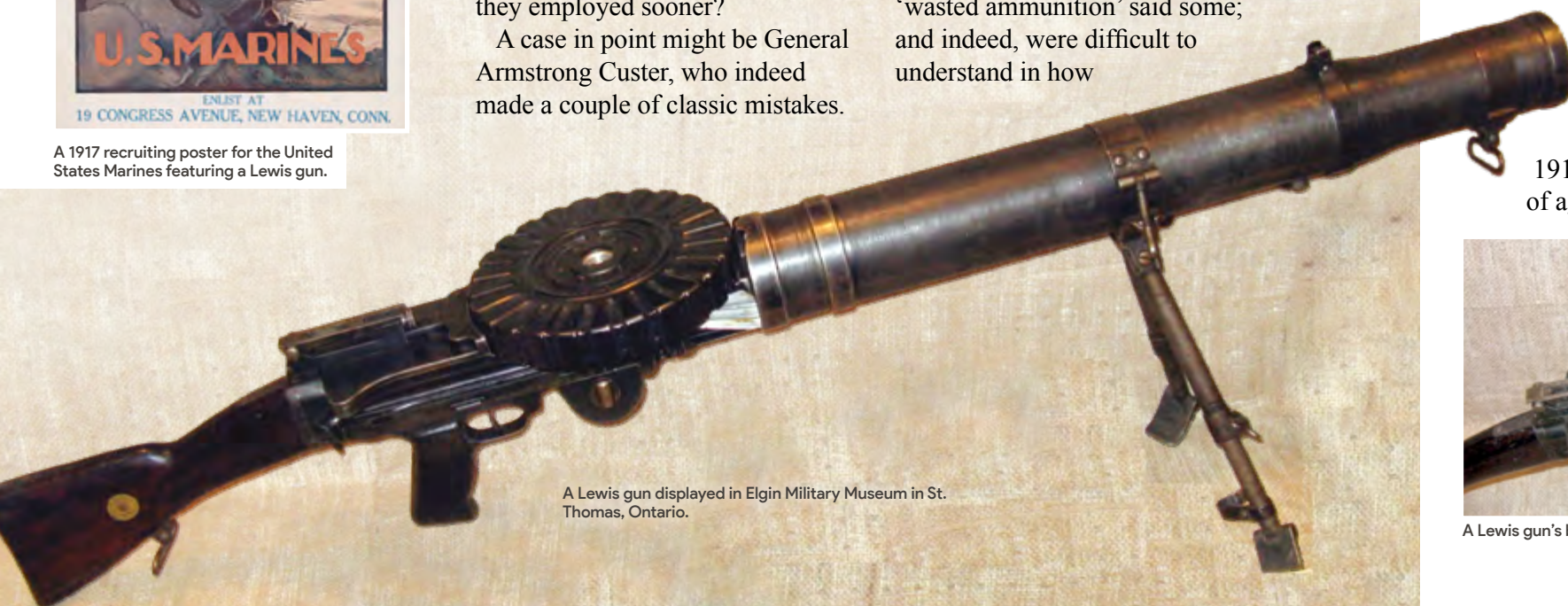
equipped with two Maxim machineguns handled by a machine gun-section along with eight companies, and a signals section. The Maxims were soon supplanted by the Vickers, as used by almost all sections of British Empire forces in an effort to standardise.

Keen-eyed readers might note this series started with the rifle, looked at some variants of the .303, and then progressed through a great sub-machine gun, the Owen. Recognise the theme: we're concentrating so far on how the great majority of firearms were used. But spare a thought for the PBI, or Poor Bloody Infantry as they were ruefully known, even by themselves.

The Lewis though was becoming recognised as a light gun in that it could be fired while being carried by a strong man, weighing around 14 kilograms. The Vickers was around the same weight, but it quickly overheated unless using its water-cooling system, which with the tripod meant it was a three-man operation. It's interesting to see the progression through combat to the demand for a sub-machine gun, which was what conditions demanded. Both used the rifle cartridge .303, as did the infantry's Lee Enfields – a good decision meaning there was always ammunition around.



A 1917 recruiting poster for the United States Marines featuring a Lewis gun.



A Lewis gun displayed in Elgin Military Museum in St. Thomas, Ontario.



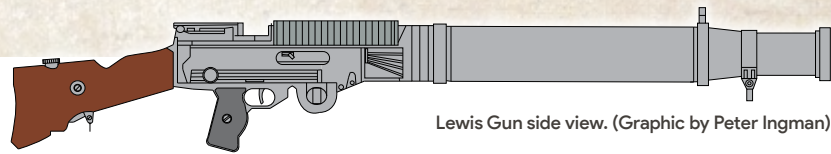
A Lewis gun's breech and magazine in Elgin Military Museum, St. Thomas, Ontario.

DESIGN

The Lewis light machine gun was designed by Isaac Lewis, a United States Army colonel. His gun design was rejected by the US Army, likely due to political arguments. He left the country and set up shop in Belgium in 1913 with the Armes Automatique Lewis company to supply an initial order to the Belgian Army, but almost immediately connected with the UK's Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA). They started manufacturing the weapon, and soon Lewis and his factory moved to England, away from possible seizure in the event of a German invasion, which indeed began in August 1914.

The Lewis gun was gas operated. Expanding propellant gas was taken from the barrel to drive a spring-backed piston to the rear. The piston was fitted with a vertical post, which was sleeved in a helical cam track in the bolt, rotating it at the end of its travel. This allowed three locking lugs at the bolt's rear to engage gun body recesses to lock it into place. The post carried a fixed firing pin, which protruded through an aperture in the front of the bolt, firing the next round at the foremost part of the piston's travel. The gun's aluminium barrel-shroud caused the muzzle blast to draw cooling air over the barrel.

At the outbreak of the war, BSA received orders for mass production, and produced more than 15,000 by



Lewis Gun side view. (Graphic by Peter Ingman)

1918. The United States also manufactured Lewis guns in .30-06 calibre mainly for the United States Army Air Corps and for the United States Marine Corps. The design was reliable, although firing was limited to 12 47-round magazines before overheating. Soldiers liked the gun, which could be fired by one man, although it was more efficient to have another readying and fitting the magazines as they were expended.

