

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER

Generation *Zanthie*



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Editorial



Gemma Dunn

Laetisha Scanlan kicks off the final issue of this unconventional year by discussing how she keeps a positive frame of mind when competing, no matter what the results.

Young SSAA member Zanthie Bailey's awards list is astounding and we highlight how she's leading the way for Australia's next generation of shooters.

Part two of my physical tips for shooting looks at strengthening exercises with a focus on getting a solid core for advanced results.

Read how hunting for the table brings virtue through the whole field to fork process.

And our **Ridgeline** Micro-Lite short-sleeve tee review demonstrates why it's a perfect all-round fit for shooting.

Keep in touch over the holiday period via our **Facebook** page and **email**. Also, remember to enter the draw to win a pair of Wiley X Saber Advanced glasses thanks to **Wiley X Australia**.

Wishing you and your loved ones a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Gemma

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER

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Taking aim with Laetisha Scanlan



The glass is half full

I have recently been lucky enough to film some informative technical videos with SSAA members Russell and Lauryn Mark that will soon feature on **SSAA TV**.

I still find myself always learning from Russell with his wealth and depth of knowledge from his experiences as an Olympic champion. And I can only think how lucky I am to have access to this.

I've been in the sport for more than 15 years and surprisingly even after this long I am still learning the tricks of the trade and how to better equip myself in challenging mental situations that come with this type of sport.

When I think about the poor performances that I've had throughout the years, I can honestly say I try to take a lesson from each and every one to make it worth the disappointment.

And as cliché as this sounds, the saying: "When you don't win, you learn," does have some merit.

International competition never becomes easier, but it does become manageable with the right people in your corner. For me, the controlling of expectations has been a struggle of mine for years. Not

just the expectations on myself but also the perceived ones I've felt from others. It took me a long time to realise that when I shoot, I shouldn't be doing it for the sake of anyone except me.

You learn quickly that to compete with the weight of the world on your shoulders is damaging, exhausting and impossible to sustain and in the end no-one wins.

I remember messaging Russell after day one of a World Cup I was involved in, where I was leading the field. I didn't know this myself as I never look at the scoreboard during competition, but I had a few other athletes come up and tell me and congratulate me for a solid first day performance.

I remember thinking to myself, I wish they didn't say that! I still had another full day of competition and then if I was lucky a final. How could people be congratulating me when we hadn't even finished?

And that's when self-doubt kicked in. That little person inside your mind trying to damage all the hard work that you achieved was rearing its ugly head and making it impossible for me to focus on what I needed to do.

So, instead of letting this snowball into a negative frame of mind, I knew my best bet would be chatting to Russell, the teller of all truths and the one person that knows what to say and when to say it.

And in his words of wisdom, this was his response to me: "Better to be leading from the front than trailing from behind."

And as simple and straightforward as that sounded, it was very accurate.

Here I was, beating myself up and being nervous about leading the competition, when I should have been grateful that I was in a great position to start the next day, rather than at the back end chasing my tail and waiting for a miracle to happen.

So, I guess the moral of that story comes down to perspective, how you choose to perceive yourself and the circumstances you are in.

Ultimately it was up to me; did I want to see the glass as half full or half empty?

Needless to say, the optimist in me chose half full.

Women's-only competition

Only female SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

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Generation Zanthie



Some of the many trophies and awards won by Zanthie.

John Denman

It has been said many times that our children are our future. It has also been said that kids today are not as dedicated as older generations. Indeed, Generation Z (born roughly between 1997 and 2012) are often spoken of in less than terms of endearment, but to every stereotype there will always be exceptions. Take 18-year-old SSAA member Zanthie Bailey, for starters.

Zanthie began shooting as a teenager. Along the way she was fortunate to be coached by her uncle, Trevor Williams, himself a competitive shooter of some

standing. Trevor helped broaden her experience in both rifle and pistol shooting, after things all began at the SSAA Northern Rivers Branch Range at Casino.

As Trevor was already competing in benchrest at the Coffs Harbour Branch Range, it's hardly surprising that Zanthie slotted rather neatly into competitive shooting there. She quickly learned the rules of shooting and the safety requirements, then gained experience in a number of disciplines. She also learned more about the working parts of firearms and how to maintain them. She discovered

how to read the wind and be aware of other weather conditions that can have an effect on the flight of the bullet.

