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GREAT AUSTRALIAN OUTDOORS



Getting bigger

Attentive members will have noticed a new logo recently adopted for SSAA Queensland. A fresh look is more than just a change of colours or design though. It reflects the direction of an organisation that continues to grow in size, strength and ambition. Most importantly, the new branding puts Queensland front and centre.

It comes at a time when SSAA Queensland has never been stronger. Our membership now sits at more than 82,000 members and continues to rise. Every new member adds to the voice of lawful firearm owners, hunters, sporting shooters and outdoor enthusiasts across the state. Growth in numbers also means greater capability to invest back into ranges, events, further hunting opportunities, services and advocacy.

Our media presence has grown too. *The Report* has staked its claim as Australia's largest print circulation hunting, shooting and outdoors magazine, reaching members across Queensland and beyond. It is something we can all be proud of, and it continues to expand alongside the organisation it represents. Also, if you aren't following us on Facebook, now is the time to join.

The Australian Shooters Alliance is another example of growth. As part of the wider SSAA Queensland operation, it has developed into an internationally recognised advocacy body, helping ensure Queensland voices are heard loud and clear.

Our competitive footprint is also expanding. SSAA Queensland now sends multiple teams overseas, and by next year we are planning to send about 12 Queensland teams to international events. These trips provide valuable experience for our shooters, strengthen relationships abroad and help put Queensland firmly on the map.

We are building momentum. Bigger membership. Bigger opportunities. Bigger influence. Bigger ambitions. When you're part of SSAA Queensland, you're part of something bigger.

Jeff Ross



SSAA Queensland President



Facebook: SSAA Queensland Instagram: thereportmag

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Volume 2.4

Published by Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA) – a wholly owned subsidiary of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Qld).

PO Box 2443, North Ipswich, QLD 4305

Web: ssaaqld.org.au
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Proudly printed in Australia by ive Print Web Offset

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Letters

Articles energised me

The two recent articles in the latest 'The Report' really stirred up some memories. The first was 'The stillness behind the shot' (March 2026) and the second was about the 'Lee Enfield .303' (Feb 2026) and they both melded for me.

Back in 1963, I had a year at Gatton Agricultural College. A sport had to be selected and I chose big bore shooting. As a 16-year-old, I had only fired a .22 and 12 gauge, so shooting a .303 was going to be a learning curve. I quickly adjusted to shooting targets. We would have an afternoon shoot on Wednesday as practice and on Saturdays we competed against all the local clubs. The coach was impressed with my scores and as a first year, I was selected in the college team. His main reason for my selection was consistency. I rarely scored less than 90/105 and usually scored 91.

I did not have a problem with loose shots as the shooter beside you fired. I could control my nerves. I also learned about breathing and trigger release. In August, our team travelled to Hawkesbury Ag College in NSW for an annual competition. Our captain (95) and I (93 my best score yet) shot well, but the other four members fell apart under pressure.

My worst day was a 900-yard shoot. The aperture sights were wound up so high I could not rest my face on the stock. To compensate, I used my thumb to support my chin to steady my head. It didn't take too long before I cut the inside of my lip and then had to fight flinching. I managed 76, my worst ever score. The previous week had been 800 yards, and I shot my best ever, scoring 95. That day was gusty, and I read the flags and fired as they dropped. Another day at 300 yards I shot 34/35, which was a minute group. My spotter was thinking of taking my sights up a click but did not. The last shot just missed the bull. I can't shoot groups like that with my scope sighted rifle today.

For more than 20 years I have competed in a social competition between the SSAA and ADA. My favourite target was the fox at 50m, five shots offhand with a time limit of 45 seconds. The first year I said that I would aim only at the fox's head, as the other scoring zones were too small. I hit it

twice but just missed with three - a score of 10 but beating many other shooters' scores. I persisted with aiming at the fox each year and finally scored 25/25 three years in a row.

One year some mates timed me and I got five shots off in less than 25 seconds for a top score. The best part was being in a shoot off, which consisted of one shot at one eye, the other was blacked out, and the time allowed was five seconds. I was beaten one year by 2cm and won the next by 1cm. Pressure was most people's enemy. Five shots in 45 seconds made them rush; nine seconds is a really long time for a shot. Trying to hold for the perfect sight picture was another that caught many. I have mainly shot offhand when hunting and had lots of practice. When shooting targets, I always try to shut out the 'noise', concentrate on the sight picture and fire on the first good picture. If one goes astray, too bad, back to business, next target.

I hope the above shows how the two 'Report' articles energised me; it certainly brought back many fond memories.

Greg K, Qld



INTERMEDIATE WORLD TEAM 1967
Back Row: J. A. Saunders, D. C. Mann, G. F. W. King
Front Row: J. T. Cochrane, G. A. Gully, W. B. Mason



No injuries in shooting

I am pumped to see SSAA Queensland making efforts to get more juniors into the sport [February issue]. How many ACLs do we see these days get done in junior sports? Seems like every other day some game has one.

In all my years I have never seen an injury at the shooting range, though. Well, maybe some tired muscles, but still much better than any other sport I can think of.

Father of a large brood, Brisbane

Future Range Officer

Dear SSAA Qld,

Many, many, years ago, as a younger man, I did a lot of shooting, mostly hunting. After a long break though I recently went out to SSAA Townsville and it has really re-inspired me. I think my future may be in target shooting rather than hunting - I am not as mobile as I used to be. In fact, I am thinking I might have a future as Range Officer.

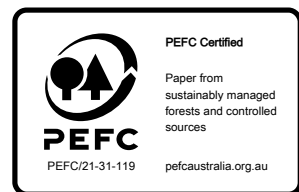
Kim, via email



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

Email: news@ssaaqld.org.au



Help with firearms licence

Hi, I am just asking for some advice regarding my licence. I have an A/B licence with RE1 and SC1 conditions.

I sold my farm last week so no longer meet the requirements (I think) to have the RE1?

I still intend to shoot on private property with permission at times but have no specific property in mind at present.

As far as I can gather, I need to do a Form 4B and lodge at the local police station? I will also need to notify a change in storage location and I believe I can do this online. I gather also that my membership of SSAA Queensland remains as my genuine reason.

Hope you can help.

John H, Qld

From SSAA State Office Team:

Dear John,

Very odd that you have a SC1 code on your licence and have only recreational as your genuine reason.

So, yes, you will need to change your genuine reason to your SSAA Membership. Providing Weapons Licensing Branch with proof of financial membership either with your valid SSAA Queensland membership card or letter of confirmation (not your payment receipt).

If you ticked YES, you need to complete a Form 6A/6B 'Application to Renew Licence-Annexure-Genuine Reason' and lodge together with this application at a Queensland Police Station.

Using Sports of Target shooting should also get you the RE1 code on your licence as well so you can continue to hunt on property with owner's permission.

And yes, you also will need to update your storage address.

Print still appreciated

I love the physical magazine; thanks to everyone involved with it.

It's awesome to sit around a campfire and have a read.

Much appreciated.

Steve, via email

Missing ID

Hi, I forgot to add my middle name to my Weapons Licensing Application. Do you know if there is a way to update the application or what the process is in this case?

I have sent an email to Weapons Licensing, but I know they can be slow to respond so I thought maybe someone in your office might be able to assist me.

Regards, Michaela, Qld

From SSAA State Office Team:

After you lodge your New Licence Application, Weapons Licensing requires you to present your proof of identity to a participating Australia Post outlet.

If you have lodged an application online with any spelling mistakes or if you have a middle name that you don't provide with your application, but it is on your proof of identity documents, you may not be able to complete your proof of identity.

In these situations, the only option is to wait for the original application to expire and then reapply with the correct name.

News

The Report on paper

As Australia's largest print circulation hunting and shooting magazine in Australia, it takes a bit of paper to get it done each month. Proudly printed in Australia by IVE, each issue requires:

- 12 reels, each weighing one ton, for text pages
- 20,000 sheets, four pallets weighing about 600kg each, for the covers.

All that to say, we don't take each issue lightly! Our writers and team invest a great deal of time to bring you great content all year. We hope you enjoy this issue.



Go 'big' with new stickers

Show your loyalty to SSAA Queensland, the Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA) and our new research and political arm the Australian Institute of Legislative Action (AILA) with either of these new stickers. With your membership you literally become a member of three powerful organisations that now act nationally. You join 82,000 members who are part of something bigger and this month 100 lucky members can win a sticker. Simply email win@ssaaqld.org.au with 'Sticker' in the subject line and your name and membership card number in the email. The stickers will soon be available for sale to members. Competition ends August 1, 2026.



THE SAUER 100

An affordable workhorse for the hunter

By Billy Allen



Three Sauer 100 rifles featured in this review: (left) a .243 Win XTA topped with a Leupold Vari-X II 3-9x40 (Leupold QR bases and mounts), (centre) .270 Win XT fitted with a Leupold VX-3i 3.5-10x40 (Talley low one-piece mounts) and (right) 9.3x62 Cerakote XT carrying a Leupold VX-12-7x33 (Leupold STD base and mounts). All models accept Remington 700-compatible mounting systems.

Welcome to the world of Sauer 100 rifles, a lineup that quietly made its mark in the

Australian hunting scene after its release in 2016. In my search for a new rifle, the Sauer 100 caught my eye. Interestingly, the same factory that makes Blaser and Mauser also makes Sauer, so I had no concerns about the rifle's build quality or functionality. The Sauer 100 is the budget and base model rifle produced by J.P. Sauer & Sohn and offers impressive quality and value.

I've become a big fan of the Sauer 100 in the last few years, and I'm proud to say I now own three different Sauer 100 rifles. In upgrading my older hunting rifles, I purchased Sauer 100s. I now own a .243 Win XTA, a .270 Win XT and a 9.3x62 Cerakoted XT.

First impressions

Upon my initial handling of the Sauer 100 at the gun shop, I found myself excited by the rifle. Sauer's entry-level model immediately stood out because it offers shooters premium features and excellent value for money. The Sauer 100 is an excellent entry-level contender - solid, reliable and priced between \$1300 & \$1900; great value for hunters and shooters across the spectrum from novice to seasoned veteran. Overall, this rifle is a neat, robust German-made hunting and sporting rifle with outstanding quality offered at an affordable price.



Shooting from an improvised field position, using a large tree as a stable rest with the Sauer 100.

The build quality and manufacturing standard of my first Sauer 100 in a 9.3x62 Cerakote XT was extraordinary, which motivated the acquisition of my second and then third Sauer 100.

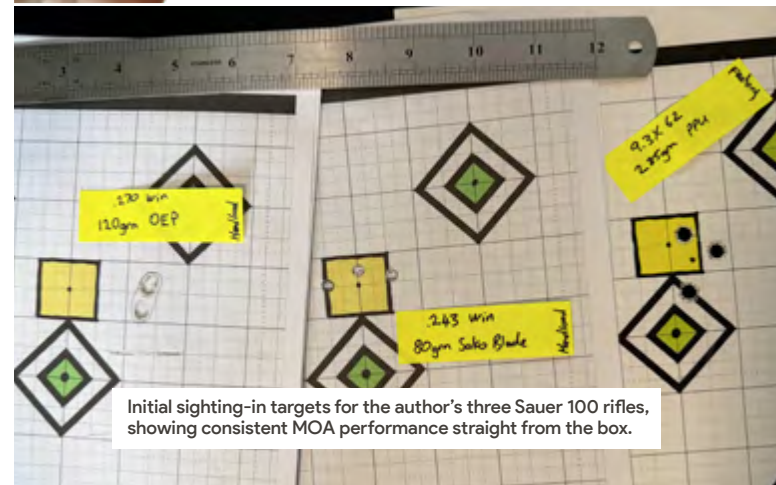
The stainless barrel models come threaded with end caps as seen on the .243 and .270. All the barrels are cold hammer-forged, with the standard action length rifles sporting 22-inch (56 cm) long barrels. A slight quality control issue with the rifle's finish is that the

stainless end caps have a different sheen than the barrel, creating a noticeable distraction.

All these rifles sport black polymer stocks that are tough and impervious to all weather conditions. These rifles are serious, functional hunting tools - no unnecessary visual embellishments and built to be a durable workhorse in all-weather conditions.



Sauer 100 end caps and threaded barrel.



Initial sighting-in targets for the author's three Sauer 100 rifles, showing consistent MOA performance straight from the box.

In the field

The Sauer 100 rifles really came into their own once I took them out hunting. Everything I had felt in the shop translated into practical performance on the ground, where the details that matter most - balance, reliability, and weather resistance - made the difference.

The Ergo Max stock is one of those designs that immediately feels right in the hands. It has a clean, attractive Schnabel fore-end and just the right amount of checkering on the pistol grip and fore-end, but comfortable enough to give confidence in all weather conditions. Made from soft-touch black polymer, the stock is tough and balanced. An ambidextrous palm swell and standard QD sling studs round out the practical touches. The XTA variant adds an adjustable cheek piece with 35mm of rise, so eye alignment stays spot-on no matter the optic or shooting position.

What really sets it apart is the 'Ever Rest' factory bedding: an aluminium block recoil lug epoxied solidly into the stock, representing one of the superior factory bedding applications observed in a rifle of this price point. The recoil pad is firm without being spongy, reducing felt recoil effectively, and the slightly upward-sloping comb allows just enough cheek separation under recoil to eliminate any cheek slap. Everything stays comfortable and controlled, even when taking rapid shots or shooting from different positions.

This rifle carries comfortably on the shoulder all day with a sling, stays balanced when you bring it up quickly and never feels like a burden, which, for a hunting rifle you'll actually use, is exactly what matters.



Billy with his trophy red stag taken during the 2025 roar, harvested with the .270 Win Sauer 100 XT.

"The bolt is a standout. I've felt nothing smoother - a 60° lift that makes follow-up shots instinctive."



I started with zeroing and group testing at 100 yards on the farm, under typical Queensland conditions with a bit of wind. The .243 was fed hand-loaded 80gr Sako Powerhead blades, the .270 ran factory 130gr Remington Core-Lokts alongside hand-loaded 120gr Outer Edge projectiles, and the 9.3x62 used factory 285gr PPU loads. Across all three rifles, a minute of angle was achieved or better straight out of the box, with no need for load development or extensive testing of factory ammunition.

The Sauer 100 uses a detachable double-stack magazine: 5+1-round capacity in standard calibres (4+1 in magnums). The magazine drops in and out cleanly and quietly. Feeding and ejection have been completely reliable with no issues across all my rifles. The design allows easy top-loading directly into the open action, my preferred method for topping off my magazine in the field.

The magazine release catch is sensibly recessed at the front of the magazine well, keeping it protected from accidental bumps or snags in the bush - no risk of losing the magazine when you need it most. The magazine well plate and trigger guard are formed as a single piece of alloy, a thoughtful touch that's missing from many rifles in this price range. While I personally prefer an internal magazine in a hunting rifle,

the Sauer's external setup sits flush with the bottom of the stock and functions so reliably that it's easy to accept the modern approach. Overall, the magazine system is straightforward, quiet and dependable - exactly what you want when you're on a hunt of a lifetime.

The bolt is a standout. I've felt nothing smoother - a 60° lift that makes follow-up shots instinctive. It's virtually impossible to jam unless you really try. The action is a turn bolt-action with three locking lugs, dual sprung plunger ejectors for reliable ejection, push-feed, single raceway for smooth travel and cycling. The bolt handle features an interesting black, grooved nylon knob, and the safety is a three-position lever on the rear right side of the action (fire / safe + bolt operable / safe + bolt locked).

The triggers are adjustable to between 1 to 2kg (2.2-4.4lb). I adjusted the triggers on my Sauer 100s to around 2.5 pounds; they are single stage, break cleanly and have very little over-travel.



The Sauer 100 polymer magazine fully loaded with five 9.3x62 cartridges.



The .243 Win Sauer 100 XTA stainless synthetic rifle, resting against a tree during a recent pre-rut scouting trip in the bush.

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FIVE-STAND RELOADED

By Darryl Groundwater

The Ripley Complex at Stewartdale became the first venue to trial the new version of shotgun Five-stand. Although similar to the Five-stand discipline that others are successfully running, SSAA Queensland looked outside of Australia to evaluate the Five-stand concepts used by the Americans and shooters in the UK. As the cost of ammunition is rising, there is a preference to utilise ten pairs and five single targets per round. Changing the structure of the discipline to be as economical as practical is beneficial to shooting costs.



The new version of Five-stand appeals to many shooters.

Five-stand has, in the past, been well received by the shotgun fraternity. The Birdbrain discipline based over five stands became a drawcard for those who preferred unknown targets. Well received in the 90s, teams were selected by the results of state titles and national titles to compete in the USA and New Zealand. Although the successful results for our Association was commendable, we stepped away from attending the US events and focused on competing at the New Zealand Clay Target championships. Today, the Five-stand (caged) concept is one of the progressive shotgun disciplines strongly pursued by avid competitors.

Taking into account the strong attendance of aged shooters presently enjoying the clay target sports, associations have realised the growing senior age group necessitated a review of categories. Additional categories, based on age blocks, have been introduced by the majority of shooting associations in Australia and overseas. More than 240 guns competed in the recent 2026 ACTA Beretta Five-stand championships. 101 of these competitors were aged

55 years and older. The growing interest in this discipline by senior shooters could be based on the four following points:

- Ease of walking to the stands.
- Turnaround time for a round of Five-stand is approximately 25 minutes.
- Target distance is limited; thereby delivering high scores.
- High customer satisfaction and enjoyment.

The outcome when trialling a new version of any shooting discipline is often met with a degree of unpredictability and satisfaction or, dissatisfaction. So, an intrepid band of supporters, calling themselves



The Ripley Complex at Stewartdale – a welcoming venue for the new version of Five-stand.



Five-stand was started as an interesting variation of Sporting Clays.