Although used widely in the trenches, this versatile gun was quickly taken by the speedily developing world of armour. Open top cars fitted with a Lewis gun or machine gun were used by British forces in hit-and-run attacks on the Germans. But the Lewis also found another place of employment – into the air – and it is to there we shall turn before coming back to ground with a memorable feat of action for Australian forces in Darwin in WWII.

- **Numbers produced:** About 152,000
- **Countries in use:** About 40 countries and 14 dominions of the British Empire produced copies, licensed and unlicensed.
- **Weight:** 28 lb (13 kg)
- **Length:** 50.5 inches / 1280 mm
- **Muzzle velocity:** 2,440 ft/s (744 m/s)
- **Rate of fire:** About 600 rounds per minute



Flexible Lewis Machine Gun mounted on a Scarff Ring.



Australian infantry with their tripod mounted Vickers .303 machine gun Mark I.



Forward-firing Lewis machine gun mounted on a WWI aircraft on a pivoting bracket so the magazines can be changed.

Foster mounting for a Lewis Mk II on an SE5a fighter.



INTO THE WORLD OF AVIATION

The Lewis gun was a primary weapon in the new exciting world of fighting aircraft in the Great War. Australians joined in with service through the Australian Flying Corps. This was the branch of the Australian Army responsible for operating aircraft during World War I, and the forerunner of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Events developed with remarkable speed in the world of military aviation, with the testbed of being able to immediately trial ideas in combat. In general, aircraft were used for reconnaissance and artillery spotting, but fighting soon developed when the other side objected to this and sent up armed aircraft to shoot down the aerial spies.

“The Lewis gun was a primary weapon in the new exciting world of fighting aircraft in the Great War.”

The Lewis gun was used with a drum of cartridges, either 47 or 97, depending on which type of magazine was fitted. It was very useful in the air, and many Allied aircraft carried them for use by the gunner/observer, fitted to a rail mount circling the rear cockpit, or even on a sliding mount atop the upper wing for pilot use. Having a gun on the upper wing was useful for attacking an enemy aircraft from below. The SE5 fighter typically used this configuration, with a Vickers firing through the propeller as well. Changing the upper drum magazine was however difficult in flight. The fuselage guns by comparison were fed by 500-round belts in boxes in the side of the aircraft, usually tracer interspersing the normal rounds, although incendiary cartridges such as the Buckingham were fitted for use against balloons.

DARKO HUDSON DOWNS THE FIRST ENEMY AIRCRAFT OVER AUSTRALIA

Back in Australia, and in the next world war, it may have been a Lewis gun that shot down the first enemy aircraft on Australian soil. On 19 February 1942, four Japanese aircraft carriers launched 188 aircraft against Darwin. Arriving just before 1000, they bombed with precision; shot down nine out of 10 defending P-40 USAAF Kittyhawks, and sank nine ships. On the ground, a ring of anti-aircraft sites fired their 3.7-inch guns at the enemy, and they were

joined by scores of machine guns.

Gunner Wilbert Hudson, known as Darko due to his olive skin, was stationed at Naval Wireless Transmitting Station Coonawarra down the Stuart Highway, some distance from town. In what was later to become one of Coonawarra's sports ovals, a number of defensive posts had been set up by the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery. The sites consisted of a 3.7-inch gun, surrounded by sandbags and machine guns.

In an interesting 1990 interview for this writer, Gunner Hudson told me his story. He was in the shower when the enemy aircraft alarm went off, donned his boots, helmet and a towel, and ran out and manned his Lewis machine gun. He couldn't get a decent angle on the incoming aircraft and left the sandbagged emplacement to rest the gun on a nearby 44-gallon oil drum. This too wasn't high enough, and finally Hudson enlisted the aid of a fellow soldier, resting the Lewis gun on his shoulder. Although his towel fell off, his fire helped to bring down one of the few aircraft shot down in the raid – a 'Val' bomber. The two crew of the downed aircraft were buried at the crash site.

Hudson remained in the Territory to man his gun for more raids, until on 16 June 1942 during another attack he was badly injured with burns. Awarded the Military Medal, he was transferred to the Adelaide River hospital south of Darwin.



The wreck of Toyoshima's Zero in Darwin Aviation Museum.

There he remained for months before being moved to Melbourne for plastic surgery and then discharge. For decades afterwards at reunions, he quietly smiled at the jests made at his expense about his lack of uniform and the 'calibre of his gun' when firing his MG at the enemy.

The Val may not have been the only victim to a Lewis. A Zero was hit on exiting the Darwin Harbour target zone, and crash landed on Melville Island where the pilot, Petty Officer Hajime Toyoshima, was taken prisoner by local man Matthias Ulungura. Analysis of the engine, still on view with the rest of the aircraft in Darwin Aviation Museum, shows it was hit by a .303 round. Then again, there were thousands of troops equipped with Lee Enfields in the area, and there were certainly thousands of rounds fired against the many aircraft the Japanese deployed. Toyoshima was imprisoned at Cowra and was one of the leaders of the breakout from the POW camp in 1944. He committed suicide rather than be recaptured again when it was clear escape possibilities were non-existent.

By this time, the Lewis was gradually being replaced in British Empire service by the Bren gun, which offered several advantages, included less weight. The faithful Bren will be covered in another article, but as we leave our look at a great light machine gun, it is testimony to the Lewis that it could be seen in service in Korea, Vietnam, and a host of smaller conflicts for some decades after WWII ended. ☺

Darko Hudson with a Lewis gun post-war.



Gunner Hudson depicted in a painting commissioned by NORCOM, showing him in action against a Val.



An Austen Mk 1 held in the UK's Imperial War Museum collection.



Flyer 3C Hajime Toyoshima with Sgt Leslie Powell, of the Royal Australian Engineers, holding Toyoshima's service pistol. The pilot was sent to Cowra POW camp, where he was later one of the leaders of the 1944 breakout.

VARIANTS:

- **Mark I:** Basic model used by British and British Empire forces from 1915 with few improvements.
- **Mark II:** Aircraft version without cooling fins. Wooden stock replaced by spade grip. 97-round drum magazine fitted to larger magazine spigot.
- **Mark II*:** Improved Mk II with increased rate of fire – 1918.
- **Mark III:** Upgrade of Mk II with faster rate of fire and barrel shroud removed – 1918.
- **Mark III*:** British designation for US .30-06 M1918 aircraft gun, equipping Home Guard with 46,000 imports. Spade grip replaced with skeleton stock. Wooden fore-stock added to allow gun firing while resting on sandbag or from the hip.
- **Mark III**:** .303 Mark III modified as per US M1918s.
- **Mark III DEMS:** Modified for defensively equipped merchant ships (DEMS). Similar to Mk III** but with pistol grip on fore-stock, so weapon could be fired free-standing from the shoulder, from any part of a ship's decks.
- **Mark IV:** Gun assembled from spare parts. Similar to Mk III**. Fragile 'clock' spring replaced with simpler version housed in straight tube extending into skeleton stock. Many fitted with a new light tripod.