In 2015 Zanthie competed in the 100-yard Heavy Rimfire match at the Coffs Harbour Dairyville Range. On the last day she had been leading the match since relay 2, with a good chance of either equalling or bettering the Australian record. The sportsmanship of the other shooters was well illustrated as they stayed back from the firing line to ease the pressure on the junior shooter.

Her list of trophies now reads like a wish list for any competitive shooter, but more importantly, she has developed desirable traits such as discipline, concentration, perseverance, dedication, resilience, focus and responsibility.



Zanthie has the Australian Olympic team in her sights.

At the SSAA NRB Casino Rifle Range where it all began for Zanthie.



Newspaper clipping: Zanthie already making headlines as a teenager.



On leaving the firing line a winner she was congratulated firstly by World Champion Norm Bardell, also captain of the Australian Rimfire shooting team, and then by Ian Thompson, whose record she had just fallen short of by 0.1 of a point.

Zanthie also benefitted from the support of former National Benchrest Chairman Dave Billingham. She started her Centrefire career using a rifle borrowed from World Champion Paul Sullivan for her to compete in the four-day Super Shoot at the SSAA Dairyville Range. She was hooked after that and ended up buying the rifle from Paul, with a little help from her dad.

As she's progressed Zanthie has been able to meet likeminded people from a wide variety of backgrounds and places around Australia. Along the way she has gained the friendship and support of this group of shooters. She numbers among her friends those who participate in state and national competitions, including some World Champions and Hall of Fame members.

Zanthie has amassed an impressive array of prizes in her brief shooting career...

In her last Centrefire competition as a junior in the Banana Coast Championship, she finished the shoot on the Sunday afternoon with the smallest group of the day of 0.140". She beat Sullivan by 0.006" using the rifle she had bought from him.

Her list of trophies now reads like a wish list for any competitive shooter, but more importantly, especially to her mother Alanna, she has developed desirable traits such as discipline, concentration,

perseverance, dedication, resilience, focus and responsibility. All this stems from her desire to succeed in her chosen sport.

Zanthie has amassed an impressive array of prizes in her brief shooting career, but it's hardly surprising. Shooting runs in the family, and along with her uncle Trevor, who has coached her along the way to where she is now, her 95-year-old grandfather Lloyd Purcell has followed her career with interest. Lloyd was instrumental in the establishment of the Casino Pistol Club which now bears his name. So if pedigree counts in shooting, Zanthie was always going to succeed.

Another member of the family, Zanthie's cousin Natonya Purcell-Williams has resumed shooting too after returning to the North Coast after five years in Melbourne, and both girls are enjoying shooting competitively. Adding to their list, they both compete in the 300m Fly Shoot at the SSAA Range in Casino. You could definitely say there's a shooting dynasty under way.



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Top 5 strengthening exercises for shooters

Gemma Dunn and Zoe Aust



As I mentioned in the previous issue of AWS, having the right foundations for success in shooting can come down to your level of strength needed to compete with limited fatigue. Most people would say that shooting doesn't require much physical strength. It does if you want to be successful at it, as once your muscles start to fatigue, so does your ability to concentrate for the required amount of time.

I have outlined my five favourite exercises to help improve performance on the range or out in the field. In addition, we have Zoe Aust (pictured), who is a certified personal trainer and has experienced shooting herself, to guide us through these

exercises and offer tips and tricks on how to succeed with them. All of these exercises can be done in the comfort of your own home or desired location, so no need for hefty gym memberships here.



Prone Snow Angel



For each exercise, Zoe provides a good explanation of how to do it, offers an alternative if you find the base activity too challenging or too easy and gives an idea of how to know you are doing it right.

Push-ups

Push-ups are a classic, and for good reason. It is a fantastic all-rounder for all shooting disciplines but rifle shooters will find this exercise offers added benefits for performance. It is the right exercise to develop a stable hold through your shoulders and scapula, assists with posture and prevents injuries in the shoulders. Stability and posture are key to being a competitive rifle shooter, both of which are something that can be developed using this exercise.

Zoe's technique:

Starting on your hands and feet in a high plank with your hands under your shoulders or just wider. Engage your core and glutes to keep your body as straight as possible and slowly lower yourself down aiming to have your chest as close as possible to the ground and then shove back up. If standard push-ups on your toes are too hard, try dropping down to your knees.