‘Friends of Ripley Sporting Clays’, organised the grounds, serviced the machines and set three 25-target courses to attract interest in SSAA Queensland’s new discipline.

Team leaders, Dan and Ray, moved containers, laid out the grounds, set the machines and organised the various colourful standard and exotic clays to deliver a successful outcome. 67 competitors braved the new discipline and, as anticipated, the outcome was enjoyable, competitive and entertaining.

The concept of SSAA Five-stand is to warm up each shooter with a single target, a report pair, then finishing off with the challenging simultaneous pair. Between six to eight traps identified with either letters or numbers release an assortment of standard and exotic targets. A menu board with a single target, a report pair

and a simultaneous pair provides competitors with the opportunity to prepare for their next call. Incoming targets were set to fall within 25 metres of the shooting stands. Traps releasing quartering and ‘going away’ targets were positioned within 20 metres of the stands and crossing target flights were designed to be engaged within an imaginary line 35 metres from the stands.



Valuable helpers during the trial included Monica and Lyndall.

FIVE-STAND RELOADED

Clever course setting for the simultaneous pairs provided the competitors with adequate time to engage both targets. With the introduction of the new SSAA Queensland Shotgun Rules, both targets can be scored with one shot, and both shots can be executed at one target of any pair. An additional new rule addresses a single target that denies the competitor a second shot (e.g., the target breaks on an obstruction) will be reinstated with only one shot to be loaded. This new rule avoids the wastage of a non-scoring shot to be fired.

The diverse target choice utilising up to five different traps for each stand is a stimulant for shooters to prepare for the pairs.

The success of our recent trial event was endorsed by the positive response from the competitors. Two interesting repeated comments were: ‘you have to get your head around each pair as your turn often comes too quickly for your next call’, and ‘remember the flight path of your next target’. The optional gun position on call was also well received.

This new style of Five-stand can be shot in less than 20 minutes and allows the competitors ample time to sit and recharge for their next 25 targets. A round of 25 targets can be easily managed with five or six competitors, or fewer competitors if necessary.

Friends of Ripley Sporting Clays will host a three-day sporting clay event from July 17 to 19. There will be a 50-target, side-by-side event on the Friday and a 200-target event over the Saturday and Sunday. Camping is available on the grounds. A flyer will be posted on Facebook. 📄

Understanding the concept of LEAD in SHOTGUN SHOOTING

By Liz Rymill

Unlike a lot of scattergun shooters, I didn't get started in the sport until I was in my late 20s. My father, a former national serviceman, introduced me to the rifle as a child, but the shotgun was only produced to scare off birds from the orchard.

It wasn't until I met my now husband that I was first introduced to clay target shooting and later, wing-shooting. Therein started the journey to understanding how to hit a moving object by shooting somewhere along its anticipated future flight path – mind bending!

A saying that has stuck with me, from an old English wing-shooting book, is: "When you're shooting in the field and you want to do the biz, you've got to shoot where it's going, and not where it is."

Getting ahead

Shotguns are primarily used to shoot targets that are in the air and on the move, and to hit a flying target it is necessary to have the shotgun barrels pointing and moving *in front of* the target when the trigger is pulled. Why? Because the load of shot pellets need time to travel the distance from the end of the barrel to wherever the moving target is.

Ironically, the 'aim of the game' is to not aim at all. In other words, there's no aiming at a moving target. The shotgun is swung smoothly and continuously, trigger discharged and movement 'follows through' much like a tennis racquet when striking a tennis ball: by watching the ball our brain and body calculate the timing of the shot, and the racquet continues to move after the ball is struck (the follow through).

Shotgun shooting is a 'hand eye' sport, and it can be argued that it has more in common with golf and tennis, than rifle shooting. Now, if you've spent any time watching clay or wing shooting, you know that clays are thrown at all sorts of distances and angles – and indeed, ducks and fowl fly at varying speeds and trajectories. Thus, your lead will be different for each 'presentation'.

So, how to figure out all those different leads? Practice and experience — connecting with lots of different targets at all those different angles and distances — will gradually build up a library in the shooter's mind.



A sporting clays shooter calculates lead at a club shoot.



If you want broken targets, calculating lead (pronounced 'Lee-d') requires practice and experience, but there are three key methods to employ when in the field or on the range.

Acquiring lead

For the shotgun shooter, the need to calculate lead is only one part of the equation – the other is utilising a method to attain it, and there are three key methods: sustained or maintained lead, swing-through and pull-away. There may be other names for these, or variations of, but these three key methods ought to be understood, experimented with and used in the shooter's tool bag, depending on the nature of target or wing shooting activity.

Sustained/maintained lead

Sustained lead requires the shooter to keep the muzzle travelling ahead of the target the entire swing – or, starting in front and staying in front – until the shot is completed. It's the method most commonly adopted in skeet (where target presentations are known) and increasingly in sporting clays. Once the shooter builds up a visual library of target presentations, the brain can quite readily adopt this method of acquiring lead and consistently breaking targets at a chosen break point.

Swing-through

The name of this type of lead acquisition tells much of the story; with swing-through, the shooter calls for and visually acquires the target, moves the barrels toward – on – and then past the target, speeding up slightly on passing, and then discharging the shot while still moving the barrel (following through). This type of instinctive lead acquisition is common and successful in the field, as long as the shooter maintains visual focus on the target/ bird.

New shooters can use the skeet field to understand lead, particularly the concept of sustained/ maintained lead.



Pull-away

Pull-away is actually a variation of pull-through – and favoured among English sporting shooters – but instead of starting the swing with the barrel inserted behind the clay target, the muzzle 'joins up' with the flying target, stays on it for a short distance, and then accelerates away from the target along its anticipated future path, while firing.

Some shooters find this lead type a little easier to learn than swing-through because if personal timing is a little out, all is not lost. The key to both, though, is that the muzzle of the shotgun must be moving faster than the target when the trigger is pulled, otherwise the shot will be missed behind.

This method works for a variety of different shots at just about any distance, angle and speed. In fact, many experienced shooters prefer this both for very long clay bird shots, as well as finding it particularly good for shooting in tight cover. As with any of the other methods, follow-through is critical. 🎯

KEEPING THE FAMILY IN THE SPORT

Reloading as more than just ammunition

By Isaac Williams

For most of us, enjoying the shooting sports only happens when we're at the range or out in the paddock hunting. The reality, however, is that life doesn't always allow for that. Work, school, weather, and general busyness mean that sometimes weeks go by between range days — and months between proper hunts.

For our family, reloading has become the way we stay connected to the sport when we can't be punching holes in paper or lining up behind a rifle in the field.

Most of my mates used to think reloading was either for the mad scientists chasing cloverleaf groups at 500 yards or simply a way to save money. While there's truth in both of those ideas, for our family it's about extending the experience beyond the range. A day's shooting

doesn't end when the last round is fired. It carries on at home, at the bench, with a pile of spent brass and a plan for the next trip.

Instead of packing everything away and waiting for the next outing, we bring part of the sport home with us.

When I first started reloading, I wanted to involve my wife and the kids. Over time it has become a family activity rather than a solo job in the shed. Sorting brass, inspecting cases, and setting up the bench might seem like small tasks, but they're ideal for getting everyone involved. Each person has a role, and that naturally builds responsibility and ownership.

It also creates conversation. While we work, we talk about what performed well at the range, what didn't, and what we might adjust next time. One shooting session

becomes an ongoing project rather than a single event.

One of the biggest benefits has been the respect it builds for both the equipment and the process. When you assemble a round yourself, you gain a real understanding of what goes into it. You see how precise everything needs to be, and you learn quickly that shortcuts and carelessness don't belong anywhere near firearms or ammunition. Inspecting brass has also taught me something else — my wife's eyesight is far better than mine, and perhaps I need stronger glasses.

That respect carries back to the range. Shots aren't wasted. Rifles and ammunition are handled with greater care. There's a clearer connection between preparation and performance.

There's also a surprising amount

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KEEPING THE FAMILY IN THE SPORT

of learning involved. The mathematics behind reloading can be a practical way for high school students to see how classroom lessons apply in the real world. Following load data teaches discipline. Recording results builds organisation. Adjusting seating depth or charge weights demonstrates cause and effect in a very tangible way.

“A day’s shooting doesn’t end when the last round is fired.”

It’s hands-on learning that doesn’t feel like school yet still develops valuable skills. It rewards patience and attention to detail in a way few other hobbies do.

For our adult children, it has also changed their understanding of where ammunition comes from. It’s no longer something that simply appears in a box courtesy of the ‘Bank of Dad.’ They see every step, from empty case to finished round. That understanding builds respect — not just for the gear, but for the responsibility and cost that comes with using it.

There’s something calming about reloading as well. The work at the bench is quiet and methodical. There’s no rush. In a world full of noise and screens, the opportunity to slow down and focus on one task at a time is valuable in itself.



Learning to reload as a family helps build confidence, responsibility and respect for the shooting sports.

For our family, reloading has become part of the rhythm of the sport: shoot, collect brass, reload, shoot again. Each stage connects to the next. It keeps everyone involved, even when we can’t get to the range as often as we’d like.

Now, is reloading as exciting as a week away hunting? Not quite. But it deepens the experience. It turns a single outing into an ongoing process and a hobby into something shared.

There is one minor downside. My wife now knows far more than the average person about calibres,

case sizes and components. A few weeks ago, we were preparing a batch of .22-250 cases I had tucked away in the back of the cupboard. About an hour in, she stopped, gave me a familiar look and asked, “Why are we loading .22-250? We don’t own one...do we?”

Explaining a recently purchased rifle - and its pending arrival - is a conversation best approached with caution.

In the end, though, it’s not really about ammunition at all. It’s about time spent together, learning something practical and staying connected to a sport we all enjoy - even when we’re not pulling the trigger. ©



A tidy bench and a clear process help keep reloading safe, simple and consistent.

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**GROUNDBREAKING INNOVATION
= DUAL-LENS DOMINANCE**



ThermTec WILD 650DL PRO Thermal Monocular Review

By Rob Mori (aka @Hunt.Aus)

The Wild 650DL Pro in the wild.

The ThermTec Wild 650DL Pro represents a significant leap forward in handheld thermal monocular technology, particularly for serious hunters who demand versatility, precision and uncompromising performance in the field. Newly released as part

of ThermTec's premium Wild DL series of monoculars, this device continues to build on the brand's reputation for high sensitivity thermal imaging while introducing standout innovations. This unit address real-world challenges faced by hunters at all times of the day and night, whether you are scouting

in thick wooded areas, scanning open landscapes or even long-range target identification and acquisition. At its core, the Wild 650DL Pro combines exceptional image quality with practical features that make it not just a tool, but a real game changer for ethical, efficient hunting.

One of the most groundbreaking aspects of the Wild 650DL Pro is its true dual lens optical system, featuring switchable 25mm and 50mm objectives (both with an impressive f/0.9 aperture). Unlike many competitors that rely on digital zoom, which often degrades image quality as magnification increases, this unit delivers genuine optical zoom by physically engaging one lens or the other via a smooth, intuitive ring mechanism. The 25mm wide lens provides a broad field of view for rapid scanning of open fields or in dense cover, which is ideal for spotting movement quickly without the feeling of narrow tunnel vision.

Switching over to the 50mm lens does narrow the field of view but in turn boosts base magnification to around 3.6x as opposed to the wider 25mm lens, which is at 1.8x. Put simply this allows hunters to zoom in on distant targets with crystal-clear detail and no loss in thermal fidelity. This dual field of view (FOV) approach eliminates the compromise between wide area detection and long-range identification, which has been a common weak point in most single lens thermals.

Complementing the optics is a high-performance 640 × 512 VOx uncooled thermal sensor with a 12µm pixel pitch. This resolution captures fine thermal details, rendering heat signatures with sharpness that rivals any other high-end units. The real standout, however, is the ultra-low NETD ≤ 15mK (Noise Equivalent Temperature Difference at 300K), among the most sensitive ratings available in handheld monoculars today. Lower NETD

means the device detects minuscule temperature differences, even subtle contrasts like a deer's ear twitch against cool foliage or body heat through light brush. Paired with a fast 50Hz refresh rate, the image remains smooth and lag-free during movement, whether you're panning across a ridgeline or open terrain tracking a moving animal. This combination excels in adverse conditions, such as heavy rain, fog, dense vegetation or extreme cold, where lesser sensors might wash out or introduce noise.

The display itself further elevates the viewing experience for the user by way of a 1600 × 1200 AMOLED screen, which delivers vibrant, high-contrast imagery with deep blacks and rich color palettes (six options, including white-hot, black-hot, red-hot, green-hot, violet-hot and golden-hot for tailored visualisation best suited to your current landscape).

The high-resolution imaging that the unit provides ensures that details like antler configuration, animal size or even multiple animals in a group remain discernible at extended ranges. I can personally confirm that the screen's clarity reduced the amount of eye strain I have felt using other monoculars during prolonged hunting sessions, which I found was a massive point of difference and a critical factor when spending hours during all night sits or extensive hunts.

Precision is another cornerstone of the Wild



Bright as day even under the cover of total darkness.



A rabbit caught 'red' handed.



When the hunter is the target.



650DL Pro's list of strengths thanks to its integrated laser rangefinder (LRF). Capable of accurate measurements out to significant distances (rated beyond 1000m depending on the conditions), the LRF provides instant distance readings with a single button press, which eliminates any guesswork when judging shot distances. This is especially valuable in uneven terrain or low light scenarios where traditional rangefinders falter. For bowhunters or long-range rifle enthusiasts alike, this feature streamlines decision making while promoting ethical shots and reducing wounded game risks.

In the field, these specs translate to massive advantages. Detection range reaches all the way up to 1300m using the 25mm lens and an impressive 2600m when utilising the 50mm lens option. This truly allows hunters to spot game far beyond what most daylight optics could only hope to achieve. Identification and recognition distances are correspondingly strong (600-1000m+ for clear animal classification depending on size and conditions) making it invaluable for a wide range of

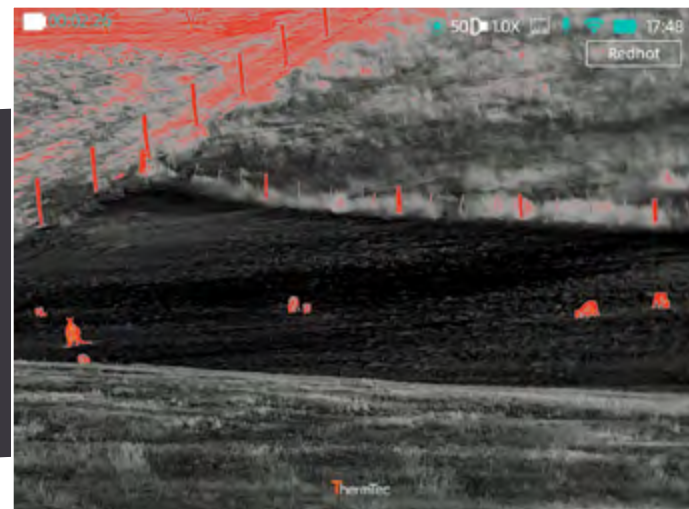
applications from scouting large properties all the way through to locating bedded deer in thick cover. The rugged magnesium alloy body is IP67 dust and waterproof and built to withstand harsh weather ranging from -20°C to +50°C. The interchangeable 18650 battery life supports extended use (around six hours continuous per battery) and features like photo/video recording, Wi-Fi and app connectivity for sharing footage and ergonomic one-handed operation (joystick and focus wheel) make it easy to navigate even with gloves on those colder winter mornings or nights.

What truly sets the Wild 650DL Pro apart is how all these features and innovations come together to enhance hunting success and safety while out in the field. The dual-lens flexibility means you only need to carry one device while offering the benefits of two, reducing pack weight and simplifying gear management. The superior sensitivity and low NETD cut through environmental noise, revealing animals that might remain hidden to competitors. I was blown away by its ability to pick up faint heat trails or subtle

"The dual-lens flexibility means you only need to carry one device while offering the benefits of two..."



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movements in cover, turning marginal opportunities into confident identifications. The LRF adds a layer of precision that supports responsible hunting while the overall build quality inspires confidence in demanding backcountry conditions.

Compared to predecessors such as the Wild 650D or other single lens models, the DL Pro's integration of laser ranging and refined dual optics marks a clear evolution in what thermal monoculars can do.

It's not the lightest or cheapest option, but for dedicated hunters prioritising



performance over compromises, its value is phenomenal. Whether glassing vast agricultural fields, navigating dense areas or even pursuing predators under the cover of darkness, the ThermTec Wild 650DL Pro delivers the clarity, range, and reliability that separate good hunts from exceptional ones.

Another nice touch is the extras that come in the box to get you started, which include: 2x 18650 rechargeable Li-ion batteries (providing up to six hours each), a two port battery charger, robust protective case with a strap, neck and hand/wrist strap, USB Type-C cable for charging and data transfer,

microfiber/non-dust cloth and the quick start guide/instructions to make sure you get the most out of the unit.

In an era where thermal technology continues to advance rapidly, the Wild 650DL Pro stands out as a thoughtfully engineered tool that addresses a hunter's needs: versatility without complexity, precision without bulk, and performance that performs when it matters most. For those serious about nocturnal pursuits, this monocular isn't just an upgrade, it's a new benchmark. Distributed by Spika with an RRP of \$5,299. 📍

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TESLONG

NTG150W and NTG200H+NTS500B



Left: NTG150W borescope in retail packaging. Right: NTG200H + NTS500B bundle in retail packaging. Both borescopes supplied for review by Outback Pursuit Marketing Group Pty Ltd (OPMG).