STAYING SHARP WITH A STROP

By Billy Allen

WHY USE A STROP

Whether you're slicing tomatoes in the kitchen, field-dressing a deer at dusk, filleting fish on a camping trip, or just opening boxes with your pocketknife, nothing beats the quiet satisfaction of using a sharp knife. But even the best steel doesn't stay perfect forever. With every day cutting use, the knife's edge microscopically rolls. That razor-sharp line is actually made of thousands of microscopic teeth, aligned like a saw at the apex. Under pressure, those teeth bend sideways, like grass flattened by wind. Keep cutting on a rolled edge, and the folded steel eventually snaps off in microscopic chips. That's what truly dulls your blade: not wear, but breakage at the apex.

Enter the strop – your edge's best mate. A few quick passes will stand the edge back upright, realigning the fine edge from normal use. You can check to see if your knife needs to be stropped by running a fingertip across (not along) the blade width, away from the edge – smooth means good; any grab or roughness means burr. It's like combing tangled hair: a few gentle

strokes and everything lines up again. Do it regularly and you'll a) keep the blade cutting as it should, and b) stop those chips from forming, preserving the edge geometry and extending the time between full sharpenings. In short, stropping prolongs the working life of your cutting edge without needing to go through the process of sharpening on a stone.

At its simplest, a strop is a strip of leather charged with a fine polishing compound – green chromium oxide is popular, though diamond or aluminium oxide pastes work brilliantly too. The blade glides across the surface, spine first, at the same angle used for sharpening. No pressure, no drama – just refinement.

“At its simplest, a strop is a strip of leather charged with a fine polishing compound...”

My personal strops: the large version for bench use at home and the compact field model that travels with me on every hunt.



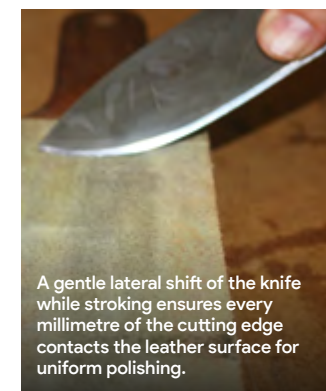
This action:

- Stands the edge upright – straightens rolled micro-teeth and resets the apex.
- Removes burr – gently abrades the fragile wire-edge that causes snagging.
- Polishes the bevel – smooths scratches, reducing friction for effortless cutting.
- Refines sharpness – boosts keenness through maintenance, not removal.
- Prevents over-sharpening – saves steel by delaying stonework.
- Delivers a mirror finish – leaves a polished, razor-like edge.

Skip stropping, and the problems stack up. Rolled edges stay bent, burrs persist and bevels roughen. Cuts turn draggy, performance suffers, and you're back on the stones far too often – grinding away metal you didn't need to lose.

Strops come in a few styles – hanging, paddle, and loom – but the paddle strop is the clear winner for me. It's rigid, portable and gives consistent feedback. I've made several for myself and mates, and they're the go-to in camp, kitchen or workshop. Typically double-sided, you start with a few light strokes on the suede side loaded with compound to realign and deburr, then finish with a couple of passes on the smooth side to polish the edge to a glassy shine. For leather, vegetable-tanned cowhide (around 2–3mm thick) is ideal – the suede side holds compound well, while the grain side polishes beautifully without grabbing.

A strop isn't just for hunters or bushcraft nuts; it's for anyone who values a sharp, reliable blade. A few strokes after use, and your knife stays ready, whether you're prepping dinner, breaking down game, or tackling odd jobs. It's simple, effective, and keeps your edge – and your mood – cutting sharp.



A gentle lateral shift of the knife while stroking ensures every millimetre of the cutting edge contacts the leather surface for uniform polishing.

HOW I USE A PADDLE STROP

Once you have your paddle strop ready – double-sided, vegetable-tanned cowhide on a firm base – using it is straightforward, quick and surprisingly satisfying. The whole process takes less than a few minutes,



Sharpening in action: the knife apex stays in firm contact with the charged leather. Using light to medium pressure, draw the blade in a straight line along the strop, leading with the spine.

yet it transforms a tired edge into something that slices with authority. Here's exactly how I do it, step by step, whether I'm in camp, the kitchen or the garage.

I always start with the suede side. This rougher surface, impregnated with polishing compound, does the heavy lifting: standing the rolled edge upright and knocking off any burr. A light rub of green chromium oxide paste (or diamond spray if you prefer) ensures the leather is evenly charged.

Place the strop on a stable surface. Lay the knife flat on the suede, then lift the spine until the bevel sits slightly higher than its sharpening angle – most hunting and kitchen knives are ground between 17 and 25 degrees per side, so I aim for around 30 degrees total. Consistency is key: the same angle every stroke.

Now, with light to medium pressure, draw the blade toward you in a straight line, leading with the spine. I gently move the knife laterally as I move it towards me to ensure all of the cutting edge makes contact with the leather surface. The cutting-edge trails behind, never digging in. Think of buttering bread smoothly from edge to edge. When you reach the end of the strop, stop and lift the blade clear. No sweeping arcs like in old barber films! That side-to-side flick stresses the fragile apex, encouraging micro-chips and edge failure. Just lift, turn the knife over and repeat on the other side.

I usually do four to six passes per side on the suede, depending on how rolled the edge feels. You'll notice the blade gliding more freely as the micro-teeth straighten and the burr flakes away. A quick burr check – run a fingertip across (not along) the edge – confirms it's gone when the surface feels glass-smooth.

Next, flip to the smooth grain side. This is the

polishing stage. No extra compound needed if the suede was well-charged; a little transfers naturally. Repeat the same motion – same angle, same light pressure, spine-leading strokes – but now with just two to four passes per side. This tightens the edge, refines the bevel, and leaves a mirror finish that shaves hair and cuts paper without a whisper.