Aim for 3 sets of 8-10 reps

Prone Snow Angel

This exercise is also perfect for developing a stable hold, a good one for you pistol and rifle shooters. Not only that, it also is an important one to bolster your posterior and shoulder strength which can be a fantastic preventative for injury, key when we are dealing with recoil into the shoulder.

Zoe's technique:

Start laying on your stomach with your head and shoulders off the ground and your arms straight by your side. Engage your core and glutes and slowly bring

your arms above your head while keeping them straight. Pause for a second and then slowly bring your arms back to your side like you are creating a snow angel. If it is too easy, you can add some resistance to the snow angel by grabbing some light dumbbells, or even something from around the house like cans of baked beans/ water bottles etc. Also, the slower and more controlled the movement, the better it is for you.

Aim for 3 sets of 8-10 reps



High Boat to Low Boat

If the name has thrown you off, bear with me. This exercise is fantastic for strengthening the hip flexors, erector spine muscles (which run up and down both sides of the spine) and the rectus abdominis. All good muscles for posture, swinging movements and back support for when you hold the firearm. I come across people with weakness in these areas who find it hard to repeatedly hold a heavy shotgun or rifle into their shoulder without it resulting in a sore lower back. You'll also discover it hard to be consistent once these muscles tire. The exercise is always a challenge and that is what keeps me interested and engaged.

Zoe's technique:

Start by lying on your back with your head, arms and legs off the ground and your core engaged. Your arms should be by your side and your legs straight. From this low boat position squeeze your abs and bring your torso and legs closer together to create a V or high boat. Pause for a second and then slowly lower back down to low boat. This is quite an advanced ab exercise so if you find it too hard you can start in a V, sit with your legs bent and slowly straighten your legs and then bring them back in or you can do a hollow body hold for 10-15 seconds.

Aim for 3 sets of 8-10 reps



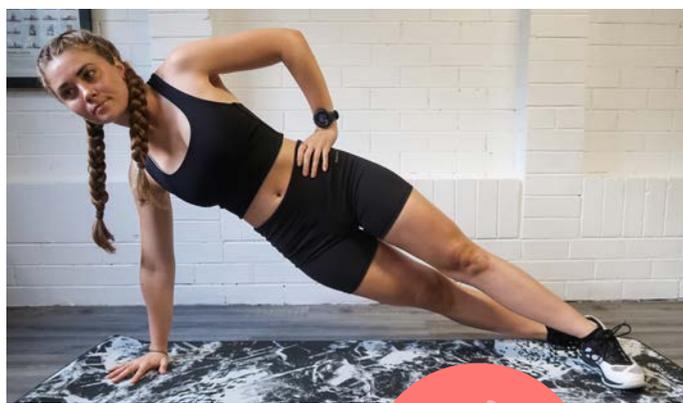
Side Plank Dips

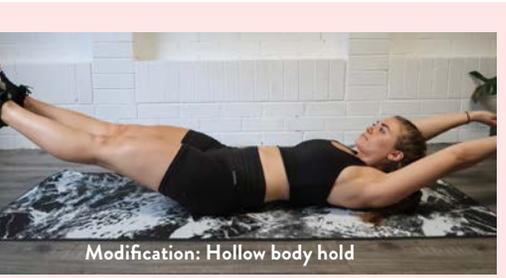
This exercise activates the deep core muscles and the obliques. The bonus with this one is you also work the arms and back. This is an exercise that can be done in a hotel room, in your bedroom, pretty much anywhere, and you'll feel it instantly. Perfect for those shooters who travel a lot for competition or for a hunt.

Zoe's technique:

Start in a side plank with one hand on the floor directly under your shoulder and your feet staggered. Rest your left arm by your side or on your top hip and engage your core and glutes. Slowly dip your hip towards the ground and then lift back up. If being on your hand is too hard or hurts your wrist, you can drop down onto your forearm.

Aim for 3 sets of 8-10 reps on each side





Modification: Hollow body hold

Ab Rollout

This is one of those moves that really helps me mentally connect to my core, which is a secondary but important training exercise for shooting. You have to stay present, engaged and mindful the whole time you do it or you can easily let your lower back take the brunt of the work. It keeps you super honest about your movement or you will feel it in the lower back and this is not ideal.

You can employ all kinds of equipment for this exercise. You can do a TRX kneeling rollout, you can use gliding discs (my recommendation), you can apply a sheet pan on turf, you can utilise a Pilates reformer or megaformer if you have access to one, you can bring into play the old school ab roller etc. It specifically works your abs and shoulder stabiliser muscles, and it's super challenging but you obtain great results if done correctly.