By Billy Allen

In the world of firearms maintenance, few tools have transformed the way shooters inspect and care for their rifles quite like the modern digital borescope. Once the domain of professional gunsmiths wielding expensive optical instruments costing upwards of \$1,000, borescopes are now accessible to everyday hunters, target shooters and reloaders. Affordable, user-friendly and packed with features, these devices allow us to peer deep inside barrels, chambers and actions to diagnose issues that were previously invisible or guessed at through indirect symptoms.

A borescope is essentially a tiny camera on a probe that transmits live video to a screen, phone or tablet. Its primary role is to reveal the true condition of a barrel's interior - fouling, wear, defects or damage that can affect accuracy, safety and longevity. Hard carbon rings, copper buildup, fire-cracking, throat erosion, crown damage, and even manufacturing voids can all be identified with clarity. Beyond diagnostics, borescopes verify cleaning effectiveness,

guide maintenance schedules, and help troubleshoot precision problems. For the reloader, they offer insight into pressure signs, chamber condition, and can even be used to inspect the internal condition of a fired case. For the hunter, they provide peace of mind that a rifle is safe and ready before a hunting trip and a critical shot.

This review examines two Teslong borescopes supplied by OPMG (Outback Pursuit Marketing Group Pty Ltd): the wireless NTG150W at \$299.95 RRP and the premium NTG200H+NTS500B bundle at \$661.95 RRP. Both represent significant advancements in accessible bore inspection technology, but they cater to different users and budgets.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The NTG150W arrives in a compact, branded box that immediately signals practicality. Inside, the components are neatly organised: a wireless transmitter, a long flexible probe, a USB charging

cable, six side-view mirrors ranging from 0.2"/5mm to 0.4"/10mm and a quick-start card, all enclosed in a sturdy zip-opening softshell case. The probe feels robust yet lightweight, with a smooth, durable sheath. The transmitter is palm-sized, with clearly labelled buttons. At under 415 grams total, it's highly portable - ideal for range bags or hunting kits.

The NTG200H+NTS500B bundle exudes premium build quality. The complete kit comes housed in a sturdy foam-lined box with a magnetic closure. Inside there is a folding 26"/66cm rigid probe, a five-inch

NTS500B monitor and charging cable, two braided USB-C cables for connecting the probe to a PC and/or the NTS500B monitor, a cased five side-view mirrors kit ranging from 0.2"/5mm to 0.4"/10mm, and a kickstand. The monitor's aluminium-framed screen and knurled probe handle suggest durability. The rigid folding probe mechanism - unique in the Teslong lineup - feels innovative yet reassuringly solid. At first glance, this is a system designed for frequent, detailed work.

Both units are designed and built to reflect attention to longevity and image quality.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND DATA



Unboxing the NTG150W borescope. The supplied zipped soft-shell case provides compact storage and protection for the unit.

NTG150W

RRP	\$299.95
Probe Diameter	< 5.0mm (.20 cal)
Probe Length Options	48-inch flexible/ semi-rigid
Display	Phone/tablet via Wi-Fi
Video Resolution	720p (app-dependent)
Photo Resolution	1280x720
LED Lighting	3 levels + off (ring LED)
Focus	Fixed (~10 mm forward); mirror-adjusted side view
Connectivity	Wi-Fi (Smart Endoscope app)
Storage	Phone/tablet gallery
Battery	Transmitter: ~4 hrs (rechargeable)
Mirrors	6 threaded (standard) Calibre-specific kit (.20 to .40+)
Water Resistance	Probe tip IP67
Weight (approx)	280g (probe and transmitter)

The NTG150W prioritises simplicity and wireless freedom.



Unboxing the NTG200H + NTS500B bundle. The sturdy retail box doubles as a protective storage case for the complete kit.

NTG200H + NTS500B

RRP	\$661.95 (bundle)
Probe Diameter	< 5.0mm (.20 cal)
Probe Length Options	26-inch folding rigid
Display	5-inch IPS screen (854x480)
Video Resolution	1080p (monitor), 720p (app/PC)
Photo Resolution	1920x1080
LED Lighting	3 levels + off (ring LED) + monitor work light
Focus	Adjustable focus ring (side view)
Connectivity	USB-C monitor, USB-A/C/PC
Storage	Micro SD card (up to 128GB)
Battery	Monitor: ~4-5 hrs rechargeable
Mirrors	Cased 5 threaded (standard) Calibre-specific kit (.20 to .40+)
Water Resistance	Probe tip IP67
Weight (approx)	650g (with monitor and probe)

The NTG200H+NTS500B bundle combines high-resolution recording, standalone operation and innovative focusing.

SETUP AND EASE OF USE

NTG150W – Wireless simplicity

Setup begins with charging the transmitter with the provided USB-A to USB-C universal cable. Select your flexible probe and thread on the aviation connector and plug it into the transmitter. A long press on the power button activates the unit; the ring LED illuminates, and the Wi-Fi beacon broadcasts within five seconds.

On an Android or iOS smartphone-type device, download the Smart Endoscope app (free, ~50 MB). Connect to the ‘Wi-Fi Cam_XXXXXX’ network - no internet required. The app auto-detects the borescope, requests media permissions, and delivers a live feed in fewer than 15 seconds. Image orientation adjusts via on-screen controls; brightness is toggled via the transmitter’s middle button (three levels plus off); a long-press zooms digitally.

Inserting the probe is straightforward. The flexible probes require slight coaxing to enter the chamber but conform to contours once inserted into the chamber and slide easily down the bore. Side-view inspection demands a mirror. Thread it onto the probe tip, adjust the distance for focus, and lock it with the ring. Focus may require two to three attempts, but once set, the image is sharp and stable.

Capturing media is intuitive: tap the shutter for photos, switch to video mode and tap record. Files save directly to the phone’s gallery. The transmitter’s physical shutter button allows one-handed operation.

Battery life comfortably exceeds 3.5 hours of continuous use. The lack of a dedicated screen means reliance on a phone, but this also eliminates extra weight and failure points.



The NTG200H + NTS500B bundle in use; rifle bore examination is easy using the rigid scope probe and the high-resolution monitor.

NTG200H + NTS500B – Premium Standalone System

The bundle’s centrepiece is the NTS500B five-inch monitor - a rugged, bright IPS panel with physical buttons for power, mode, lighting, capture and navigation. Charge via USB-C (cable included), attach the NTG200H folding probe via the braided cable, and power on. The system boots in fewer than three seconds, displaying battery, SD card status and mode.

The folding probe is the star. Unfold, twist the collar to lock, and it becomes a rigid 26-inch shaft - perfect for rifle barrels. The adjustable focus ring near the tip is a game-changer. Screw a side-view mirror fully down, insert the probe, and rotate the ring until the lands and grooves snap into clarity. No more trial-and-error mirror positioning. Focus holds across the entire barrel length, even in varying light.



The NTG150W wireless borescope is in use, transmitting live images directly to a smartphone for convenient inspection.

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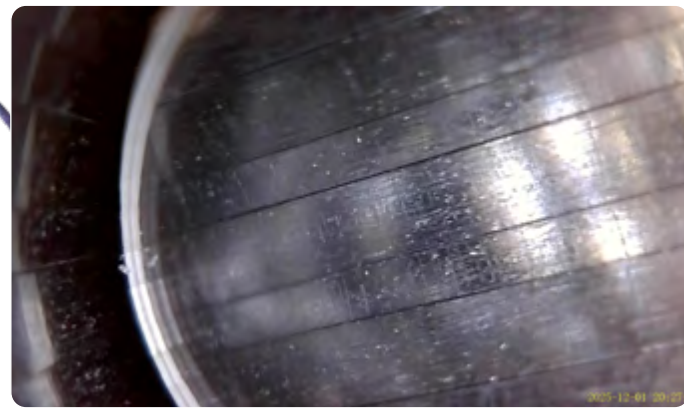
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The monitor's interface mirrors a digital camera:
Mode button: cycles photo, video and playback
Light button: adjusts probe LED (3 levels + off)
Up/Down: digital zoom (1.3x, 1.5x) or image flip
Settings: resolution, date stamp, audio, auto-off, format SD card.



The Teslong NTS500B five-inch monitor is attached to the 26-inch folding rigid probe, providing a clear, hands-free view inside the barrel.



Close-up internal views of rifle barrel rifling (lands and grooves) captured with the bore scopes under review, revealing detail that is impossible to see with the naked eye.

Video records in full 1080p to microSD. Photos are 2MP. A built-in work light illuminates your workspace - ideal for evening cleaning sessions.

Insertion follows standard practice: chamber-end entry with a bore guide. The probe's measurement markings and rubber depth stop aid repeatability. The monitor's kickstand allows hands-free viewing, though most users hold it naturally.

Transferring files is flexible: remove the microSD card, connect the monitor via USB-A to C cable to a computer (it appears as a drive), or use the secondary USB cable for live PC viewing.

Ease of use is exceptional. The standalone screen eliminates phone dependency, and the focus ring simplifies side-view inspections. The folding design reduces packed size by nearly half - brilliant for range transport.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Teslong NTG150W (\$299.95) is the ideal entry point for shooters seeking wireless convenience and portability. Its robust probe options, reliable app and sub-\$300 price make bore inspection accessible without complexity. It excels for occasional use or field diagnostics where a phone is already on hand. The lack of a dedicated screen and 720p ceiling are minor trade-offs for the freedom it offers. The flexible probe required more finesse at times when maneuvering the scope within the barrel, as the feel and response to movement was sluggish, but expected due to the scope being flexible and only semi-rigid. There was some buffering between the transmitter and iPhone app; overall, functional use of the scope was acceptable.

The NTG200H+NTS500B bundle (\$661.95) is a professional-grade system designed for frequent users - reloaders, precision shooters, gunsmiths or anyone regularly inspecting multiple firearms. The five-inch 1080p monitor, adjustable focus ring, folding probe and calibre-specific mirrors deliver unmatched clarity and efficiency. It justifies the premium cost through time saved, image quality and standalone reliability. The 26-inch probe was too short to allow a complete full-length bore inspection from the chamber end on my standard- and long-action rifles in barrels 22 inches or longer. Muzzle-end entry was required to inspect the entire barrel. While not a major drawback, it is worth noting.

Both units share Teslong's hallmarks: durable construction, IP67 probe tips, effective LED lighting and thoughtful accessories. They outperform traditional optical borescopes in terms of usability and cost, while revealing details - such as carbon rings, throat erosion, and crown condition - that directly inform maintenance and performance.

For the hunter heading into the field or returning after a wet day afield, the NTG150W slips into your kit and can quickly confirm barrel condition. For the reloader chasing sub-MOA groups, the NTG200H+NTS500B becomes a bench-side companion, documenting every cleaning cycle.

In an era where precision matters and barrel life is precious, a borescope is no longer a luxury - it's an affordable and essential diagnostic tool. Teslong, distributed in Australia by OPMG, has democratised this technology. Choose the NTG150W for smart simplicity; choose the NTG200H+NTS500B for uncompromising detail. Either way, you'll see your barrels as never before.

Products supplied for review by OPMG
 | Outback Pursuit Marketing Group Pty Ltd. 🇦🇺



WHERE PERFORMANCE MATTERS, MAINTENANCE MATTERS

By Taylah Campbell May

In the world of shooting, the reliability of your equipment isn't optional. Often proper care and maintenance is neglected. Whether you are constantly at the range, in the field or simply storing your firearms, preventative maintenance is the difference between flawless performance and frustrating failure. We have all heard variations of maintenance advice, but what if there is a new benchmark in firearm care?

StrikeHold and Mako Oil may just be that. These advanced maintenance solutions bring something different to the table – long-lasting dry film lubrication that provides protection for months, not days.

StrikeHold isn't just a lubricant, rather it's a precision-engineered penetrant, corrosion inhibitor, and moisture displacer that is designed to protect metal components in harsh environments. There are numerous reasons that shooters are switching to StrikeHold, including providing deep penetration, reducing carbon build-up adhesion and extending servicing intervals.

Similarly, Mako Oil, a penetrating lubricant made from oils of deep-sea fish, bonds to metal surfaces and dries, forming an extremely thin lubricating film that isn't tacky or wet. There are many advantages of using Mako Oil, not only is it a long-lasting, dry to the touch lubricant, but it also reduces wear

on moving parts, making it ideal for precision components. This means a smoother bolt action, cleaner trigger, improved reliability and less frequent reapplications.

The great part about both of these products is that they aren't just firearm specific; they can be used to maintain fishing reels, knives, tools, marine gear, and outdoor and 4x4 gear. Since they dry into a protective film, they reduce the attachment of unwanted contaminants to your equipment.

When reliability counts, your maintenance products should work as hard as you do. StrikeHold and Mako Oil aren't just another spray and wipe solution – they provide serious, long-term protection for serious shooters and outdoorsmen. If you are diligent about preventative care, performance and longevity, maybe it's time to consider other options. Where performance matters, maintenance matters.

If you are keen to give either of these products a try, check out Alpha LED, an Australian-owned company that pride themselves in supporting and sponsoring other small businesses. Alpha LED lighting first discovered StrikeHold about eight years ago while trying to find a solution to more efficient installation of pool lighting. This is where they found that StrikeHold allowed them to use a battery-operated power drill underwater for more than five minutes and



continued functioning afterwards. The capillary crawl of StrikeHold gets into all the mechanical parts and creates a watertight barrier. It is this feature that made it ideal for use on firearms, especially if your equipment is exposed to the elements. Soon after discovery, Alpha LED connected with the USA-based manufacturers and have been working extensively on further development of StrikeHold. StrikeHold was both developed and tested by the US Military as a weapons cleaner and has since seen many war zones.

For more information or to purchase products, visit: alphaledlighting.com.au

And don't forget members get ten per cent off your first order when quoting 'FOREST10 for 10%'. ©

SOMEBODY'S POISONED THE WATERHOLE


What are the risks and responsibilities around preserving water quality when hunting? Read on from Brendan Jones to find out.

'Ooh, that smell

"Somebody's poisoned the waterhole," I thought, quoting Woody from Toy Story to myself as I slipped out of the passenger side of the Jimny. The warm humid night air carried a distinctive tang to it, tickling my nostrils with an unmistakable olfactory reminiscence of Easter Monday crab pots. More specifically, the crab bait that had been soaking since 'Easter Thursday' (the mandatory sick day before the official long weekend begins).

Lacking the writing skill to convey the nuance, I will just state it: There is a difference in smell between something that rots on the dry land versus something that begins its rotting under the water. The aroma grew ever stronger, bleeding over from smelling into tasting as we peered over the high bank of the small dam to the water four meters below. Sure enough, floating at the near edge, glowing hot in the thermal, was the cause of the stench. A rapidly decomposing boar. Stating the obvious, Dave mused, "Well, I guess it did end up in the water."

This had all began earlier in the week when Dave, while peering over this same wall at a dam devoid of feral animals, had lucked-in as some pigs lucked-out. Exiting the scrub 40m away came a conga-line of swine walking right in under his feet. Fun and frivolity ensued, but when the dust settled, there was a body unaccounted for. Try as he might, Dave couldn't locate the third pig but had a sinking feeling it could have taken a short swim. The next day, the owner checked up on Dave's request, though nothing was found



The dissolving pig in all its glory. Complete with lard slick and escaping maggots littering the surface of the waterhole. You don't have to be a professor of tropical diseases to realise this is a sub-optimal situation.


"Getting a pig out of a dam is enough of a mission immediately after it goes in. But one four days old (in a tropical climate) after dark, is a very different scenario."

floating. A false sense of relief set in, all the while the decomposing pig lay hidden as the gasses slowly built up to the point positive buoyancy would be reached.


Getting a pig out of a dam is enough of a mission immediately after it goes in. But one four days old (in a tropical climate) after dark, is a very different scenario. A scenario we were neither equipment-ally nor emotionally prepared for. There was nothing to do but hunt on and leave it a problem for the future.

Some science

Feral pigs carry all manner of communicable diseases and ailments, whether that be via parasites, viruses or bacterial pathogens. Now, of course, they don't have to be floating dead in a waterhole to pass those on. Leptospirosis, for example, is transmitted primarily by coming in contact with urine or things urine has contaminated, like water. Being that pigs can spread




Some of the hundreds of thousands of maggots burrowing their way out through the pig skin.



Roped up and ready to tow. Three points of pulling would hopefully lead to it coming out in one piece.

SOMEBODY'S POISONED THE WATERHOLE



I love it when a plan comes together. The dogcatcher inspired snare worked a treat.

Some scheming

Halfway through mowing the next morning, I stopped to check my phone, suspiciously no word from Dave. A call revealed he had been thinking up hairbrained cadaver recovery schemes like I had, though was coy about dragging me into it. Viewing it as his problem to solve, since he had shot the pig and I wasn't even in the vicinity, was an admirable stance. But as the old saying goes, 'A body recovery shared is a body recovery halved.' We combined our two half-baked plans into a whole one and, while I finished mowing, Dave started raiding his shed for stuff.

Our load-out wasn't your typical hunting accoutrements. Rubber washing up gloves, a fishing rod, a makeshift dog catcher noose fashioned from Telecom rope and PVC conduit, shade cloth, Glen 20 and copious amounts of hand sanitiser. There wasn't any room left in the Jimny for guns, almost. Dave was wearing sacrificial clothes and had gumboots, saying if anyone was going in it was going to be him as he shot it. I wasn't going to argue him on that point. We packed up and left Dave's for the property, wondering what exactly we had gotten ourselves into.

Some more science

Beyond diseases an animal might be carrying, and beyond the bacteria feeding directly off its decomposing body, the third and last concern to be mentioned is the potential for triggering a toxic algal bloom. Cyanobacteria, a kind of bacteria that photosynthesise, technically aren't true algae, but are often referred to as 'blue-green algae'. Certain kinds of cyanobacteria produce cytotoxins and these



Not all algal blooms are toxic and do occur without being triggered by a carcass in the water.