That's it. Ten to twelve total strokes, and your knife is field-ready again. The beauty? You're not removing steel – just realigning and polishing. Do this after every serious use, and you'll go weeks, even months, between stone sharpenings. It's low effort, high reward, and keeps your blade performing at its peak – exactly what you want when the moment matters.

MAKE YOUR OWN STROP

Why spend good money on a factory paddle strop when you can build one yourself – cheap, easy and perfectly suited to your hand? It takes basic materials and an afternoon, and the result is a custom tool that keeps your knives cutting hassle-free. I've made plenty for mates and myself, and everyone proves the point: simple works. Here's how to craft a double-sided paddle strop step by step.



Compact paddle strops sized to slip easily into a hunting pack – ideal for family and friends on the move. The suede faces have been charged with polishing compound, ready for final honing.



Timber blanks and leather pieces are pre-cut to final dimensions, laid out at the start of the strop-building process.

Materials

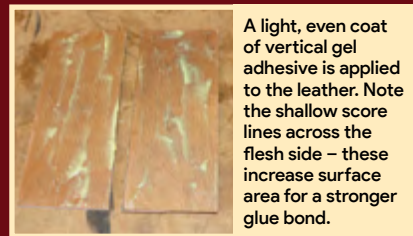
- **VEGETABLE-TANNED LEATHER:** Offcuts are ideal. Check your local saddlery or boot repair shop; scraps are often dirt cheap. Online

- leather suppliers carry 2–3mm veg-tan cowhide at an affordable price. You might even have an old leather belt that could be repurposed.
- **FLAT TIMBER:** Meranti is my go-to; its stable, inexpensive and easy to find at any hardware store. Grab a straight piece around 20mm thick.
- **VERTICAL GEL CONTACT ADHESIVE:** the gel formula stays put and bonds fast. A small tube from the hardware store covers multiple strops.

Step-by-step

- **SHAPE THE PADDLE:** Mark your timber to size with rounded corners. Cut with a handsaw or jigsaw. File or sand the edges smooth – no rough spots.
- **CUT THE LEATHER:** Lay the timber on the veg-tan hide and trace two identical pieces. Cut cleanly with a utility knife and steel ruler. One piece will be smooth-side up, the other suede-side up.

- **PREP FOR GLUE:** Lightly score the back of each leather piece (the side against the wood) with cross-hatch scratches to help adhesion. Roughen both faces of the timber where the leather will sit. Keep the stropping surfaces untouched.
- **GLUE UP** Apply a thin, even layer of vertical gel adhesive to the scored leather backs and both timber faces. Work carefully to avoid getting glue on the outer leather – precision now saves hassle later.
- **BOND AND CLAMP** Press the suede-side piece onto one face, smooth-side piece onto the other. Align neatly, then secure with hand clamps, a bench vice, or a flat weighted item (like a couple of bricks) on a level surface. Firm pressure, not crushing. Leave for 24 hours.
- **TRIM AND FINISH** Unclamp, then carefully shave excess adhesive from the edges with a razor blade. Light sanding with 180-grit paper blends everything flush.
- **CHARGE THE SUEDE** Rub a thin, even coating of polishing compound (green chromium oxide is excellent and easily found at your local hardware store) into the suede side. Work it in with your fingers or a soft cloth – just enough to embed without clogging.



A light, even coat of vertical gel adhesive is applied to the leather. Note the shallow score lines across the flesh side – these increase surface area for a stronger glue bond.

That's all there is to it. You now have a professional-grade, double-sided paddle strop ready for action. The charged suede realigns and deburrs; the smooth side polishes to perfection. Total cost is minimal, and the satisfaction of using your own build, priceless.

FEEL FREE TO CUSTOMISE

Round the handle, add a hanging hole, or finish the wood. The first time you restore a rolled edge with your handmade strop, you'll see why this little project is a game-changer. Affordable materials, straightforward steps, and knives that stay sharp with ease – it doesn't get better. ☺



XRS-370C
UHF CB Radio Review

By Alex Minicozzi



When I first helped my friend install the GME XRS-370C in his 4WD for a trip we were preparing for, I didn't realise how much difference a modern UHF CB radio could make. After experiencing it on several occasions, through long road trips and on outback tracks, I've come to appreciate this unit as a thoughtful blend of rugged design, modern tech and genuine everyday utility. Although

I've already got my own CB set up, being able to use it in my mate's car was amazing, we were able to switch cars during the trip and I could compare how this new CB with modern features compares to my own older model.

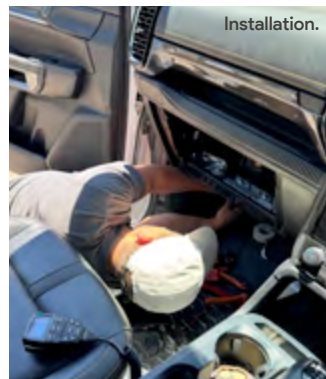
Design and build quality

Right out of the box, the build feels premium. The casing has a solid, rugged die-cast metal chassis that inspires confidence, not cheap

plastic, but something that you don't need to worry about jostling around under the seat or behind the dash. GME backs this up with a five-year warranty, which is reassuring given the price point and it's intended every day and adventure use. The radio itself can be tucked out of sight, and the interface is all on the handheld unit, making integration clean and unobtrusive in the cabin. This is something I can really appreciate especially since my own older unit sat right under my dash, where my leg would often hit it in the middle of a drive. It's a big plus for vehicles where dashboard space is precious.

Setup and installation

Installation was very straightforward. For our setup, we mounted the unit under the centre console and routed power from the fusebox, a clean, safe way to get ignition-switched power. The included wiring and hardware cover most bases, and if you have basic DIY skills, you won't be struggling for hours. Many users also report similarly easy installs. The only addition was a mounting frame for the handheld unit, which we had to buy specific to the car.



This unit is a thoughtful blend of rugged design, modern tech and genuine everyday utility.

Norfolk Island

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Once powered up, the OLED display and tactile buttons on the microphone make the interface clear and easy to understand, really reducing that classic muffled CB sound. That said, I did find that some button labels are a bit small, and I needed a few days to really memorise shortcuts but that is no issue at all, once you work it out, it is extremely practical, and overall, it's one of the more user-friendly UHF control setups I've seen.