Zoe's technique:

Start kneeling with your hands on either an ab roll out wheel, sliders, a towel or even a skateboard. Engage your core and glutes and slowly push your arms out in front of you while keeping your arms straight and then slowly push yourself back up to kneeling. Ensure you only go as far as comfortable while keeping your back straight and core engaged the whole time. If this is too difficult start kneeling and walk your hands out as far as you can in front of you and then walk your hands back in.

Aim for 3 sets of 8-10 reps

To gain the best benefit out of these exercises repeat 1-2 times per week. Feel free to lower or increase rep range and number of rounds based on your ability.

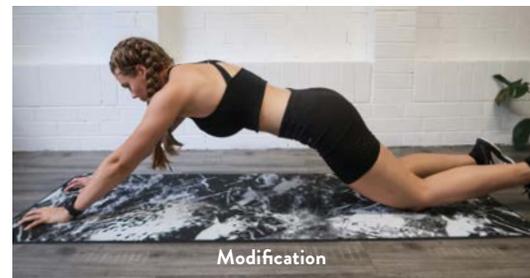


Summary

These are just some basic exercises for you to start with that are primarily focused on areas that will help with your shooting. Of course, they are good for you to do in general also to keep your body's core muscles working to prevent injuries, sore backs and more throughout daily life.

It is important that before you do any exercise plan, you are aware of your own limits and speak to a doctor first.

If you would like a more personalised training program, speak to your local trainer or better yet – make contact with Zoe and she can create a plan for you after a one-on-one consultation. If you aren't



Modification

local to Brisbane, Zoe can provide assessment over the phone or via Zoom if it's practical for you.

You can reach Zoe by the following:
 Facebook: **Zoe Aust Personal Training**
 Instagram: **@zoeaust**
 Email: **zoeaustpt@gmail.com**
 Website: **zoeaust.com**

Becoming a hunter brings virtue

Rachel Nichols

I didn't grow up in a hunting family. I didn't know anyone who hunted, I never ate game meat nor gave a thought to eating meat from the supermarket.

The ethics of meat consumption was a black and white meat-eater versus vegetarian/vegan discussion. The idea that you may be able to still consume meat, but in a more ethical way through hunting it yourself, never occurred to me. As I grew older I eventually decided that if I was going to continue eating meat then I would need to learn to ethically hunt, dress and cook my own game meat, which was easier thought than done.

My hurdles were extensive. I needed a fire-arms licence to buy a rifle, store it correctly and find a property to hunt on. After that, I still had to learn to shoot accurately, find an animal in the field, and take it cleanly. And I knew no-one with the time to teach me. So, I put the idea on the backburner and decided that if I couldn't hunt my own meat, I would forgo all meat consumption bar the occasional treat. I lived quite happily this way for a few years and forgot about my dreams of learning to hunt.

Then, a couple of years ago, I met my partner, Elise. She grew up differently from me. Her father Anton taught himself to hunt as a young man, and instructed all his children how to hunt, dive and fish.

She ate deer and wallaby meat regularly. While I was thinking about hunting and what it meant, she was doing it – Elise helped her family hunt meat for the table throughout her youth, taking her own first trophy stag at 16 (*The Junior Shooter* 13).

She has hunted sambar deer in Victoria, bush pigs in Queensland and Himalayan tahrs in New Zealand. When we first met, she was planning a bear hunt in Canada with her father and brother. I told her that I had

always wanted to try hunting for my own meat. She was excited to share this part of her life and invited me to the cattle farm her family have been hunting on for years.

The first time there, she told me that it was important to wear a colour that deer can't perceive well – shades of green, brown, red. Blue was the worst colour to wear. I managed to cobble together an outfit of green and went for my first hunting trip.

This outing was memorable for many reasons – it was the first time I had seen an animal taken in the field as I learned about the basics of hunting. I had imagined that hunting was about stalking and being subtle and stealthy. However, I soon saw that when you stumble on a herd of deer, hunting can quickly become a task of speed. Anton yelled at a running herd and a couple stopped, giving him enough time to take a shot from a nearby fencepost. It was the opposite of quiet and stealthy on this occasion.

I went regularly on these trips and Anton began to teach me how to hunt. He trained me the same way he had instructed his children – start by target shooting, then shoot a wallaby, then perhaps a deer. I began target shooting with a .22 and eventually with a .243.