Glen 20, while not a normal part of the hunting kit, was warranted on this occasion.

toxins can affect different parts of the body, including the liver and nervous system. These can kill cattle and any other mammal that drinks the water. A decomposing animal in a water source represents an influx of nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, which acts like fertiliser for the cyanobacteria. Under the right conditions, algal blooms can occur on their own, but a dead animal breaking down in the water is really stacking the odds. On top of this, as the cyanobacteria dies off and itself decomposes, it leads to a reduction in the dissolved oxygen in the water. If the oxygen drops too low, this can suffocate fish and aquatic plants, leading to more decomposing organic matter in the water, which means more nutrients and more algal blooms.

Situation dependent, water can return to being drinkable, not by Evian® standards of course, but at least for a cow or feral pig. Wind moving over the water increases oxygenation, sunlight breaks down toxins, the water column stratifies with unfavourable elements settling into sediment at the bottom and precipitation helps pollution via dilution. But the best cure, especially in the tropics, is the return of the wet season. Flooding rains purge creeks, streams and waterholes - natural and man-made alike - flipping the reset switch and starting the yearly cycle all over again.

Being that many animals, feed, drink, wallow and sleep in and around water, hunters' interactions with them are heavily skewed towards a close proximity to it. Also, the chances of a dead pig ending up in the water are high if it's standing in it when you pull the trigger.



The chances of a dead pig ending up in the water are pretty high if it is standing in it when you pull the trigger.

The smell of success

Fortunately, prevailing winds had the pig close to the bank where it was the previous night so my lure casting skill wouldn't be tested. Up close and personal, 12 hours later in the midday heat the pong was on another level. An Exxon Valdez style oily lard slick was coming off the rotting carcass, with a veritable waterfall of live maggots cascading out of it. Despite this, some poking with sticks revealed we might be just in the nick of time to get it out in one piece. I was relieved. While our shade cloth scooping idea seemed simple in theory, standing here on the bank, I appreciated having to net the big hot mess out as a chunky soup would have been anything but simple.

We looped up a couple of legs with the prowess of a veteran dog pound officer but the way the rear right trotter fell off made me nervous. Dave was keen for a tow, but I argued: "Do it right, do it once." After a few minutes of mucking around, we had a rope around the neck as well giving us three pulling points, and a decreased chance of sling-shooting a slimy pork leg through the back windscreen of the Jimny. A gentle tow coaxed the pig out from the dam in one piece, and as we neared the final resting place 40m away from the water's edge, a small bump in the ground saw it break in half. Another few hours and we would have been forced into the shade-cloth debacle. Thankfully, personal clean-up was minimal, with excessive hand washing and sanitising undertaken mostly as a precaution - seeing we had managed to avoid touching the pig at all.

We couldn't resist a quick walk in the dry creek bed behind the waterhole, hoping for a pig or dog that had followed its nose or checking back a few nights later on the formerly aquatic carcass for some feeding ferals. Success with either would have made for a good ending to the tale, with both literary symmetry and a moral to end the story about being rewarded to doing the right thing. But keeping the property owner onside and not poisoning a paddock full of cattle was reward enough. Besides, taking responsibility and doing the right thing shouldn't be predicated on a reward. If you're not willing to go wading for a shot animal, then maybe you should think twice about taking the shot. 🚫



It's a shooter's responsibility to make sure a shot pig's finally resting place isn't an aquatic one.



The shallower the water and the fresher the pig is, the easier the recovery becomes.



Best practice is not only to remove a dead animal from the water, but to drag it a fair way from the water's edge, reducing contamination as much as possible. Additionally, a storm in the coming days could raise the water level enough that the carcass ends up in it.

By Sam Talbot

SSSAA Bowen is a well-established club with a long and interesting history. The site itself dates back to the early 1950s, when it was used as a military training area during the Korean War era. Army training at the time included the use of firearms such as the Thompson submachine guns and even grenades. In the decades that followed, the range transitioned into civilian use, with the Bowen Rifle Club operating on site before the SSAA Bowen Branch was eventually incorporated in 1994.

Today, the branch operates across a sizeable property made up of multiple lease lots, totalling about 72 hectares. While the branch in its current form has been running for about 15 years, the longer history of the range remains an important part of its identity.

Membership at SSAA Bowen is strong, with about 700 shooters, including a significant number of pistol shooters, as well as a growing cohort of women and



Club secretary Peter Steers shows the range with a great natural backstop.



Bowen Branch Secretary Peter Steers at part of the original range infrastructure, a reminder of the site's history as a military training area in the 1950s.

junior members. The club has also ensured its facilities are accessible, with disabled access available across key areas including parking, ramps and amenities.

The range supports a wide variety of disciplines. Facilities include a 100-metre range, an action match area, shotgun ranges and dedicated air rifle and air pistol ranges. Regular shoots cover Benchrest, Field Rifle, Action Match, Target Pistol and shotgun disciplines, with newer additions such as Wild Bunch creating a busy and robust club calendar.

SSAA Bowen is also notable for its involvement in crossbow shooting. It is one of only a small number of approved crossbow clubs in Queensland and possibly the only one in North Queensland.

The club hosts several events throughout the year, including the 'Farr' Out Shootout,

an interclub Lever Action Metallic Silhouette competition, as well as the Target Pistol State Championships later this year (8 and 9 August). These events are great for bringing extra participation from shooters across the region and beyond.

Bowen also boasts a clubhouse, training area, workshop, machinery shed and campground, along with amenities such as toilets and showers. Beyond shooting, the branch is involved in local initiatives including a weed management program with the Whitsunday Regional Council. It also has an established Aboriginal Cultural Heritage agreement with the Birra Gubba Juru Elders.

As for the future, the club has plans to further develop the site, including the addition of archery and bowhunter ranges, along with upgrades to the kitchen and training areas.

SSAA Bowen continues to provide a practical and well-rounded facility for members in the region, supported by an active committee and a consistent calendar of shooting activities. 📍



SSAA Queensland President Jeff Ross and SSAA Bowen President Marty Duggan.

QUEENSLAND GOES INTERNATIONAL WITH END OF TRAIL

By Sam Talbot

A team of SSAA Queensland members recently travelled to the United States to compete at End of Trail (EOT), the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) World Championships for Cowboy Action Shooting, or as the discipline is more commonly known in Australia, Single Action.

This year's event also marked an important milestone for SSAA Queensland, with the selection of the inaugural SSAA Queensland President's Team to represent the state at the world championships. The initiative reflects the organisation's intention to support future international representative teams and recognise shooters who demonstrate strong performance, dedication to the sport and the values of SSAA Queensland.

The 2026 President's Team consisted of Marlboro Man (Rick South), Lucky Strike Lass (Rebecca Leadle), Frank Buck James (Dale Jones), Clancy (Cathy Arley) and Pearl Starr (Kim James).

Held annually in Phoenix, Arizona and organised by SASS, End of Trail attracts competitors from around the world and is

widely regarded as the pinnacle event for the discipline. This year's championship drew 645 competitors, including 21 shooters from Australia representing Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and the ACT.

The team performed strongly throughout the match, with every member of the team earning either a championship buckle or a Clean Match pin. Championship buckles are awarded to top competitors in each category, while a Clean

Match pin recognises shooters who complete the entire match without any penalties or misses across all stages.

Among the standout results was Clancy, who placed second in Lady 49er, while also winning the Speed Shotgun side event. In the Classic Cowboy category, which emphasises period-authentic firearms and

attire alongside shooting skill, Queensland's Marlboro Man finished third and recorded a Clean Match.

Mean Mongrel Matt and Broken Spur, father and son from NSW, both shooting their first ever End of Trail, managed to both land in 7th place in their respective categories of Duelist and Cowboy.

Lucky Strike Lass also delivered a strong performance, placing fourth in Lady Wrangler while shooting a Clean Match.



The Queensland team: L to R – Clancy, Lucky Strike Lass, Marlboro Man, Pearl Starr, Frank Buck James.



Single action shooting requires both accuracy and speed, with a timer following and recording successful shots.

WHAT IS SINGLE ACTION?

Single Action shooting is closely related to Cowboy Action Shooting and recreates the firearms, equipment and atmosphere of the American Old West. Competitors adopt a cowboy-style alias, wear period-inspired clothing and use firearms based on designs from the late 1800s.

The discipline typically involves single-action revolvers, pistol-calibre lever-action rifles and period-style shotguns, with shooters engaging steel targets in timed stages.

Courses of fire are designed around Old West themes and require competitors to move through a sequence of targets using multiple firearms. The combination of historical equipment, themed stages and fast-paced competition makes Single Action one of the most distinctive shooting disciplines.



Frank Buck James, competing in the Silver Senior category, finished 16th and also achieved a Clean Match.

Queensland shooter Pearl Starr finished third in Lady Senior Duelist, despite suffering a significant equipment malfunction during one stage. A jammed rifle forced her to declare the firearm broken with nine rounds remaining, costing valuable time and ultimately denying her a chance at the category world championship.

The wider Australian contingent also achieved several impressive results. Queenslander Kathouse Kelli arguably was the standout, capturing her sixth World Championship buckle, winning the Lady 49er category. Ringer's Ruby from New South Wales claimed victory in the Top 16 Ladies' Shootout and also placed third in Lady Wrangler. Western Australia's Sister Sarah Carnegie secured a World Championship buckle in her category in the Wild Bunch match. Sassy Belle, from NSW, competing at her first ever world championship event, also placed 16th in Lady 49er.

The women no doubt took up most of the spotlight but special

mention to Savage Sam, who returned from retirement to come 3rd in Cowboy and 7th Overall.

Meanwhile Savage Sam's younger brother and Australia's youngest competitor Tornado Tommy, son of Ringer and Ringer's Ruby, placed 6th in his category of Buckaroo.

With strong results across multiple categories, the Queensland team once again demonstrated that Australian shooters can hold their own among the best in the world.

For more results, go to ssaaql.org.au

All Australian - Back Row L to R: Marlboro Man, Clancy, Lucky Strike Lass, Wild Ruby Rose, Charlie Wagon, Pearl Starr, Frank Buck James, Sister Sarah Carnegie. Front Row L-R: Ringer's Ruby, The Ringer From Down Under, (photo bomber), Jackaroo, Kathouse Kelli, Constable Nelson, Broken Spur, The Trapper From Oz, Waco Kid From Oz, Sassy Belle, Mean Mongrel Matt, Savage Sam. Centre Front: Tornado Tommy.



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	Digital	3840x2160	55mm	5.5x-44x (8x)	14.0 x 8.8m			
D335-4K	Thermal	384x288	35mm	3.8x-30.4x (8x)	13.7m x 10.3m	➔ >8h		
	Digital	3840x2160	55mm	5.5x-44x (8x)	14.0 x 8.8m			
D635-4K	Thermal	640x512	35mm	2.5x-20x (8x)	21.9m x 17.6m	➔ >8h		
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6.5mm 264 Cal. (.264/6.71mm Diameter)

- 100 gr. HP VK #1710 B.C. .259

7mm 284 Cal. (.284/7.21mm Diameter)

- 100 gr. HP VK #1895 B.C. .209

30 Cal. (.308/7.62mm Diameter)

- 110 gr. HP VK #2110 B.C. .177
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- 65 gr. SBT GK #1395 B.C. .303 **10" TWIST**

6mm 243 Cal. (.243/6.17mm Diameter)

- 85 gr. HPBT GK #1530 B.C. .311

25 Cal. (.257/6.53mm Diameter)

- 90 gr. HPBT GK #1615 B.C. .250
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6.5mm 264 Cal. (.264/6.71mm Diameter)

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7mm 284 Cal. (.284/7.21mm Diameter)

- 140 gr. SBT GK #1905 B.C. .416
- 140 gr. HPBT GK #1912 B.C. .375
- 150 gr. SBT GK #1913 B.C. .436
- 160 gr. SBT GK #1920 B.C. .455
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6.5mm 264 Cal. (.264/6.71mm Diameter)

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270 Cal. 6.8 SPC (.277/7.04mm Diameter)

- 140 gr. TGK #4440 B.C. .508
- 175 gr. TGK #4475 B.C. .560 **8" TWIST**

7mm 284 Cal. (.284/7.21mm Diameter)

- 140 gr. TGK #4540 B.C. .545
- 150 gr. TGK #4550 B.C. .545
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- 180 gr. TGK #4580 B.C. .632 **8" TWIST NEW**

30 Cal. (.308/7.62mm Diameter)

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338 Cal. (.338/8.59mm Diameter)

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Profile:

Jared McCarthy

WHAT SHOOTING REALLY GIVES YOU

By Sam Talbot

The pathway starts with showing up and putting in the work.



Jared has competed on the international stage many times.

If you asked Jared McCarthy at 12 years old where shooting would take him, he probably wouldn't have had much of an answer. Like a lot of juniors, he got into shooting through a local program, liked it and simply kept turning up.

That first taste was the Brisbane junior shooting program, and from early on it was a competitive environment, which may feel like a curse for some, but even then, Jared had the insight to realise it was a blessing. It was also the perfect environment to push Jared to improve, something he was already eager to do.

"That sense of competition quickly turned into a focus on self-improvement," Jared said. "Just trying to be better every time I showed up."

It didn't take long for shooting to become a big part of his life. As a junior he was training three times a week and competing across multiple disciplines: Silhouette, Field Rifle, Air Rifle Field target, even clay target and pistol shooting. It was a full schedule, especially for someone still at school. Jared is of course quick to thank his parents for their support - and driving, no doubt.

Despite diving into the deep end with shooting, he wasn't someone who just picked it up and was immediately good at it. In fact, quite the opposite. "I was never a natural," he said. "Everything came from showing up consistently and trying to improve a little bit each time."

That's probably not the most glamorous origin story, but it's also the one that tends to work out in the long run. Some shooters are born with it and some develop it.

Over time, all the practice and steady improvement did add up. Jared went on to compete in dozens of state and national championships and represented Australia at five world championships between 2014 and 2025. That included trips to places like New Zealand, Portugal, Poland, the United States and Northern Ireland. Not bad for something that started as a junior program without much 'natural talent'. But if you talk to him now, the way he sees shooting has changed quite a bit.

"When I was younger, it was all about performance and results," he said. "Now, I have a much greater appreciation for the journey and what the sport has given me. It's not just about scores anymore - it's about the experiences, the people and the lessons along the way."

These days, he is still involved, but it looks a little different. Instead of shooting three times a week, he might go once every month or two. Life gets in the way a bit more. That said, when he does turn up, he is still right in the mix, usually around the top end of the field.

"The fundamentals don't really leave you," he said. "Consistency



Jared has long learned to stay composed under pressure.

and mindset are still there." Those fundamentals were drilled into him as a junior, including during some training with Anthony Finn in Bundaberg back in 2012. At the time, it was just another step in getting better, but looking back, it was also something that shaped how he approaches challenges more broadly.

So, while the shooting is one thing, what you get out of it goes a bit further, and that's why competitive, but social events are so great for development. This year's Junior Challenge at Captains Mountain on July 4 and 5 and is another opportunity for young shooters to step into the environment that allowed Jared to flourish. This exact competition and others like it were a very big deal to him growing up. "They

gave me something to aim for and were a real stepping stone into open competition," he said. They also teach a few things that don't show up on a scorecard. "Handling pressure, staying disciplined, and working towards long-term goals. Outside of shooting, it builds confidence and resilience."

For all the juniors who will be making their way to the competition this year, here is Jared's advice: "Focus on your own process. Don't get caught up in what everyone else is doing. Take it all in and treat it as a chance to learn."

It's simple and straightforward, but that is the same approach that took Jared from club competitions all the way to the world stage. And while he is not chasing the same milestones these days, his connection to the sport is still strong. Part competition, part social, part just enjoying being around it. "It's taken me to places I never thought I'd go," he said. "Those experiences stay with you."

If you boil it all down, that is probably the best way to look at it. The scores matter, the results are nice, but they are not really the point. For Jared, shooting has

evolved as something he used to attack fiercely to something he simply enjoys and has learned a lot from.

"At this stage it's less about chasing big milestones and more about continuing to perform well and enjoy the sport. There's always that internal drive to do your best when it counts. It's given me confidence, discipline and an appreciation for delayed gratification," he said. "It's shaped who I am."

For the juniors heading to Captains Mountain this year, the competition may feel like any other, but like it was for Jared, it could be the beginning of something much bigger. 🎯

The Queensland Junior Challenge is on this year at Captains Mountain on July 4 and 5.

There will be a variety of disciplines on offer, including Silhouette, Field Rifle and Benchrest.

It's a family event: there is no cost, even accommodation is provided free of charge.



From little things, big things grow.

Early start and a little family rivalry

A morning at the range By Suzie Stitt

Taking my time behind my dad's Anschütz Match 54, chambered in .22 rimfire, fitted with a custom fibreglass stock and shooting Federal Gold Medal Match ammunition. Precision, patience and good company on the range.



If there's one thing I learned this month, it's this: get there early. And by early, I don't mean a leisurely coffee-and-chat kind of early. I mean alarms before sunrise, kids asleep and that slightly delirious feeling that comes with being awake when the rest of the house is still asleep.

Dad and I were up at 5:30am to beat the crowds to the Davison Range Complex, home to SSAA Sunshine Coast. Dad had told me it was going to be busy, but I recall thinking 'surely not THAT busy'. I can confirm, I was wrong. We left Caloundra at 6.10am and rolled into the Sunshine Coast range at around 6:50am.

Despite being an hour and a half early, the place was already buzzing; I would guess at least 50 people - and on a Wednesday!

It was the first shoot back after Christmas, but I still wasn't expecting the sheer number of people already there. Cars lined up, benches filling, rifles being checked and rechecked. By my count, there would have been well over 50 shooters on site, and shooting wouldn't even begin for another hour and a half. This was our monthly father-daughter bonding day - my suggestion! One thing became immediately obvious as I scanned the range. I was one of only three women. Three. In a sea of men.