Performance on the road

Where this radio shines is its real-world communication performance. The unit outputs the full 5W legal UHF power and holds solid reception across distances. To test the unit, we regularly drove from highways to remote dirt tracks, through valleys and hills, to see where its limit was. Throughout all, conversations are clear, static is minimal and the integrated speaker behind the mic delivers sufficient volume even with road noise.

A favourite practical feature of mine is fast channel scanning; it cycles across channels quickly and efficiently, meaning you spend less time waiting and more time connected. This comes in handy when travelling with convoys. While not revolutionary, it's a feature that noticeably improves usability compared to older units.

Modern twist: Bluetooth and the app

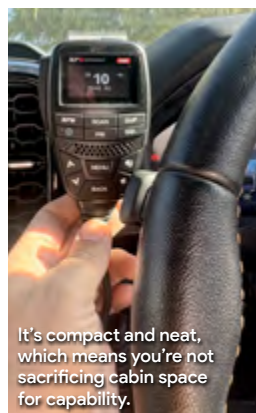
Where GME has really outdone themselves and moved ahead of many competitors is Bluetooth connectivity and app control. Pairing the radio via Bluetooth with the XRS Connect app on my phone opened up features that older radios simply lack,

creating and editing custom scan lists, receiving software updates, and even accessing a database of thousands of frequencies.

The app isn't perfect, there's a small learning curve and the user interface could be cleaner, but what else would you expect with new technology? It's only going to get better and once set up it's incredibly convenient. I especially like configuring scan lists for specific trips, say, prepping a convoy run vs general highway use. The ability to update firmware at home through the app means your radio can get smarter over time, which is not something rival units typically offer.

Everyday use and reliability

The XRS-370C has earned its place as one of the most reliable communication tools. Would you honestly expect anything less of GME? On the open road, chatter with truckies, convoy mates or locals has been dependable; in the depths of regional terrain, range is respectable and audio quality stays strong. Best of all, the compact form tucked neatly under seat storage means you're not sacrificing cabin space for capability. The only downside to this is the extra handheld mount you will need. Although in my experience, the one my mate purchased works perfectly; we have seen some people talk about how the magnetic mounting system can be fiddly if mounted on thinner trims in the car, not a big issue, but just something you might want to be aware of when choosing your mount.



It's compact and neat, which means you're not sacrificing cabin space for capability.

Strengths and what I would improve:

Pros:

- Rugged build and long warranty, confidence-inspiring for long trips.
- Great reception and clarity across channels.
- Bluetooth and app integration gives flexibility and future updates.
- Easy installation and compact hideaway design.

Areas to improve:

- The app, while functional, can feel clunky at times.
- Handset button layout takes some getting used to.

Overall verdict

The GME XRS-370C is one of the most balanced UHF CB radios you can get. It's not just another basic radio, it integrates modern Bluetooth control and software upgrades that genuinely enhance usability while maintaining the typical feel and function at the core of any CB.

For anyone who wants a reliable and feature-forward CB radio for 4WDing, highway travel or work communication, this is a standout choice, especially if you value build quality and futureproofing. Yes, at around \$700 it costs more than the most basic UHF sets, but the performance, ease of use, and smart features earn that premium. Like most things with these trusted Aussie brands, you get exactly what you pay for. Overall, I'd happily recommend the XRS-370C to both experienced UHF enthusiasts and newcomers alike. See more at gme.net.au/au

The best UHF channels for travellers

The UHF band provides access to 80 CB channels, but not all are open for general use. Here are the most useful ones for motorhome and caravan travellers.

Channel 18 – Caravan and Motorhome Travellers

This is the unofficial channel for those travelling by motorhome or towing a van. It allows other road users to let you know if something has come loose or if you've left something behind. It is also useful for communicating with others in your group if you're spread across multiple vehicles.

Channel 10 – Convoys and National Parks

Ideal for small group travel or exploring national parks. If you're travelling with friends in convoy, this channel keeps everyone in contact without cluttering other public frequencies.

Channel 40 – Road Safety and Truck Drivers

Truck drivers rely on this channel to share road conditions and safety information. Listening in can help you plan safe overtaking or get an early heads-up on hazards.

Channel 5 and Channel 35 – Emergency Use Only

These channels are reserved for emergency use and monitored by various services, including emergency services in some regions. They should only be used when there's no other way to request help. Under Australian law, misuse can result in serious penalties.

Channel 11 – Call Channel

Use this to make contact with another user, then move to another channel for your conversation.

Channels 22, 23, 61, 62 and 63 – Do Not Use

These channels are regulated by the Australian Government and are allocated for telemetry, data or future services. Voice transmissions are not allowed, and general misuse of these frequencies may result in fines or prosecution. While misuse of emergency channels can carry serious penalties, minor cases like accidentally using a telemetry channel usually result in a warning or only a small fine, so don't freak out if you find yourself on one of these channels for a moment by mistake.

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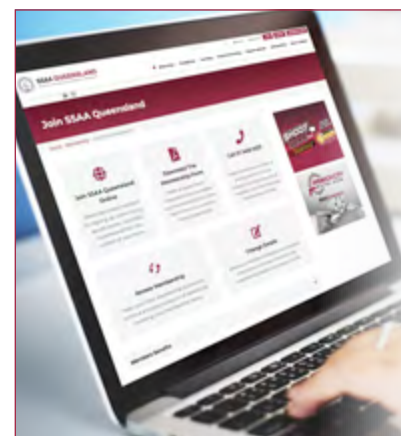
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SSAA STATION STAYS WOODLEIGH STATION

By Peter Jackson
Images by Alex Loughton

Heading north?

Set on a working cattle property near Ravenshoe on Queensland's Atherton Tablelands, Woodleigh Station offers SSAA members and *The Report* readers a genuine station-stay camping experience — quiet, spacious and refreshingly free of commercial gloss.

This is the sort of place that rewards preparation and self-reliance. If you're chasing privacy, open country and nights around a proper campfire, Woodleigh Station fits the brief.

The setting

Woodleigh Station is classic Tablelands cattle country. Rolling paddocks, river flats and bushland combine to create a relaxed, open landscape where campsites are measured in hundreds of metres apart, not metres.

Access is straightforward in dry conditions, with 2WD vehicles able to reach many areas, though a 4WD is recommended for river-side bush camps and after rain.

Once set up, the atmosphere is what most station-stay campers are looking for: quiet days, cool evenings and dark skies undisturbed by town lights.

Tablelands
bush camping
done right



Woodleigh Station is very much a working cattle station.

Camps and facilities

Camping options at Woodleigh are deliberately simple and well-spaced.

Remote bush campsites are unpowered and located beside creeks, rivers or dams, making them ideal for self-contained campers who enjoy a more traditional bush setup. These sites offer genuine privacy and suit experienced outdoor users who bring their own water, toilet and firewood.

Closer to the homestead are powered and unpowered sites with access to basic amenities, including toilets and showers. A popular option is the Rambler's powered site, which includes a covered area, fridge, sink and a wood-fired shower. Facilities are clean and functional, but intentionally minimal — in keeping with the station-stay ethos.

Wildlife and outdoor living

Birdlife is abundant, and sightings of wallabies, cattle and horses are common. Early mornings are a highlight, with mist rising from the water and bird calls carrying across the paddocks.

Campers spend their days fishing, swimming, walking the station tracks or simply enjoying the stillness that comes with being well away from busy parks and highways.

For SSAA readers, this is outdoor time as it used to be — unstructured, quiet and grounded in the environment.



Woodleigh Station is a great spot for large groups.



The sun setting signals an end to another fun filled day.

“Once set up, the atmosphere is what most station-stay campers are looking for: quiet days, cool evenings and dark skies undisturbed by town lights.”

Why it works

Woodleigh Station consistently earns strong feedback from campers for good reason:

- wide campsite separation offering true privacy
- excellent value, with pricing typically per vehicle
- quiet, respectful atmosphere suited to experienced campers
- welcoming but unobtrusive hosts
- family-friendly environment where kids can enjoy the bush.

Importantly, Woodleigh attracts campers who understand bush etiquette and self-sufficiency, helping maintain the calm and low-impact feel of the property.



Be sure to pack the fishing gear.



As a working cattle station, you might encounter special visitors to your site.

Things to know before you go

- This is not a caravan park, and it's not trying to be one.
- Firewood availability can be limited in peak periods and bush camps may be some distance from amenities and winter nights can be cold.
- Road conditions can change after rain.
- Planning ahead is part of the experience - and part of the appeal.
- There are no organised activities or structured entertainment.
- What you get out of a stay at Woodleigh Station depends entirely on what you bring with you.



Walking around the station reveals historic reminders.

SSAA station stays verdict

Woodleigh Station is a standout option for SSAA members seeking an authentic northern station-stay camping experience. It suits outdoor families who value space, quiet and independence over facilities and frills.

If your idea of a good camp involves a clear fire, a quiet riverbank and no neighbours in sight, Woodleigh Station delivers exactly that - honest bush camping on Queensland cattle country. ☺

Magnetic Island

Nelly Bay Aerial
Magnetic Island.

Queensland's Laid-Back Island Escape with a Wild Side

By Rebecca Foreman

All Photography: Tourism and Events Queensland Tourism.

Just 20 minutes by ferry from bustling Townsville, Magnetic Island (traditional name Yunbenun), unfolds like a layer of tropical calm laid over an ancient geological heartbeat. Palm fringes, pale bays and hidden coves greet the early ferry crossing, where the Coral Sea shimmers turquoise against a horizon as wide as expected. But unlike resort-only islands that carve themselves out exclusively for visitors, Magnetic is woven together with a vibrancy most islands rarely reveal, a lived-in community, a sprawling national park and a World Heritage-listed reef teeming with life and challenge alike.

Loved for its snorkelling spots, friendly wildlife and relaxed pace, Magnetic Island attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. But there is another side beating just behind its postcard beaches: one where tourism, conservation, community and climate extremes intersect, revealing what responsible island travel looks like today.

AN ISLAND ON THE EDGE OF EVERYWHERE

From the water, Magnetic Island looks like a postcard sent from paradise. As the ferry pulls into Nelly Bay, the first things you notice are the colours: the deep green of eucalyptus and pandanus forests, the pale sand crescents framed by bush, and the quilted patterns of reef brushing up against the open sea.

There's an effortless ease to island life that reveals itself the moment you step off the ferry. Along the waterfront, shops and cafés mingle with bus stops carrying locals into the island's quieter heart, a community that balances tourism with traditions far older than its fame, honouring the enduring presence of the Wulgurukaba people of Magnetic Island.

Magnetic Island isn't large, roughly 52 per cent of its 52 square kilometres sits within Magnetic Island National Park, but that mix of bush, beach and built environment makes it feel textured rather than tame. This is a place where a day might begin with snorkelling over coral gardens and end with locals at the Arcadia Village Hotel recounting sightings of the island's more furtive residents.



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IN THE TREES AND UNDER THE SUN: WILDLIFE THAT ROAMS FREE

Magnetic Island is a haven for the bush stone-curlew, rock wallabies, echidnas, possums and more than 187 birds, but perhaps is best known for its wild koalas.

Unlike purpose-built wildlife sanctuaries, here they're encountered in the wild, ambling along shaded tracks or nestled in the fork of a scribbly gum. Their presence is magnetic in its own right; koala encounters have become one of the island's signature experiences but there's a delicate balance to how people and wildlife coexist here.

Walkers on the Forts Walk, a rocky trail that clings to ridges and opens to panoramic views, learn to tread slowly and quietly, scanning branches as much as beaches. It's not uncommon to stop mid-conversation for a koala sighting, camera phones ready, hushed in reverence.

WHEN PARADISE MEETS PEST: CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE

On Magnetic Island, conservation isn't a backdrop, it's a daily reality shaped by community, rangers and policy. Along narrow bush tracks, discreet signage referencing rock wallabies and feral animal controls hint at the careful ecological balancing act underway behind the scenes.

While the island is largely free of many invasive species found elsewhere in Queensland, targeted management remains essential. As Matt Watson, Principal Media Advisor at the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and



Snorkelling at Florence Bay Magnetic Island.

HOW MAGNETIC ISLAND MANAGES FERAL SPECIES

- Magnetic Island is largely free of feral animals compared with many mainland and island environments.
- Feral cats are the primary invasive species of concern, due to their impact on native wildlife.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service conducts ongoing feral cat control programs across the island.
- Management strategies focus on protecting native species, including rock wallabies, birds and reptiles.
- Community engagement is central to conservation success, with residents involved in education and reporting initiatives.