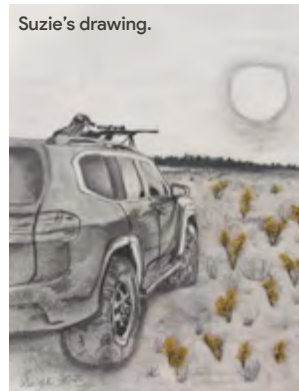
Now, don't get me wrong, the atmosphere was welcoming and respectful, but the imbalance was impossible to ignore. And it got me thinking: why is it still like this? Why are so many women missing out on a sport that is technical, disciplined, meditative and SO MUCH FUN! Let me say it plainly: come on, girls! We can do better than that. Dads, get your daughters involved!

I'm officially making it my mission to get more women into this sport. Not because shooting needs to change, but because women would love this sport if they tried it. You don't need to be loud, competitive or aggressive. You don't need to 'prove' anything. You just need curiosity, patience and respect for the process. If you enjoy problem-solving, fine motor control and the satisfaction of incremental improvement, shooting has something to offer you.

With plenty of time before the range opened, I pulled out my sketchbook, another new hobby I've recently taken up in 2026, and settled in to draw while we waited. It turned out to be the perfect way to pass the time. Drawing, like shooting, rewards observation. You slow down. You notice angles, light, and small details. It felt like a fitting warm-up before the precision work to come. Dad, meanwhile, made a cuppa and settled in. Shooting ranges have their own communities - tight-knit, knowledgeable and often surprisingly generous with advice.

At 8:30am on the dot, the range opened. It was on.

I was shooting an Anschütz Match 54 chambered in .22 rimfire with a custom fibreglass stock and using



Watching my dad get his eye in on the target, letting the barrel dirty and warm up before 'Shooter McGavin's' turn (my new range name).



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EARLY START AND A LITTLE FAMILY RIVALRY

Federal Gold Medal Match ammunition. It's a rifle that my dad used to shoot his Australian BR30 record back in the 90s and a gun that, as a 9nine-year old, I chose the colour for the stock when it was being built. The gun has history. With its Leopold 36x scope, my dad reminded me to "let the gun shoot for you". I just needed to aim and gently squeeze the trigger, and it would do the rest. Dad put a few shots out to dirty the barrel and then it was my turn. I got four in the centre and one rogue shot, obviously I am blaming the wind for that one.

Over the course of the morning, I learned more than just how my groups were forming. We talked about waxed versus non-waxed bullets, and how something that seems so minor can influence consistency and barrel behaviour. I was reminded that shooting is a sport of details. Tiny variables matter. Ammunition choice, temperature, barrel condition and shooter mindset all interact in ways that can't be rushed. We also drifted into conversation about the broader shooting landscape in Australia.

As the targets came back and the morning progressed, something else became clear. I was shooting well. Not just 'okay for today' but consistently well. Then came the moment that will no doubt be raised at future family gatherings. The score! I beat my dad. I called it early; Dad wasn't so sure but once we got home and tallied up the shots, I beat him!

Now, this is a *big deal*. Dad is an experienced shooter, meticulous and methodical, and not someone who hands out victories lightly. The reaction was immediate and priceless. He measured and scored the target once. Then again. Then, just to make absolutely sure, a third time. To his credit, he accepted the result, with one caveat: apparently, he "won on grouping."

Classic. Well, he is 75 years old, and his eyes aren't



A tiny glimpse of one of about six different carparks at the Davison Range. The other carparks were just as full.

what they used to be. A bit of family rivalry keeps things interesting, and honestly, it's part of what makes days like this memorable. Shooting has a way of bringing people together. Out at the range, you're not just father and daughter, expert and learner, you're two shooters trying to do one thing well.

Shooting is about discipline and patience (both of which I have limited amounts of). It's about learning to control what you can - your breathing, your posture, your mindset and accepting what you can't. It's about being present in a way that's increasingly rare in a distracted world. And it is all about safety!

What I loved most was that it built connection. With family. With community. With different generations. If you've ever wondered whether this sport might be for you - especially if you're a woman sitting on the fence - take this as your nudge. Find a range. Ask questions. Take your time. You don't need to know everything to begin.

Just be prepared to set your alarm early. 📞



Drum roll please...and the winner is...me! Sorry, Dad.

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NEXTORCH

Military quality for the civilian market



By Rod Hoare

I've been a user of Nextorch torches for a number of years now in my offroad, camping and outdoor pursuits, and I thought it was time you all became acquainted with, from my personal experience, one of the best torch brands on the market, and possibly one of the best kept secrets in the EDC torch world.

During the past two decades, Nextorch has built a solid reputation as a maker of professional grade flashlights. Originally focused on supplying military and law enforcement agencies, including some Australian Police Forces being issued with the TA30CMAX torch, the company has expanded into the consumer market while maintaining that same duty driven design philosophy. Their products are now used in more than 100 countries, and the emphasis has always remained consistent: reliability, durability and straight-forward operation in real world conditions.

Unlike many consumer brands that chase features for the sake of it, Nextorch designs gear that prioritises performance when it matters. That approach is immediately evident in both the E52D and the compact K40, reviewed below, both of which, like all Nextorch products, carry a 10-year warranty, handled right here in Australia by the Australian Distributor Aussie Outback Supplies.

WHY NEXTORCH STANDS OUT IN A CROWDED LIGHTING WORLD

- 10-year warranty - all products backed locally in Australia.
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- Used in more than 100 countries worldwide.
- Full warranty support handled locally; no need to ship overseas.
- Compliant with Australian safety and performance standards.
- Access to the latest tactical and professional lighting technology.

Nextorch E52D

The Nextorch E52D strikes a fantastic balance between everyday carry practicality and serious lighting output. From the moment you pick it up, it feels like a purpose-built tool rather than a gadget: solid in the hand, well weighted, fantastic tactile feel, and clearly designed to handle rough use. It's compact enough to carry regularly, yet delivers performance that rivals much larger torches.

In the field, the E52D really comes into its own. With a maximum output of 3700 lumens, it produces a broad, intense beam from a single LED that comfortably lights up paddocks, sheds and tree lines. The beam profile is particularly well executed, being wide enough for situational awareness while still maintaining enough throw to reach out to about 280 metres. When camping, hunting or around the house, this combination gives you that feeling

of safety, being able to pick up movement quickly with its bright and broad beam or show the way when walking at night with one of its lower strength beams.

Build quality is exactly what you'd expect from a brand with military roots. The hard anodised aluminium body feels durable, comfortable, well weighted and everything is where it should be. With an IPX8 waterproof rating (two metre submersion) and a two-metre drop resistance, it's a torch you won't hesitate to throw into the ute or your pack. The grip is secure even with wet or gloved hands, and the overall construction gives confidence.

The user interface is deliberately simple. You have access to high, medium, low and strobe modes all through the one single button that is protected from any accidental pushes, with quick access to maximum output when needed. There's no unnecessary complexity or multiple buttons, just reliable, repeatable operation. For shooters and outdoorsmen, that simplicity is a real advantage, particularly in situations where you don't want to be cycling through modes in the dark.

Power comes from a rechargeable 21700 li-ion rechargeable battery, charged via a protected USB-C port; this makes life easy when you're away from home with charging from a power bank made simple. Runtime is strong, especially on the lower settings, meaning it will comfortably handle extended trips without constantly needing attention, while the battery level indicator keeps you informed.

The E52D comes with a removable pocket clip and lanyard



E52D lighting the way, more than 200m in view on high.

Nextorch E52D Technical Specifications

- LIGHT OUTPUT:** High 3700 lm | Medium 550 lm | Low 40 lm | Strobe 3700 lm
- RUNTIME:** Up to 60 hours on low
- Beam distance:** 280 metres on high
- BEAM INTENSITY:** 19,600 candela
- Water resistance:** IPX8 (2m submersion)
- DROP RATING:** 2m validated
- BATTERY:** 1 x 21700 rechargeable (4800mAh)
- DIMENSIONS:** 153mm x 30mm (head) x 27mm (body)
- WEIGHT:** 130g (without battery)
- CARRY OPTIONS:** Optional V55L / V10 holsters, Optional FR-2 tactical ring

PRICE
\$199

strap, while other accessories are available including a 'quick draw' 360 rotatable holster, and a nylon holster, both with Molle and wide belt compatibility, making this a true 'carry anywhere' item.

What stands out most about the

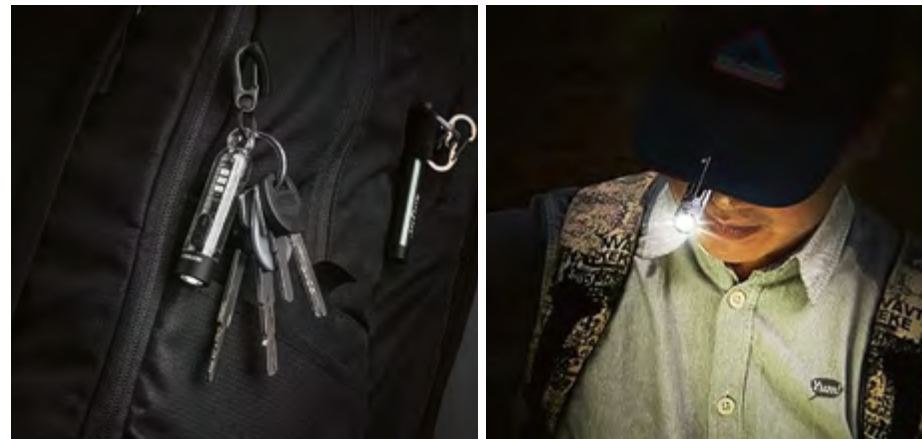
E52D is how well it fits into real world use. It's powerful enough to rely on as your primary light, yet compact enough that you'll actually carry it. That's a combination many torches promise but few truly deliver.

Nextorch K40

At the other end of the spectrum, the Nextorch K40 is all about convenience and accessibility. Small enough to live on your keys, or clip onto a cap for handsfree use, weighing only 17g, it's the kind of light you always have with you, something that becomes surprisingly valuable over time.

Despite its size, the K40 delivers a respectable 300 lumens and maximum beam distance of 78m, which is more than enough for close up tasks like finding gear, unlocking sheds, navigating around camp, or doing that nighttime repair under the bonnet of your 4x4. Where it really sets itself apart, however, is in its versatility. In addition to the three-level main white beam, it also includes a strobe, red, blue, red/blue flashing and UV light modes. The red light is particularly useful for preserving night vision, while the UV function can come in handy for inspection tasks. The red/blue flashing mode is bright and is perfect for attracting attention.

With its impact-resistant, see-through body, pocket clip and large lanyard/keyring hole, this torch



K40 a very versatile, light and handy small torch.

Nextorch K40 technical specifications

- MAX OUTPUT:** 300 lumens on high
 - MAX BEAM DISTANCE:** 78 metres on high
 - LIGHT SOURCES:** White, Strobe, Red, Blue, Red/Blue flashing, UV
 - MAX RUNTIME:** 9 hours 15 minutes on low
 - WATER RESISTANCE:** IPX4
 - IMPACT RESISTANCE:** 1 metre
 - BATTERY:** Built-in 180 mAh rechargeable battery
 - DIMENSIONS:** 73mm x 16.5mm x 16.5mm
 - WEIGHT:** 17g
- Pocket clip doubles as a hat clip

PRICE \$55

is not only functional, it looks cool and has multiple ways to be carried and used. It's not designed to replace a full-size torch, and it doesn't try to. Runtime on high is limited, but the charging is quick, and the beam won't reach out over long distance like the E52D, that's not its role. The K40 is a backup,

an everyday utility tool, and a 'just in case' light that proves its worth time and time again. My K40 lives in the console of the 4x4, even though I also have a couple of larger Nextorch torches in the car. The K40 has been super useful and is more often than not the one I reach for first.

Final thoughts

The pairing of the Nextorch E52D and Nextorch K40 highlights exactly what Nextorch does well: building practical, reliable lighting tools for real users.

The E52D stands out as a serious working torch, offering excellent output, durability and ease of use in a compact package. It's ideally suited to shooters, campers, outdoorsman, and of course home use - basically, anyone who needs dependable illumination. The K40, on the other hand, complements it perfectly as a lightweight, always available backup.

If you were to carry just one, the E52D would be the clear choice for field use. But together, they cover nearly every lighting scenario you're likely to

encounter, whether you're out in the paddock, at camp, heading out to the shed after dark or checking around the house after hearing a noise.

The E52D sells for a very reasonable \$199, while the K40 is \$55. If you purchase both the E52D and K40 torches together in June 2026, you will get them for a combined price of \$215!

Nextorch products are available from all good hunting/fishing/outdoors dealers. To view a full range of more than 130 products and find your local dealer, please visit nextorchaustralia.com.au

For a more in-depth review on these torches, please check out the Aussie Knife and Gear Reviews' YouTube channel @AussieKnifeGearReviews

NEXTORCH®

As seen on page 51-54

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RECHARGEABLE USB-C KEYRING
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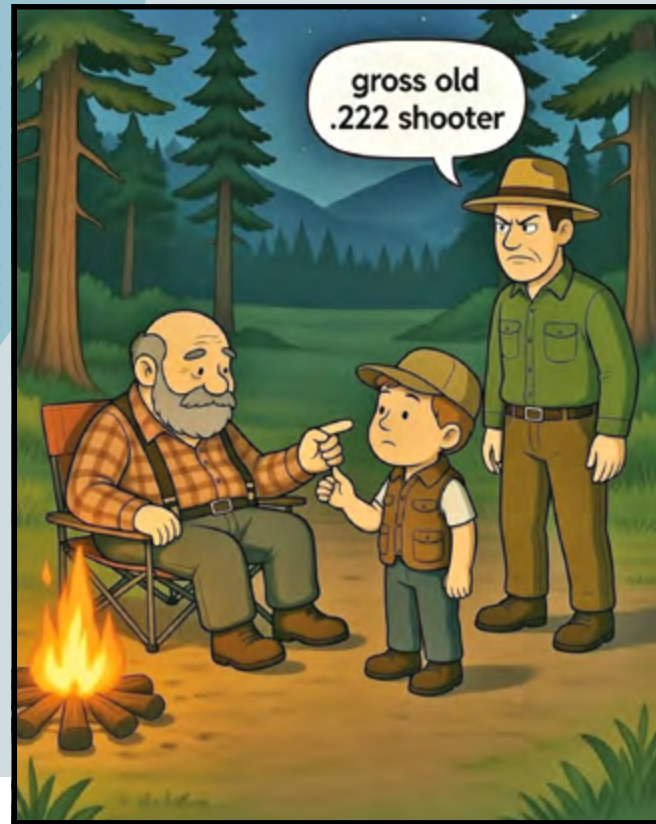


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WHAT YOUR HUNTING CALIBRE SAYS ABOUT YOU

By Billy Allen

"WHILE WE ALL KNOW THE BEST CALIBRE IS THE ONE THAT PUTS MEAT IN THE FREEZER AND SMILES ON FACES, CERTAIN PATTERNS EMERGE."



In the Australian hunting scene, few topics generate as much friendly debate as the choice of rifle calibre. Around the campfire after a long day in the bush - whether chasing sambar in the Victorian highlands, fallow deer in the south or pigs across the warmer states - the conversation inevitably circles back to cartridges. Everyone has an opinion, and the good-natured ribbing flows as freely as the drinks.

While we all know the best calibre is the one that puts meat in the freezer and smiles on faces, certain patterns emerge. Each popular hunting round seems to attract a distinct type of shooter. With tongue firmly in cheek and no offence intended, here is a light-hearted look at what your chosen calibre might reveal about you.

THE .222 REMINGTON OWNER

The .222 Remington is the baby boomer's answer to the .223. It is a classic, mild-mannered cartridge from an era when things were simpler and ammunition lasted longer. Many owners hand-loaded a few hundred rounds back in the 1960s and are still working through the same batch today. They are wonderfully thrifty souls who see no reason to upgrade when their old loads still group beautifully at sensible ranges.

These hunters develop a genuine appreciation for tracking. Their lighter bullets often produce minimal exit wounds, so they hone their skills following subtle signs through the scrub rather than relying on dramatic blood trails. Most are balding with quiet dignity, and they possess an inexhaustible supply of grandfatherly humour. 'Pull my finger' remains a reliable ice-breaker with the grandchildren, and a well-timed fart joke can still bring the house down.

At camp, they nurse a rum and coke with actual ice cubes, convinced this small flourish elevates the drink to something rather sophisticated. They view anyone under 30 with a mixture of bemusement and mild alarm, often muttering that the younger generation moves too fast and lacks proper respect for tradition. Their rifles are usually well-cared-for classics, and they speak fondly of the days when a hunter needed little more than a good bolt-action and a pocket full of handloads.

THE .270 WINCHESTER OWNER

You will never need to ask a .270 Winchester owner what calibre he is carrying. He will tell you - usually within the first few minutes of meeting - complete with enthusiastic comparisons to other rounds. These passionate advocates tend to have a smaller but loyal circle of friends, largely because any gathering risks being steered back to the undeniable virtues of the .270.

They enjoy their beer poured into a glass, served properly cold. This small ritual sets them apart from the stubby-drinking crowd and feels just a touch more refined. They are quick to point out that with 150-grain bullets or lighter, their calibre keeps pace with the mighty .30-06, and they can quote ballistic tables to prove it.

Jack O'Connor, the legendary American shooting writer, is their hero. Many discovered the .270 through his evocative tales of sheep hunting in wild country. There is often a moment of quiet deflation, however, when they learn that O'Connor actually used the .30-06 almost as often, if not more. Still, the .270 remains their talisman: flat-shooting, manageable in recoil, and perfectly suited to deer and lighter game across Australia's varied landscapes.