Innovation, notes, "Magnetic Island is largely free of feral animals. There are feral cats, and rangers conduct feral control programs aimed at cats."

As Parks and Wildlife Queensland explains, conservation is a nuanced endeavour on the island: "Management of rock

wallaby populations on Magnetic Island requires a balance between conservation of a species important to local ecology and reducing the impact on neighbouring flora and cultural values. Integrated pest management and community engagement are key."

It's a shared responsibility that makes Magnetic Island one of the few Australian destinations where ecological care feels woven into everyday life rather than treated as an afterthought and a reminder that visitors are stepping into a fragile home as much as a holiday escape.



Rock Wallabies populate Magnetic Island.

REEF LIFE AND OCEAN CURRENTS

The ocean around Magnetic Island is a temperate-tropical hybrid that supports colourful coral outcrops and an array of fish species. Snorkelling spots like Geoffrey Bay, Arthur Bay and Florence Bay reward early risers with clarity and calm; paddling here is like dipping into a kaleidoscope.

But reef health, like wildlife management, mirrors pressures felt across the Great Barrier Reef region. Rising sea temperatures and coral bleaching events, intensified by global climate shifts, underscore that even idyllic waters are part of a deeper ecological story.

Local tour operators, keenly aware of this interplay, have woven citizen science and educational elements into their offerings, inviting snorkellers and kayakers to learn about reef resilience while they explore its wonders.

ISLAND COMMUNITY: WHERE LIFE HAPPENS

Head off the main bays and you can feel the rhythm of everyday island life.

At the IGA in Nelly Bay, fishermen and holiday-makers jostle for space in the frozen seafood cabinet. Cafe owners know regulars by name, island kids bike home with surfboards clanking against car bars, and old-timers trade stories about how things used to be 'back when the ferries ran late and the phones were all landlines.'

Art studios tucked into laneways reveal a thriving creative scene. Sculptors, painters and makers transform found shells, driftwood and reef glass into pieces that capture the island's inimitable spirit.

Markets on weekends spill into open spaces shaded by trees, where locals sell jams, fresh fruit and storytelling alongside handcrafted jewellery. It's a place that doesn't feel like a postcard, it feels like home, just another beat away from Nelly Bay's boutiques and fisherman's wharf.



Enjoy a Pilgrim Sailing Cruise and discover one of Magnetic Island's 23 hidden bays.

WHERE TO STAY: BEACHSIDE TO BUSH SIDE

Magnetic Island accommodates a wide spectrum of travellers, from those seeking a carefree surf holiday to those chasing solitude under the stars.

Premium & comfort

- Upscale apartment living at Grand Mercure Apartments Magnetic Island, just 50 metres from the ferry terminal at Nelly Bay and Peppers Blue on Blue.



Apartment living at Grand Mercure Apartments Magnetic Island.

Eco & mid-range

- Family-friendly cabins with shared BBQs and leafy communal spaces at Bounce/Magnetic Island Koala Park Cabins.

Camping & glamping

- Camping inside Magnetic Island National Park is not permitted so you can't legally pitch a tent or stay overnight on beaches or in the national park without designated facilities.
- The FORTS is a small campground in Horseshoe Bay, one of the few formal sites welcoming tents, caravans and campervans with water available or Magnetic Glamping near Nelly Bay, ideal for families and first-timers.

A PLACE THAT TEACHES YOU TO SLOW DOWN

At day's end, when the sun dips behind the ranges and lights shimmer across the water, Magnetic Island settles into a hush that feels ancient and alive at once.

This isn't an island of facades or packaged experiences. It's a place rich in stories - of wildlife, of community, of reef and bush, of people learning to balance love for a place with respect for its limits. Here visitors aren't just observers; they're participants in a living ecosystem that thrives because people care.

GETTING THERE: MAGNETIC ISLAND

Getting to Magnetic Island is easy. Fly into Townsville, then make your way to the ferry terminal at Breakwater. SeaLink ferries run frequently throughout the day and take around 20 minutes to cross.

Travelling with wheels? Magnetic Island Vehicle ferries also operate daily, bookings are essential.

GETTING AROUND: MAGNETIC ISLAND

Once you're on the island, getting around is half the fun. Local buses run between the main bays (Picnic Bay, Arcadia, Horseshoe Bay) and line up with ferry arrivals.

For full freedom, hire a car, scooter or electric buggy - the island favourite for good reason. They're easy to park, great on hills and part of the 'Maggie' experience.

Walking trails link beaches, lookouts and hidden coves, so if you're staying put for a few days, you may barely need wheels at all.



Bungalow Bay Koala Village Cabins.

The Report Vol 2.3

THREATS TO MAGNETIC ISLAND'S WILDLIFE

An excerpt from 'A suburb of National Parks and World Heritage status – Wildlife Conservation on Magnetic Island'

By Lyndall Harvey, Environmental Scientist

Weeds and feral animals have the potential to cause devastating environmental impacts. On Magnetic Island, feral animal such as pigs, feral cats and goats, predate on native species and also damage and outcompete native species for resources. Invasive plants including Lantana (*Lantana camara*) and Rubber Vine.

(*Cryptostegia* sp) (Weeds of National Significance), rapidly invade the delicate environment, especially along creek lines and other disturbed areas. Unfortunately, many of these species have been introduced for their ornamental value and have jumped the garden fence to become bushland bullies on Magnetic Island.

Domestic pets are recognised as one of the key threats to Magnetic's wildlife. Magnetic Island is a suburb of Townsville, and as such the local laws of the Council apply over the island. As such it is permissible to keep domestic pets on freehold land, provided dogs are kept on a leash whenever in a public place and that cats are not allowed to roam outside. However, it is often not practical or logistically possible to enforce these regulations on the island, and it is believed that domestic dogs and cats have been responsible for the demise of many native animals on the island over the years. Domestic animals such as cats and dogs can have a tremendous impact on our native wildlife, particularly in an area as environmentally sensitive as Magnetic Island.

A number of other human related impacts also affect the wildlife of Magnetic. Natural events such as fires, cyclones and climate change impacts also have the potential to greatly affect wildlife populations.

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SHOOT OFF! Quiz

Welcome to another instalment of The Shoot Off! It's a chance to test your knowledge on firearms, hunting and the great outdoors. Whether you're a competitive shooter, or closer to a bushwalker, there's something here for everyone.

We think getting anything over 15 out of 20 makes an AA-grade quizzier. Answers can be found in the Sunset Gallery section on page 83.

QUESTIONS:

- 1 What is the term for the vibration pattern of a barrel during firing?
- 2 Which country developed the Mannlicher straight-pull rifle?
- 3 What is the purpose of a gas check on a cast bullet?
- 4 What does 'SMLE' stand for?
- 5 What tool is commonly used to measure trigger pull weight?
- 6 What is the scientific name for a cane toad?
- 7 In Metallic Silhouette, are targets shot offhand or from a rest?
- 8 What is the term for anticipating recoil and pushing the rifle down before the shot?
- 9 What is the name for the cylindrical part of a bullet between the ogive and the base?
- 10 What smokeless powder did Alfred Nobel develop in 1887?
- 11 Which direction does the Southern Cross point to help locate true south?
- 12 What does ES stand for when analysing chronograph data?
- 13 Which French rifle was the first widely adopted smokeless powder military rifle?
- 14 What is the term for the edible inner layer of bark used in survival situations?
- 15 What is the safest general direction to travel during a bushfire if escape routes are limited?
- 16 What is the formula unit used to measure kinetic energy in ballistic tables?
- 17 What is the name for the distance from the bolt face to the datum line in a chamber?
- 18 Which Australian deer species has palmate antlers?
- 19 What is the term for the expansion of a cartridge case to seal the chamber upon firing?
- 20 Power factor is calculated by multiplying velocity with what?

SCORING

20 out of 20: Bullseye!

15+: 9 ring

12+: 8 ring

7 or fewer: Time to re-sight your 'scope'

Plus, if you want more quizzing fun, there's a second half to the Shoot Off! A full extra 20 questions on our website - ssaaqld.org.au Good luck!

Send feedback and your question ideas to news@ssaaqld.org.au.



Eat WILD:

Kangaroo, Mushroom & Dark Ale Pie

Prep: 30 mins Time: 2 hours Serves: 6

Recipe from K'Roo

What you'll need

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 200g field mushrooms, chopped
- 150g button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 800g diced kangaroo
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 330ml bottle dark ale
- 1 cup beef stock
- 1 tbsp lemon thyme leaves
- 445g pack ready-made frozen sour cream shortcrust pastry, thawed
- 1 egg, beaten, to glaze

How to cook it

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced).
2. Heat half the oil in a medium non-stick saucepan over medium-low heat.
3. Add onion and mushrooms, cook for 10 minutes or until onion is soft and golden. Increase heat to medium, add garlic and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.
4. Add remaining oil and increase heat to medium-high, brown the kangaroo in batches.
5. Return the kangaroo and onion mixture to the pan. Add flour, salt and pepper, stirring to combine and cook for 1 minute.
6. Pour over the ale and beef stock, stirring to combine and bring to the boil.
7. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 50 minutes. Remove the lid and cook for a further 10 minutes. Add lemon thyme and allow to cool.
8. Roll the pastry to a thickness of 5mm and line 4 x 8 1/2 cm round pie tins with half the pastry and evenly divide kangaroo mixture between the six pie cases. Brush the edges with the egg glaze.
9. Cut out 4 rounds from the remaining pastry to cover each pie, pressing the edges with a fork to seal.
10. Cut air holes in the top of each pie, brush with egg glaze.
11. Bake in preheated oven for 45 minutes or until pastry is golden.
12. Serve with tomato sauce.

INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR SSAA Queensland?

Location: Ipswich, Queensland
Occasionally, vacancies open up across our various departments and, of course, we are looking for capable, enthusiastic staff to join our team.



MEMBERSHIP OFFICE

Requirements:

- Computer literate, clear speaking voice, patience, dependable.
- Administrative or call centre experience desirable.
- Firearms knowledge desirable but not essential.

IPSWICH CITY PISTOL CLUB

Requirements:

- H firearms license.
- Courteous, safety-conscious and calm.
- May also be asked to assist the Queensland Shooters Supplies Gun Shop.

QUEENSLAND SHOOTERS SUPPLIES GUN SHOP

Requirements:

- Firearm licence - A, B & H. If not currently licensed for H must be able to obtain in near future.
- Understanding of firearms, ammunition and accessories.
- Work flexibility essential.
- Retail experience desirable.
- May also be asked to assist the Ipswich City Pistol Club.

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESUME TO:
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ANSWERS

1. Barrel harmonics	11. Downward (toward the horizon)
2. Austria	12. Extreme spread
3. Prevent leading	13. Lebel 1886
4. Short Magazine Lee-Enfield	14. Cambium
5. Trigger gauge	15. Downhill
6. Rhinella marina	16. Joules/Foot-pounds
7. Offhand	17. Headspace
8. Flinching	18. Fallow
9. Bearing surface	19. Oburation
10. Ballistite	20. Bullet weight

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PROTECT YOUR LICENCE!

SSAA members, please remember if you are using your membership to satisfy state-government requirements for a genuine reason to hold a firearm's licence, it is **your responsibility** to ensure your membership is **current and financial**. Your expiry date is written on your membership card.

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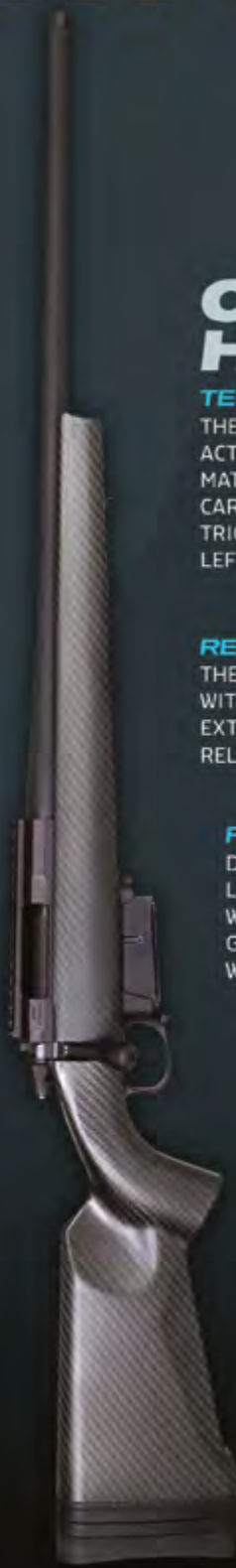
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