THE .308 WINCHESTER OWNER

The .308 shooter is the practical, everyman of the hunting world. He drinks his beer straight from the can, warm or cold - it makes little difference. Practicality rules here. You will find him with substantial stockpiles of ammunition stored neatly in green military-surplus cans, alongside an impressive collection of tinned baked beans. He is the silent prepper of the hunting camp, quietly ready for anything.

At night he is often the first to nod off by the fire, content after a solid day's hunting. He rises early, not because of any disciplined alarm clock routine, but because an enlarged prostate demands attention.

WHAT YOUR HUNTING CALIBRE SAYS ABOUT YOU

Once awake, sleep proves elusive, so he simply pulls on his boots and heads out while the rest of the camp snores on. The .308 suits him perfectly: reliable, versatile and powerful enough for pigs and deer without unnecessary drama. It is the cartridge of the no-fuss hunter who values function over flash.

THE .30-06 SPRINGFIELD OWNER

The .30-06 is the plain Jane of hunting calibres, and its owners wear that description as a badge of honour. They drink their beer cold from the stubby, straightforward and unpretentious. This is arguably the most versatile calibre in Australia, capable of handling everything from small game to large deer and even the occasional tough customer with the right load.

Many work in government roles and can tell you, to the exact day, how long remains until retirement. They start the morning with instant coffee - white with two sugars - and approach life with steady, organised calm. Their rifles usually have three carefully developed handloads, and they know precisely where each hits in relation to the zero. One for close-range brush, one for open country, and one for when things get serious.

The .30-06 owner understands balance. The cartridge has been doing the job reliably for generations, and there is quiet satisfaction in that continuity. It will take any animal on the continent when the shot is right, and its owner would not have it any other way.



THE .300 WINCHESTER MAGNUM OWNER

The .300 Win Mag owner likes things big. He drives a large four-wheel drive, usually fitted with a four-inch lift kit and plenty of aftermarket accessories. His favourite drink is rum and coke straight from the can - mixing properly feels like unnecessary effort. Many work FIFO rosters in mining or resources, and quite a few sport a neck tattoo featuring a majestic sambar stag.

Zeroing the rifle is a serious undertaking. Three shots would suffice for most, but these lads happily send 40 rounds downrange just to be certain.

They carry a little extra weight around the middle these days and have developed a resonant snore that echoes through camp. Remarkably, they wake refreshed each morning, blissfully unaware of the dark looks from the .30-06 and .270 owners who spent the night wide awake.

The .300 delivers the thump they crave for big-bodied sambar or determined pigs. It is overkill for many situations, but that is rather the point.



THE .243 WINCHESTER SHOOTER

To the .243 shooter, the .270 looks like a big gun. These hunters often received their rifle as a thoughtful gift from a family member, and they treasure it accordingly. They mix their own rum and coke with care and tend to slip away early from the campfire, keen to be up well before first light.

Many are smokers, and they use the drifting cigarette smoke to read the wind with quiet expertise. They are excellent trackers, patient and observant, able to piece together a sparse blood trail where others might give up. You will usually spot them wearing an old, well-worn John Deere cap acquired 15 years ago when they bought a ride-on mower. It has seen more hunting seasons than most people's Sunday clothes.

The .243 is precise and mild in recoil, ideal for smaller deer species and foxes. Its owners are often the most dedicated early risers in camp, slipping out into the pre-dawn stillness with quiet determination.

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**THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR OWNER
(ALSO KNOWN AS THE 6.5 MAN BLIND)**

The 6.5 Creedmoor shooter is the modern face of long-range enthusiasm. He usually sports longer hair and a flat-brimmed baseball cap. On the way to work he stops for an almond-milk latte, enjoyed from the driver's seat of a late-model BMW.

He has probably never taken a shot past 200 yards on live game, yet he speaks with complete confidence about having the ability to drop a deer at 500 yards 'any day he chooses.' His scope is enormous - often exceeding 20x magnification and weighing nearly as much as the rifle itself. At camp he sips fancy vodka mixers that taste suspiciously like fairy floss. The .243 shooter has been known to edge quietly further around the fire to avoid an extended conversation about ballistic coefficients.

In quieter moments, he works on Sudoku puzzles in the amenities block. The easy puzzles are completed neatly; the hard ones are abandoned halfway with several optimistic but incorrect entries. The 6.5 Creedmoor appeals to those who love precision and modern technology, even if actual field results sometimes lag behind the theory.

CONCLUSION

In the end, these are all affectionate stereotypes. The truth is that every hunter around the fire shares the same core pleasures: the smell of the bush at dawn, the satisfaction of a well-placed shot, and the simple joy of time spent with good companions. The calibre debates will continue long



into the night, but they are part of what makes Australian hunting such a rich and entertaining pursuit. Whatever you choose to chamber, may your shots be true, your campfires warm, and your stories worth retelling. ☺

BOOK REVIEW:

By Ted Springs

I AM A DEER HUNTER

Rob Baldinger is an Australian outdoorsman and advocate for ethical hunting. As a father of two young children, he noticed a lack of children's books reflecting his lifestyle, which led him to write *I Am a Deer Hunter*.

The book follows a hunter through the process of a deer hunt, using rhyming, bush poetry-style language. Hunting terminology and outdoor themes are woven throughout, introducing younger readers to concepts such as tracking, patience and harvesting game. The simple structure and repetition make it accessible for younger audiences, particularly when read aloud.

Given the subject matter, the book may prompt questions from readers about hunting, the environment and where food comes from. It presents hunting as part of a broader relationship with nature and food sourcing, framed through a practical, hands-on perspective.

Baldinger has also released a companion title focused on duck hunting, continuing the same style and themes. Both books aim to introduce children to aspects of outdoor life that are less commonly represented in mainstream children's literature. You can get the books from many online outlets for around \$30. ☺



The book is available now along with *I am a Duck Hunter*.



**SETTING UP FOR
HUNTING SUCCESS**

By Ken Payne

Successful hunts start with the correct rifle set up.

Throughout the years I have been teamed up with a lot of new shooters on CWM (Conservation Wildlife Management) hunting projects. One of the first things I check for them is their rifle setup. A lot of our hunting is done in close cover, long grass, and brigalow regrowth - shooting pigs five to 20 meters out. Most of the time these shooters are equipped with the set up they first started shooting with, usually range shooting from a bench, a heavy

barrel rifle with sometimes up to a 6-18 power scope and, for a bit of extra weight, a bi-pod.

Due to the weight, which includes wearing a backpack with the essentials, water, radio, spare ammo and emergency equipment, new shooters quite often end up carrying their rifle slung on their shoulder. This means it takes a while to get the rifle into the action and usually by then the pigs are gone. One new shooter once said to me he didn't think something so bulky and

ungainly looking could run so fast.

Getting back to the setup...trouble is, the setup's fine *if* the pigs are out on the crop for a long-range shot like targets are at the range with a rest *but*, on most of our hunts, we are in thick scrub with pigs taking off from two meters to 50 meters away in grass and thick trees, which requires quick acquisition and getting the shot away without a support rest.

On one trip we were hunting along the river in the Lomandra grass, when I put up a good-sized sow. While I shot her at about five meters, my mate Cam said all he could see with his Ruger .308 fitted with a 6x18 Vortex scope was blurred green. I use a 1-4 power Leupold Pig-Plex scope on my .444 Marlin, nearly always set on one when I hunt. My brother uses a Vortex Crossfire 1-4x24 scope on his Remington pump action in .30-06. So, when we came to the heavier scrub, where visibility was down to between two and five meters, I told Cam it would be a disservice to him to continue and I changed direction and headed out around the billabongs, which



This crusty boar was taken within five metres.

“He realised he should talk to experienced hunters rather than his internet-educated mates!”

This tall grass is a great hiding spot for pigs.



The path to success isn't always easy. Note how well the blaze orange stands out in the bush.



This Lomandra grass and a nice watering hole make for an inviting spot for pigs.

had more open area to suit his rifle setup. I could always set mine to four power for any longer shots.

On the next trip, Cam had swapped the scope to his .223 for foxes, etc and had fitted a lower power 2-7 scope to his .308.

We had one new shooter who had sold a .308 due to his mates telling him that calibre was no good for pigs and that he needed premium projectiles in his new 6.5 Creedmoor to be effective. On his first hunt with another hunter, he witnessed a 90kg boar

being taken with one shot and when he asked what calibre, the answer was a .308. What projectile? A good quality soft point like Siera GameKing or similar. (Be aware match projectiles may be too hard for hunting and not expand properly.) He realised he should talk to experienced hunters rather than his internet-educated mates!

Lomandra grass grows in sandy soil along water courses, and the pigs dig trenches in between the clumps for the cool sand and cover from the sun. Being up to waist

high, the adrenalin gets going when they bust out almost under your feet.

Also, when hunting in thick scrub, the use of blaze orange gear makes sure our companions can be easily seen and tracked, ensuring we have a safe direction to take shots. I have passed up shots when I have not been 100 per cent sure of my hunting companions' positions in the thick scrub.

To be successful during a hunt, many things have to line up, beginning with the correct rifle set up. 🎯

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Sawdust from ironbark and blue gum adds the perfect smokiness to the wurst.

Old-school WURST MAKING

By Jeremy Herbst



you have prepared. A good quality sausage stuffer is key, which can also be purchased from most butcher suppliers.

As wurst making is a long process, it's a good idea to get as many family members or friends to help out. We usually have one person mixing the ingredients into the mince, another cranking the sausage stuffer, another filling the casings and two people tying the ends.

Once done, we then hang the wurst overnight in a smoker, which for us is an old out house. You could also use a small garden shed for a smoker or make a dedicated one yourself. The next morning, we put sawdust, which is from ironbark or blue gum, in trays beneath the wurst and light one end of the tray. We check the trays every morning and night and add more sawdust when needed.



You wouldn't want to undertake this recipe without a good quality sausage stuffer.



Who will help eat the wurst? As per *The Little Red Hen*, if your mates don't help stuff the wurst, they don't get to eat it!

Wurst making in Australia is a tradition passed down from generation to generation, dating back more than 100 years, with each family having its own secret recipe. Traditionally made from beef and pork, these days a lot of hunters are using venison and pork to cut down on costs. Even if you don't have the luxury of having access to a cold room, wurst is mainly made in the winter months.

Once you have obtained some venison and pork, simply cut it up into pieces that will fit in a mincer, then bag and freeze until you are ready to make your wurst. You will need ox runners or beef casings about 40mm – 43mm long, which can be purchased from any butcher. Each packet is enough to do around 80 rings, depending on how long you make your sausages. Also, you'll need enough salt, herbs and a few other ingredients to cater for the amount of mince

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OLD-SCHOOL WURST MAKING

The smoking process usually takes around six to seven days. After five days, we start taste testing the wurst. Once it is to our liking, it's removed from the smoker. Some people hang them in a cool place, but we like to Cryovac ours and freeze them. They seem to keep better that way.

Wurst is a great snack to take hunting or fishing. It doesn't need to be in the fridge; just throw a ring in your backpack and go. On the right is a simple recipe. Just add chili, garlic or whatever spices you like. Obviously, it's not my secret recipe, but it will give you something to build on. Once everything is mixed into the mince, I like to roll a few meatballs and fry them up. It gives you a rough idea of what your wurst will taste like. Good luck. ☺

Venison and Pork Wurst

- * 100lb/45kg meat - 60% pork, 40% venison (minced)
- * 700g salt
- * 130g black pepper
- * 180g cayenne pepper
- * 80g allspice
- * 1kg brown sugar
- * 80g Quick Cure



We like to Cryovac our sausages and freeze them, extending their shelf life.

Mix everything together and get stuffing.



The wurst being hung in the makeshift smoker.

SEE PAGE 82 FOR A VENISON RECIPE FROM AUSTRALIAN MEATS

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LATEST AT Queensland SHOOTERS SUPPLIES



There's always something new on the shelves at SSAA Queensland's one-stop shop: Queensland Shooter Supplies.

Among the latest arrivals is the Simtek StealthAlert – an off-grid alarm system with a lithium battery that can last up to a year.

Also just in, is the Kogan hat, ideal for combining sun protection with hearing protection – great for shooting, tradies and long days outside.

Thermal technology is drawing 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 \$2000 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. ☺



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A wild boar romping around the wetlands in Florida, USA, where hog calling is more likely to result in success and has a strong following.

Calling in the silence

Why hog calling hasn't answered back in Australia

By Peter Jackson

Hog calling is one of those ideas that sounds so simple you can't help but think it should work anywhere pigs are a problem.

In the United States it's almost become its own sub-culture: hunters and trappers running recorded grunts, squeals and 'fight' sounds through a caller to pull feral hogs into a trap site or into range for a clean dispatch.

The logic feels universal - pigs are social, vocal, competitive and forever curious. So, why hasn't hog calling properly caught on in Australia, where feral pigs are every bit as widespread, destructive and hard-won as their American cousins?

Part of the answer is pure landscape.

A lot of American hog calling content is built around thick timber, crop edges and managed bait sites where sound travels in a contained way and pigs have predictable feeding patterns.

Much of Australia's pig country - especially across the north - can be the opposite: sprawling floodplains, paperbark swamps, lignum and speargrass, creek lines that snake for kilometres and endless pockets of shade and water that pigs can use to move unseen.

Sound still carries, sure, but pigs don't always have to commit to a single 'edge' to investigate. They can swing wide, test the wind and melt back into cover without ever showing you a whisker.

Then there's pressure and how pigs here learn. In plenty of regions, pigs are worked hard by doggers, aerial culling, thermal shooters and property control programs. They get educated fast. Australian pigs are often harassed, not hunted leisurely. They learn that noise equals trouble - utes, choppers, dogs barking, gates clanging and spotlighting.



A hog caller.

"Calling clashes with the way many Australians actually hunt pigs."

A chorus of pig squeals blasting across a flat might be interesting to a young boar on a quiet farm block, but in pressured country it can just as easily be filed under 'unnatural' and avoided. Calling also clashes with the way many Australians actually hunt pigs.

A lot of our pig hunting is active - driving likely creek crossings, walking sign, running dogs, setting up on water at last light or using thermals at night over bait. Hog calling, by comparison, is a sit-and-wait tactic that assumes pigs will come to you and do it quickly.

In Australia, pigs often don't behave on a timetable. They'll circle downwind, hang up in cover, or simply choose a different gully because there are ten other feed options within earshot.

If the method doesn't deliver consistent, repeatable results, most hunters won't stick with it long enough for it to become a 'thing'.

There's also a cultural piece.

The US feral hog boom created a market for dedicated hog gear - callers, scents, trap systems, guided hog hunts...you name it. Australia has gear markets too, but pig control here is more often framed as pest management rather than sport.

Plenty of properties want pigs removed efficiently, not experimented on. That tends to favour proven methods: trapping with bait, dog work, coordinated shooting and aerial programs. A caller can feel like a novelty when the landholder wants certainty.

As a freelance writer for *The Report*, I learned that lesson the practical way - by trying it where pigs should have been a sure bet. On Kendall Station in Far North Queensland, I trialled the technique with a speaker set up on the tray of a 2011 Toyota Hilux, feral pig audio blaring into classic pig country.

The idea was straight from the American playbook: trigger curiosity, spark territorial interest, maybe even provoking a dominant boar into coming to sort out the 'intruders'.

It felt promising in theory.

In practice? Nil result. Not a single pig materialised to investigate. No answering grunts. No shadowy shapes sliding through the scrub. Just the odd bird carrying on and the sound of recorded pigs echoing back off the country like a bad karaoke track.

That doesn't mean hog calling can't work here - only that it's not yet reliable enough, or adapted enough, to become mainstream. Australian pigs might respond better to subtler, shorter sequences, placed near real drawcards like water or fresh rooting and only when the wind and pressure are right.

But until someone cracks a repeatable Australian 'recipe', hog calling will probably stay what it is for most hunters: an interesting American trick that sounds deadly...right up until the bush stays quiet. 🐷



Australian boar, like these piglets, might respond to hog calls that are delivered in shorter bursts and near waterholes. But, if not, do what works for you! They are a menace and culling is important.

SHOOTING COLLECTABLE FIREARMS

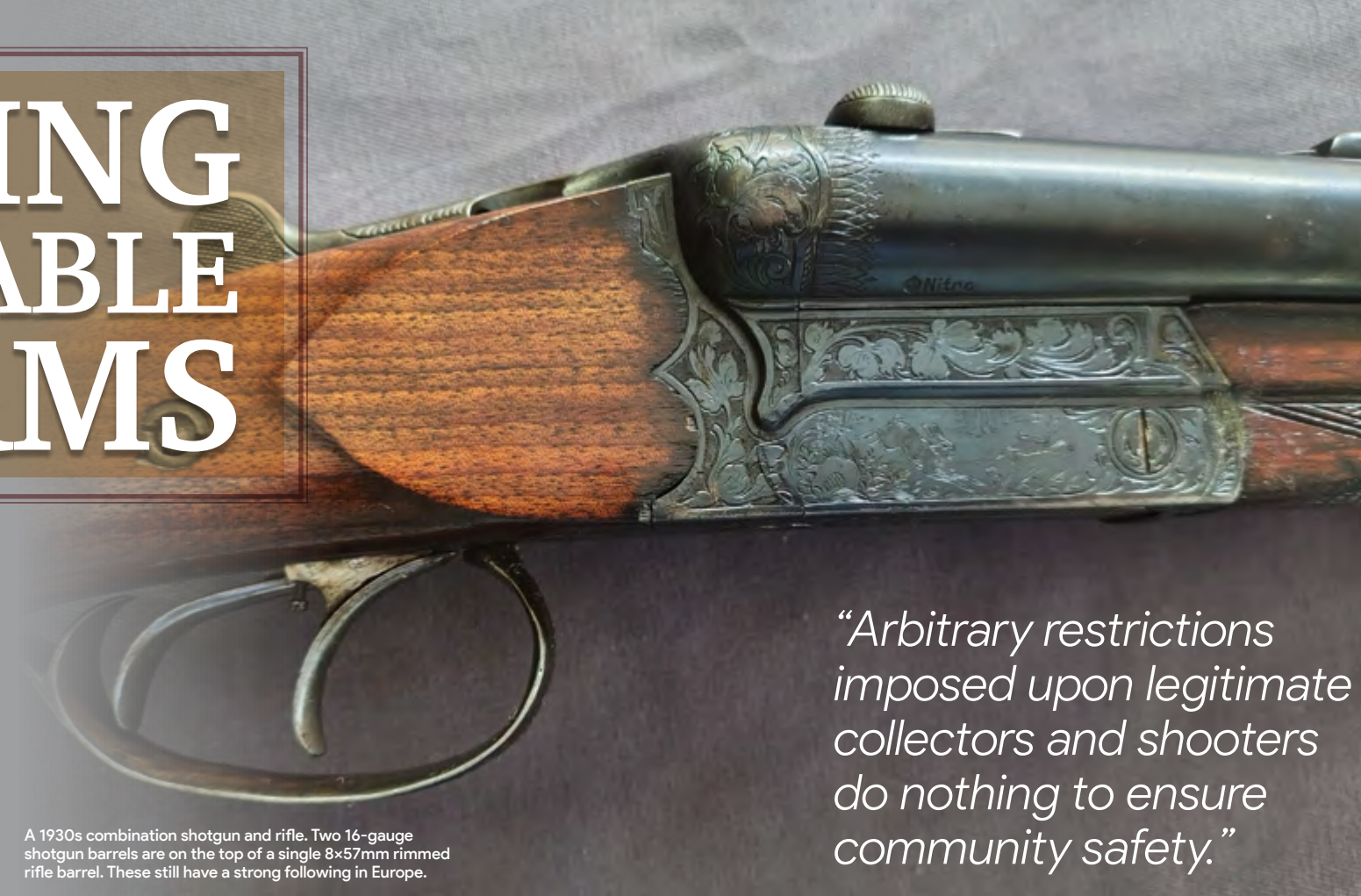
By Paul Heiser

The Queensland Weapons Act 1997 (the Act) does not provide for collecting as a legitimate reason to register firearms to a Firearms Licence. In fact, the Act in Section 75 states: *A person must not collect weapons unless that person is a licensed collector for the category of weapons being collected.*

The above intentionally stops a person who wishes to collect firearms from registering them to a firearms licence and denies them the opportunity of being able to shoot the firearm. This is a 'silo mentality' that arose when the National Firearms Agreement was implemented in 1997. There were, and there still are, individuals who unfortunately believed that firearms registered to a Collectors Licence Weapons (Collectors Licence) should never leave their safe storage. No thought was given to circumstances where a firearm owner who has a passion for



Paul shooting an Alexander Henry Carbine in .450/577 calibre.



A 1930s combination shotgun and rifle. Two 16-gauge shotgun barrels are on the top of a single 8x57mm rimmed rifle barrel. These still have a strong following in Europe.

“Arbitrary restrictions imposed upon legitimate collectors and shooters do nothing to ensure community safety.”

Mausers, for example, will require a Firearms Licence to shoot a Mauser on an approved range and a Collectors Licence Weapons to acquire and possess other Mausers.

The old chestnut of community safety has no application as to whether a firearm is registered to either a Firearms or a Collectors Licence. It also needs to be clarified that items that are not firearms are registered to a Collectors Licence. This may include various martial arts implements, bladed instruments or anti-ballistic vests.

Starting with basics, the licensee must successfully complete a safety course for the various classes of firearms that they wish to possess. The issuing of either a Firearms or Collectors Licence demonstrates you are a fit and proper person to possess a firearm. A collector must jump through the same hoops (and are usually required to provide more information) to obtain an Application for a Permit to Acquire and must have correct storage. Collecting has no shortcuts in obtaining a licence or possessing firearms.

A shooter may have a strong and genuine interest in a particular calibre or type of firearm but with arbitrary restrictions on the number of firearms of

a certain calibre or type registered to a Firearms Licence, difficulties will be encountered when trying to acquire more than a small number of any one calibre or action type. Arbitrary restrictions imposed upon legitimate collectors and shooters do nothing to ensure community safety.

A collector may not wish to partake in formal target shooting events but has a passion in understanding the functioning of and shooting of a collectable firearm. Single Action Shooters are fortunate with being able to shoot with quality copies of wild west firearms. A collector of 19th century Mannlichers or such does not have this option. The collector must try and justify the registration of the Mannlicher on a Firearms Licence or register it to a Collectors Licence and by default it becomes a safe queen.

The SSAA Historical Arms Collectors Branch Inc. (Q60) presently shoots annually two Society and Collector events under Section 78 of the Act and Section 111(4) of the Weapons Regulations 2016 at the Queensland State Complex. This allows attendees to shoot, under very tight restrictions, A, B and some H class firearms registered to a Collectors Licence. This year, 2026 represents 25 years of branch collector



A very late 1889 production .577/450 Martini Henry. This one saw service in India.



An Enfield Pattern 1853 muzzle loader that was converted to a breech loader in the 1860s. This rifle saw service in Canada.

shoots without incident and strict adherence to range templates and standing orders. This demonstrates that community safety and other hot topic issues are not compromised.

The above exemption allows for historical and culturally significant firearms to be fired and admired by all shooters. Our Single Action Shooter colleagues demonstrate that an appreciation of wild west firearms from the 19th century can be put to a practical and legitimate use. Likewise, collectors demonstrate that original vintage firearms have their place on the firing line. The common factor is having fun and enjoying our mutual pursuits.

Surely with good will by all parties this could be expanded to the benefit of all firearm owners. ☺

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST MACHINE GUN THE VICKERS

By Tom Lewis

One of the first problems with early machine guns is the operators often didn't know how to use them. They turned out essentially in infantry combat to be a defensive weapon, but that goes against one of the principles of war taught in all officer schools: Offensive Action. In other words, you don't win a battle by sitting still – you must attack.

The machine gun and the quick-firing rifle changed the face of modern warfare, and this realisation came in the early days of World War I.

ARMY ORGANISATION

Formation	Personnel	Composition	Commanded by
Platoon	35-50 soldiers	3 or 4 sections (British Empire) or squads (USA)	First or Second Lieutenant
Company	150 soldiers	Three platoons	Captain
Battalion	600-1000 soldiers	Four companies	Lieutenant-Colonel
Regiment	1,500 to 5,000	Two or more battalions; HQ section, and more	Colonel

Composition of all of the above, including the ranks, is variable through time and circumstances. For example, on the Western Front in WWI, it sometimes occurred that a captain would be commanding a battalion due to casualties. Similarly, there are numerous examples of a sergeant – usually 2IC of a platoon – commanding it due to the absence of his commanding officer.

Before the Great War, as a platoon or company or battalion commander you studied how you should attack the enemy who was appearing in front of you. Look at his disposition – are there any area of weakness? You would go for some sort of flanking movement if you could – attack him from



A Vickers machine gun crew in action at the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, September 1917.

“The machine gun and the quick-firing rifle changed the face of modern warfare, and this realisation came in the early days of World War I.”

expensive horses with all the gaudy fellows with feathers in their hats, you could use them as shock troops to exploit the gap and pour through with your men and their sabres or lances, attacking the infantry who might run.

That was the theory anyway, and for hundreds of years it worked. Then along came magazine-fed bolt action rifles with smokeless powder. Now if you attacked, you faced their massed fire and you had difficulty discerning where it was coming from. Perhaps you could

the side – because it's extremely difficult and demoralising for him to command soldiers to then turn and face the new danger.

But maybe to safeguard his flanks then, he has weakened his centre? In which case you might attack there, and if you have a handy detachment of cavalry, those

use your artillery, firing over your own heads, to break him and make him run. The enemy responded with trenches and dugouts in which to take shelter. And then machine guns were added to all this. If they were deployed properly, they were on the flanks. As your lines of men charged towards them, they fired in enfilade along the line, with the gun on a tripod to allow it to be moved in an arc. Think hosing ants and you have it. Machine guns were now understood and useful.



950,000 female workers were employed in British factories, including this woman, pictured making shell cases in a Vickers establishment in January 1915.

The Vickers, the main machine gun of the British Empire, began service as the Mark I from November 26, 1912. It was a tripod-mounted weapon necessitating a cooling system due to the barrel heat with its rate of fire of 450-550 rounds per minute. The ammunition was fed from a belt, constructed of canvas with brass separating strips, with a capacity of 250 rounds. Firing 600 rounds a minute in continuous fire, the Vickers would boil water, and then the gun would go through its cooling tank at a rate of 1.5 pints per 1000 rounds. Heat generated by the rapid fire would cause a powerful emission of steam, which was condensed by passing it through a pliable tube into a canvas bucket of water. By this means, the gun could continue to fire without a cloud of steam giving its position away to the enemy.

At the start of the Great War, the Vickers Mk. I, now tested to the ultimate in combat, soon began to change. For the first

few years, these alterations were mainly to lighten the heavy gun and reduce production time and cost. Completely lightened weapons had a 'five-arch' top cover and where the metal was thicker than required, it was milled out to the minimum. This even went to the extent of boring out the centres of securing pins so they were hollow to save precious ounces.



An Australian Vickers machine gun team in the Great War.

As the demand for machine guns increased, it was decided a smooth barrel jacket could be produced more quickly than the fluted version. From late 1917, some Vickers MGs were manufactured with these jackets, similar in appearance to World War II weapons.



Vickers MK I machine gun. The water-cooling tank, tripod, and the gun itself made the Vickers a heavy weapon to move. A crew of two operated it, with four more needed when movement was necessary.

IN AIRCRAFT USE

The Vickers was quickly adapted to the needs of aircraft. These flimsy machines had only staggered into the air as a powered unit – balloons had been in use for artillery spotting for about a century – from 1903. But the realisation their reconnaissance abilities were unique and valuable soon followed, with fighters developing both to pursue them or – if they were on your side – protect them. Bombers too evolved to deliver explosive power from the air. The machine gun was the obvious choice to try to hit a fast-moving target manoeuvring in three dimensions.



Cockpit view from inside a WWI Sopwith Camel fighter, showing the two Vickers .303 machine guns, which fired through the propeller.

A good example of how MGs evolved in the air is with the British Sopwith Camel, the most successful fighter of the war. This biplane got its name from a small hump covering the guns forward of the pilot's position. It had a short fuselage and long wings, coupled with a powerful rotary motor. These design characteristics and the immense right-hand torque of the engine would cause an immediate and vicious spin if the pilot released the joystick. But once mastered, the Camel was a capable fighter. It was an effective counter to the German Fokker triplanes beloved of aces such as the famous Red Baron – Manfred von Richthofen – who



An SE5 fighter pilot in the cockpit, preparing his forward-firing .303 Vickers and the upper wing Lewis machine guns.

flew a red machine armed with two forward-firing 7.92mm Spandau machine guns. A total of 5,490 Camels were built.

Fighters by 1917 had evolved to an almost universal model of a single pilot aiming the whole aircraft with gunpower delivered from preferably two machine guns. The Sopwith Camel had formidable firepower from its two Vickers, firing through the propeller via interrupter gear. It was strong and sturdy and could absorb damage. If a fighter's success is measured in victories, then the Camel was the best machine of the war. Its pilots shot down 1,294 German aircraft – more than via any other Allied plane.

Another famous fighter, with two machine guns firing in different arcs, was the SE5, a product of the Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough. The SE5 did not have the aerobatic abilities of the Camel, and less concentrated firepower, with one forward-firing Vickers, and a top-wing mounted Lewis gun. Although not as formidable a machine in some respects as the Camel, it was however faster and a steady and stable gun platform. More than 5,000 were built for use on the Western Front.

Attempts to shoot down observation balloons with incendiary rounds led to the



The Sopwith Camel, one of WWI's finest fighters, renowned for its sharp right-hand turn, rugged build, and twin Vickers guns firing through the propeller.

development of an 11mm Vickers round in 1917. It was used by both the British and French in this role until the end of the war. Incidentally, although not much talked about, it appears one usual practice of 'balloon-busting' was to target the highly trained observers, even as they parachuted to safety, not the cheap balloons.

The Vickers in aircraft use became superseded post-WWI by the faster-firing and more reliable Browning, which was adapted into the wings of aircraft, allowing more ammunition and more guns as well.

VICKERS MACHINE GUN PRODUCTION DURING WWI

1914	1915	1916
266	2,405	7,429
1917	1918	Total
21,782	39,473	71,355

BACK ON THE GROUND

As the Great War neared its end, the Vickers had cemented its position as a weapon of excellence. Ian Hogg, in *Weapons & War Machines*, describes an action in August 1916, during which the British 100th Company of the Machine Gun Corps fired ten Vickers guns to deliver sustained fire for 12 hours. Using 100 barrels, they fired a million rounds

without breakdowns. "It was this absolute foolproof reliability which endeared the Vickers to every British soldier who ever fired one," wrote Hogg. "It never broke down – it just kept on firing and came back for more."

Variants on Vickers machine guns proliferated in ship defences and in use on tanks and armoured cars as World War II began. Tens of thousands were in use around the British Empire and also having been produced in numerous foreign countries. Several companies were producing guns under licence as the demand grew.

An unusual use of the Vickers well inside Australia's coast during the war should not go unremarked. During the breakout from the Cowra Prisoner of War camp in NSW on August 5, 1944, Privates Ben Hardy and Ralph Jones of the 22nd Garrison Battalion manned a Vickers machine gun to stop more than 1,000 Japanese prisoners from escaping. As it looked as if they were about to be overwhelmed and killed, they disabled the gun by disposing of its lock, preventing prisoners from turning the gun against the guards. Both were awarded the George Cross, posthumously. (See Harry Gordon's book *Voyage from Shame* for more on this fascinating story.)

The Cowra breakout was the largest prison break in history, with many Japanese knowing that it was likely a suicide mission but also a chance to regain their lost honour. During the event, 234 prisoners died and 108 were wounded. Three Australian guards were killed, and an officer stabbed and killed during the subsequent hunt for escapees. More than 300 men were recaptured in the nine days following.

Dimensions	Original Imperial measurements
Method of feed	250-round fabric belt from right side - canvas with brass separating strips
Weight	Empty – 30 lbs. With water – 40 lbs. (approx.)
Length	3ft., 7½in
Rifling	Number of grooves – 5; twist – 1 turn in 10 inches
Sights	Aperture and blade
Cyclic rate of fire	450 to 550 rounds per minute
Muzzle velocity	Approximately 2,440 fps
System of operation	Recoil, gas assisted
Type of cooling	Liquid cooling; seven-pint barrel casing
Ammunition	Cartridges, S.A. Ball, .303 in., Mk. 7, Mk. 7z or Mk. 8z, or Tracer or A.P.
Gun barrel lifespan	18,000 rounds of firing Spare barrel carried by team for replacement



An anti-aircraft gun crewman with their multi-barrel Vickers on board the cruiser HMAS Perth, circa 1940.



Part of the NORFORCE collection at the Darwin Military Museum, showing a Vickers machine gun and a pack saddle.

POST WAR VICKERS USAGE

Australia post-WWII was using the Vickers in the Korean War as support weapons for its deployed infantry battalions. Each battalion was equipped with six Vickers guns, fired by a crew of two: one man to fire the weapon and another to ensure the smooth feeding of the 250-round belts of .303 ammunition. If it had to be moved, four other soldiers were detailed for moving the gun, its tripod, ammunition, spare parts and tools, sights and water.

Given Korea's extremely cold winters, anti-freeze had to be added to the cooling tank's water supply

to prevent it from freezing and splitting the jacket open.

Back in Britain, the Vickers was used by the Army until 1968. The main argument used for its replacement was its weight when the gun and crew needed to reposition. Here, the division between light and heavy guns was coming to the fore: the light to be capable of fast and easy movement and the heavy as a sited defence weapon.

Sturdy, reliable, accurate and hard-hitting, the Vickers machine gun remains one of the finest weapon systems in history. 🍷

GIVING FIRE ANTS THE FLICK

By Taylah Campbell May

Solenopsis invicta, the fire ant, is an invasive species that was introduced to Australia from South America on global trade shipping containers. Their presence in Australia was first detected in Brisbane in February of 2001. In the relatively short period of time that they have been here, they have caused extensive damage to the native ecosystem assemblages.

Fire ants are very robust animals that are tolerant to a wide variety of environmental conditions, ranging from extreme drought to heavily waterlogged environments. Interestingly, fire ants lack the ability to regulate their body temperature; in order to counter this, they modify their nests to account for the weather of their surroundings. During warmer periods or periods of drought, they will nest in small patches of loose soil. While in cooler, damper regions they often nest in large highly visible mounds.

Their incredible ability to adapt to climatic conditions has greatly aided their invasive survival, but there are many other unique adaptations that assist their persistence.

SLOW THE SPREAD

Businesses and individuals using equipment and machinery while working with materials that could carry fire ants – and are in fire ant biosecurity zones – must clean them thoroughly before moving them off-site. This helps to prevent the spread of fire ants. Cleaning all equipment and machinery, including slashers, excavators, wheelbarrows and other gear, ensures they are free from soil and other materials that fire ants are likely to nest in.

Fire ants have learned a unique method of survival...bonding together to create a 'raft' to escape flood waters of the tropical areas they mostly live in. Yet winter weather does not seem to slow them down either, as they create large mounds to trap any heat.



Fire ants are notoriously aggressive and territorial; when they feel threatened, they will swarm and sting their prey with a potent venom.

Another specialised evolutionary adaptation that has accelerated the increasing distribution of the invasive ant species is their ability to raft together. During wet weather and major flooding events, all the worker ants surround their queen and her eggs, linking together into a tight bundle. This forms a highly buoyant raft that they use to combat severe wet weather. With the more frequent occurrence of these types



Winter weather does not seem to slow ants down, as they create large mounds to trap any heat. This mound was damaged by the winter weather.

of weather events in the past few years, this has only aided their survival further.

On top of causing extensive damage to our natural ecology, fire ants are posing extensive economic strain. Fire ants are known to impact more than 50 species of agricultural and horticultural crops as well as turf and nursery species. They can cause damage and have the potential to kill plants by tunnelling through roots and stems. Similarly, they have been known to make their mounds in vital equipment such as irrigation systems and harvesting equipment. Further, fire ants often feed on biological control agents, which interferes with integrated pest management practices. Of note, international infestations have seen a 35 per cent reduction in potato yield and a 65 per cent reduction in corn yield.☹

“Fire ants are notoriously aggressive and territorial; when they feel threatened, they will swarm and sting their prey with a potent venom.”

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET BITTEN BY A FIRE ANT?

Each ant delivers many stings causing the sensation that the body is on fire, and the painful burning sensation can last up to an hour. Small white pustules form within 48 hours of being stung, which can become itchy and infected.

WHAT TO DO IF BITTEN

The acid from fire ants (known as formic acid) reacts with your skin and damages it. Other compounds in their venom react with your skin and nerves. No wonder these bites and stings hurt so much! Some common remedies to treat bites include soap, baking soda, rubbing alcohol, and calamine lotion.

The lesions on a foot after being bitten by fire ants.



NIGHT-TIME ENCOUNTERS TO REMEMBER

By Samantha Warren

Anyone who has spent a night observing a dark, clear sky in remote areas can attest to its mesmerising display. When the lights of big cities, developments and suburbia are nowhere to be found, the stars feel almost as if they are about to fall from the sky and envelope you. In these dark areas, the number of stars visible multiplies immensely.

And while seeing so many more stars is impressive enough, catching the beauty and wonder of the Milky Way offers next-level views. If you haven't seen it, it should be on your bucket list. The Milky Way is our galaxy and home to the billions of stars we can see if the light is right.

A National Science Week initiative pitched the Milky Way against auroras, moonbows and 'stargazing at a dark sky location' against each other. The Milky Way was the clear winner, as "the most amazing thing to see in the night sky".

Unfortunately, given that about 86 per cent of Australians live on the coast near built up areas and towns, most of us will not be able to see the Milky Way unless we travel to the Outback or visit a designated 'dark sky' site.

According to Dark Sky Tasmania, "a 'dark sky sanctuary' is a public or private land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural

or educational value, its cultural heritage and/or public enjoyment."

International Dark Sky Places (DSP) is the body that certifies dark sky communities, parks and protected areas around the world, assisting with policies surrounding responsible lighting and education. Since the first Dark Sky area was named in 2001 in Flagstaff, Arizona in the USA, the program has certified more than 200 sites across the globe.

There are several places and companies around Australia where you can take in a starry night and hopefully the Milky Way.

Did you know?

Australia is home to six official sites certified by DSP as being either a community, park, reserve, sanctuary, or urban space:

- 1. Sanctuary:** Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary – Flinders Ranges, South Australia
- 2. Community:** Carrickalinga – Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia
- 3. Urban space:** Palm Beach Headland – regional Sydney area, NSW
- 4. Reserve:** River Murray Dark Sky Reserve – Mid Murray Council Area, South Australia
- 5. Sanctuary:** The Jump-Up (Australian Age of Dinosaurs Ltd (AAOD) – a not-for-profit) – Winton, Queensland
- 6. Park:** Warrumbungle Dark Sky Park – Orana area, NSW.

Image: @godwardphotography

Image: Cosmos Centre, Charleville Outback Queensland. Image of Orion.



Charleville, Queensland

The Cosmos Centre in Charleville, Queensland will open your eyes to a world of "celestial wonder". Offering two after-dark experiences, choose from its Outback Stargazing evening where you'll use a 14-inch Meade telescope, or get a little more intimate with the heavens on its Premium Stargazing tour, which offers longer viewing times, smaller groups and Queensland's largest dobsonian telescope – a 30-inch telescope providing a truly immersive night. Both options will change the way you look at stars and the night sky forever.

W: cosmoscentre.com/Tours/Night

P: (07) 4656 8377

East MacDonnell Ranges, NT

The East MacDonnell Ranges, in the Northern Territory, is where you can take a tour with Earth's Sanctuary. Just outside Alice Springs, experienced guides will open your eyes even further to the mysteries in the sky.

P: (08) 8953 6161

W: earth-sanctuary.com.au

Mount Wellington, Tasmania

With only 576,000 people in Tasmania, there is plenty of space untouched by urban sprawl that will offer breathtaking night sky views, including Aurora Australia (southern lights). Mount Wellington, in Hobart, offers fantastic night views, taking observers high above the city's light pollution. Dark Sky Tasmania is currently working to get its own dark sky sanctuary certified. Mount Wellington is hard to miss in this harbour city.

Perth, WA

Head west to star gaze at the Perth Observatory, which has been bringing the night sky closer to home for more than 120 years. Take a night sky tour or their Moonlit Option, where you can almost see what the first moonwalkers saw

Sky-Watcher Australia sells telescopes and everything else you need to start stargazing. They have an extensive range from which to choose – for both beginners and experts. Plus, to help get you set up, they offer a discount to SSAA members! Mention the code SSAAQLD10 to receive 10% off your purchase. See ssaaqld.org.au/exclusive-deals/sky-watcher-australia

Also, visit skywatcheraustralia.com.au and check out their Knowledge Base, where you can find a first-time buyers guide and a photography cheat sheet.

so many years ago. In addition to their day and night tours, the observatory offers more than a dozen special events, including a mosaic workshop, a sip and paint night, a breathwork and healing night, night photography workshops and much more.

P: 08 9293 8295

W: perthobservatory.com.au

Warrumbungle National Park, NSW

The Warrumbungle National Park in New South Wales was the Southern Hemisphere's first dark sky park. At Siding Spring Observatory, one of the world's most important observatories, it works to understand "the universe and how to protect our planet's fragile environment". And, according to its website: "It is one of the few light observatories in the world that can observe the whole southern-hemisphere sky." You'll be able to peer through Australia's largest telescopes to get one of the best stargazing experiences available, with several great camping spots from which to choose.

W: sidingspring.com.au

P: 0488 687 562

Around Australia

Free and paid campsites around Australia offer countless secluded places to camp under the stars. Once you experience the tranquillity of this type of camping, your local campground surrounded by dozens of caravans and tents and the chatter and light pollution that accompany them, may be hard to swallow.

Next time you get away from the 'Big Smoke', be sure to set aside time to enjoy the night sky. After all, 'the stars at night are big and bright'... even outside of Texas. ☾

Image: @godwardphotography



"Deep in the Heart of Texas," popularised by Gene Autry, celebrates bright night skies—but Australia's skies rival them just as strongly.



Advancing to Adventure

By Alex Minicozzi

When I first heard about the Voortrekka Cape duffle bag, I could just tell it was a unique product. The sleek, simple, rugged and functional design will immediately catch anyone's attention. Like everyone, over the years I've owned many duffle bags, from cheap nylon sacks to branded sporting bags, and the one thing they all have in common is chaos. Clothes tumbling all over the place, muddy boots ruining your fresh pair of undies, all while reaching for anything is a tug of war with a sea of fabric. It can be one of the most irritating parts of camping. Clearly, I wasn't the only one who thought this, as Steve, the owner and one half of the two minds behind this bag put it, "We wanted to fix the black hole that is a duffle bag." And that is exactly what they have done.



The Velcro pouches are a simple but clever addition to easy storage.

VOORTREKKA CAPE REVIEW



Pick a bag and be done. The Cape from Voortrekka should last you a lifetime.

DESIGN AND BUILD

The name of the brand, Voortrekka, is a play on the Afrikaans word 'Voortrekker' (meaning 'pioneer' or 'those who trek ahead'). The company's tagline is 'Advancing to Adventure', and this bag could not hold truer to that statement. Right off the bat, the Cape exudes quality. The outer shell is built from rugged 900D polyester canvas with a PVC lining, designed to shrug off rain, dirt mud and rough surfaces; it even floats if you ever find yourself in a sinking situation. It is built for exactly the kind of punishment Aussie landscapes dish out. The base is double layered for extra protection, meaning it isn't scared of wet ground or sharp stones.

This bag isn't about flashy materials, its built to be used, it feels honest and ready for quite literally anything. My first impression left me a bit confused; I was expecting a rather large compartmentalised bag. Instead, I received a flat package.

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Opening it up I was starting to see what I needed to do with each of the dividers for the bag, and watching Steve's video on the setup removed any confusion after that. It was then that I realised the genius of the product. The dividers can be set up incredibly easily, and the draw string bag it arrives in can then be used as a dirty laundry bag. It is this versatility and attention to the customers' needs that sets the Cape apart from other luggage options. If you're someone who appreciates gear with substance over marketing fluff, this bag delivers on that promise.

ORGANISATION THAT WORKS

The real gamechanger with the Cape is its internal design. It's modular down to the last detail, with removable dividers that let you configure the space you need. Additionally, the Velcro-attached pouches for toiletries and essentials are genius in their simplicity, pull one out at a rest stop, grab what you need, and clip it back without unpacking and messing up the whole bag.

But my favourite feature, and something I never knew I needed until I used it, is the dedicated waterproof shoe compartment. Dirty boots and sandy thongs have no business touching clean gear, and on trips where the weather turned or trails got muddy, this alone justifies a purchase. It's easy to slip your muddy gear into a sealed section and know it's contained.

ACCESS AND EVERYDAY USE

Some extra features that I really enjoyed were the lid, which has a strap that loops around the back of a car seat, letting you transform your back seat into a wardrobe, and the seat belt loops that secured the bag for rough rides. Having the lid stay open is incredibly helpful, as it allows you to rummage around without making a mess and just keeping everything very easily accessible.

With a 71L capacity (about 55cm x 35cm x 35cm), it is plenty big enough for multi-day trips. With my experience, with I believe you can comfortably undertake a five- to six-day adventure with this bag, but if your strict with your packing and don't mind reusing clothes, this could be stretched out to a bit more than a week. With that said, when its fully packed, it doesn't scream 'big heavy bag'. It is surprisingly manageable for its size, especially with its reinforced straps and handles and vehicle-focused uses.

PRICE AND VALUE

At a retail price of around \$290, the Cape isn't cheap and for good reason. This is an investment, rather than a disposable purchase. The materials, thoughtful layout, and rugged reliability suggest this bag will go the distance if treated well. For someone who spends a lot of time outdoors, on road trips or moving gear in and out of vehicles or campsites, this feels like a bag that is absolutely worth the price; pay once and be sorted forever.



The compartment for shoes is the best.

WRAPPING UP

In a world of bags that either lack organisation or fall apart after a few trips, the Cape stands out, not because it's flashy, but because it genuinely solves problems you run into as an adventurer. It's not perfect for every scenario, but it's *exceptionally good* for what it's designed to do: keep your gear sorted, protected and accessible when you really need it. If you're planning regular trips, whether it's coastal weekends, bush camping or longer road adventures, this bag is definitely meant for those who advance to adventure. You can buy one online at voortrekka.com.au ☺



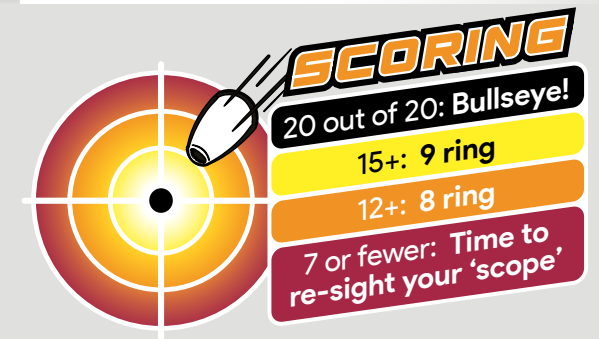
SHOOT OFF! Quiz

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 Which city will host the 2032 Olympic Games?
- 2 What is the raised portion between grooves in rifling called?
- 3 Which repeating rifle used a tubular magazine in the buttstock during the American Civil War?
- 4 What does the 'LR' stand for in .22 LR?
- 5 What does 'ES' stand for when analysing chronograph data?
- 6 Which clay discipline requires shooters to move between five shooting stations?
- 7 What does 'R-value' measure in camping mats?
- 8 Which Queensland city hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games?
- 9 What is the term for a rifle barrel that does not contact the stock along its length?
- 10 Which Swiss straight-pull rifle was adopted in 1931?
- 11 Which bullet type abbreviation refers to a projectile with no exposed lead at the base?
- 12 What is the forward curved portion of a bullet's nose called?
- 13 Which deer species in Australia has three tines on a typical mature antler beam?
- 14 What is the term for minor vertical dispersion caused by inconsistent shoulder pressure and/or placement?
- 15 Which clay target discipline features a high house and a low house?
- 16 Which Olympic Games first introduced dedicated women's shooting events?
- 17 In what US state was the company Yeti (Eskys/water bottles, etc) started?
- 18 What law explains pressure increasing as temperature rises in a sealed, constant-volume container?
- 19 What barrel characteristic primarily determines a bullet's rotational stability?
- 20 What is the name for the distance from the bolt face to the datum line in a chamber?



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:

Wild Venison and Mushroom Meatballs in Porcini Cream Sauce

*A Comforting New Classic
– Made Wild*



Prep: 25 mins | Cook: 35mins | Serves: 4 | Recipe Australian Meats

What you'll need

For the Meatballs

- 1kg Spring Ridge Venison mince
- 200g brown mushrooms, finely chopped
- 20g dried porcini mushrooms, soaked
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- Leaves from 2–3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp butter, for frying
- Olive oil, for frying

For the Porcini Cream Sauce

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 100ml dry white wine
- 250ml beef or venison stock
- 150ml thickened cream
- 20g dried porcini mushrooms, soaked in 200ml boiling water
- Leaves from 1 sprig fresh thyme
- Salt & pepper, to taste

To Serve

- 350–400g tagliatelle
- Grated Parmesan
- Fresh parsley, chopped

How to cook it

Place the dried porcini mushrooms in a heatproof bowl and cover with 200ml boiling water. Set aside to soak for 15 minutes. Once softened, remove the mushrooms (reserving the soaking liquid), then finely chop.

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil and 1 tbsp butter in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and brown mushrooms with a pinch of salt. Sauté for 4–5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, chopped soaked porcini, and thyme leaves. Cook for another 4–5 minutes until softened and fragrant. Set aside to cool slightly.

In a large bowl, combine venison mince, the cooled mushroom mixture, Dijon mustard, breadcrumbs, egg, parsley, and seasoning. Mix until just combined. Cook a small test meatball in a frying pan to check seasoning. Adjust the main mixture if needed. Roll the mix into 16–20 small meatballs (or about 26–28 golf ball-sized ones) with damp hands. Place on a tray and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes—overnight is ideal for flavour and retains the shape of the balls really well.

Heat a little olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Brown the meatballs in batches for 5–6 minutes, turning occasionally. Transfer to a baking tray and finish in a 180°C oven for 10 minutes, basting with pan juices halfway through.

Using the same pan, melt a little more butter if needed. Sauté the garlic for 30 seconds, then deglaze with the white wine. Simmer for 2–3 minutes to reduce slightly.

Add the reserved (strained) porcini liquid, the remaining un-chopped soaked mushrooms, stock, and thyme. Simmer for 4–5 minutes, then stir in the cream. Return the meatballs to the pan and simmer gently for 2–3 minutes, until the sauce thickens slightly. Season to taste.

Meanwhile, cook tagliatelle in a large pot of salted boiling water according to packet instructions. Drain well.

Divide the tagliatelle between bowls or serve on a large family-style platter.

Spoon over the meatballs and creamy porcini sauce. Finish with grated Parmesan and chopped fresh parsley.

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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.



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- 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.

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ANSWERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brisbane | 11. TMJ |
| 2. Lands | 12. Ogive |
| 3. Spencer | 13. Rusa |
| 4. Long rifle | 14. Vertical stringing |
| 5. Extreme spread | 15. Skeet |
| 6. Five-Stand | 16. Los Angeles |
| 7. Thermal resistance/Insulation | 17. Texas |
| 8. Gold Coast | 18. Gay-Lussac |
| 9. Free-floated barrel | 19. Twist rate |
| 10. K31 | 20. Headspace |

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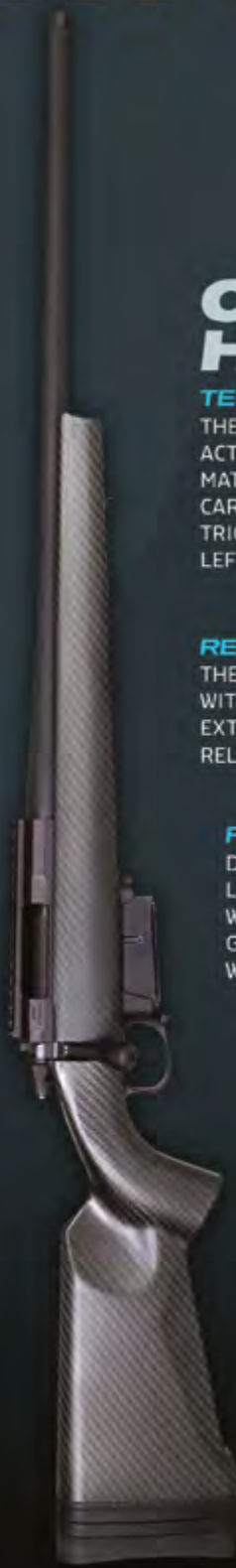
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