I found that I was reasonably good at target shooting, but I struggled with finding the right position to look through the scope of the .243. I'm quite small and the stock of a .243 is a little long for me, so the correct position to see through the scope is not obvious. In time, I learned to brace the stock in a triangular shape and use a pack to steady myself. A few times my target groups were closer together than Elise's.

On New Year's Eve in 2018, I shot my first animal – a wallaby with Elise's .243. I felt



Rachel cleans up a deer for steaks for the first time.

like I had accomplished something. Here was an animal I had taken and would eat, the culmination of a dream, something that felt real. I took the wallaby home and ate it with pride. But now I had my sights on the next hunt – a deer. Unfortunately, I had to wait a year before I could shoot again as the property was undergoing development and hunting activities were limited.

Throughout the gap, I walked the fields with Elise and Anton, watching them hunt. I made myself useful carrying rifles and packing meat out. I was frustrated, but I realised I was still learning a lot about how to hunt just by watching – how to move slowly and quietly, how to stalk, when to be patient and when to hurry, how to keep an eye on the wind direction and finally, how to set yourself up for a clear shot.

I had always imagined that, when shooting an animal, you aimed for the head. I learned that to maximise the target surface area and minimise the chances of missing or wounding, the best place to aim is at the shoulder while a deer stands broadside.

I had also thought that it was fine to fire the rifle from a standing position, with the stock braced on the shoulder. Again, I soon found that the safest shot has three points of contact – the tip of the rifle resting on a bipod or similar, and both elbows on the ground with one hand bracing the stock.

When I'm at home with a roast meal in front of me, I view hunting as an enjoyable activity that lets me enter my environment in a visceral way...



From left: Rachel, Elise and Elise's father Anton with Rachel's first deer.

Exactly a year after shooting my first wallaby, I took my initial deer on New Year's Eve in 2019. I felt an adrenalin rush as I watched the deer fall and stay down in the scope. It was an ideal situation. The deer had no idea we were there, we had to belly crawl for 20m which made it feel exciting, and I shot the deer perfectly, broadside through the lungs.

We walked up to the deer, took a picture to commemorate it and I started cutting it up with Elise's guidance. I managed to recover the projectile, which was lodged in the opposite shoulder. I now have it sitting in an abalone shell on my bookshelf. Afterwards, I felt a mixture of pride and sadness – it can be a hard thing to watch a deer die, especially when you are the cause. I took the deer home, Elise butchered it and minced it. It was delicious and especially satisfying to eat knowing the work that had gone in.

At this point, I felt that I had fulfilled myself in terms of my ethical dilemma –

I had learned to shoot and killed an animal with the view of eating it. But now the question was, would I keep going? Was it enough for myself to have done this once, or did I want to become a hunter? I have elected to keep going. There is still so much to learn.

Since then I have hunted more deer and had many experiences. One highlight was Elise and I hunting as a pair and managing to take three deer, two does and a spike. I also enjoyed a trip with Elise's parents and her brother Robert to celebrate her father's birthday. We hunted together all day and Anton and I managed to shoot a deer each an hour before dusk, the perfect end to the occasion.

When I'm comfortable at home with a roast meal in front of me, I view hunting as an enjoyable activity that lets me enter my environment in a visceral way and brings me face to face with a reality that I am not able to observe in my everyday life; that my food comes from an animal that eats

and breathes and dies just like everything else. I go to the supermarket and I look towards the refrigerated meat section and think that it's sad that more people don't, or don't want to, confront this reality. I feel lucky that I've been able to experience it.

But when I'm in the field, covered in mud and tired from a demanding stalk, I realise that hunting is hard work. There's trudging through the fields in the wind and the rain, hiking up hills and skidding down slopes, sprinting one minute and then crawling on hands and knees the next. There's the psychological burden of killing, a sore back while leaning down to field dress a deer, carrying the weight of the meat while packing it out, and recovering entire deer from places that can't be reached by car.

By the time I'm home, bruised, sore and tired, I begin to envy the people who just go to the supermarket and buy their meat. That used to be me. It was so easy. But then another week passes, and I begin to plan and anticipate my next hunting trip...

Ridgeline women's *Micro-Lite short-sleeve*

Gemma Dunn

To start, it is important to note that a hunter's pack is often broken down into two things – essentials and inessentials. For many, the essential hunter's packing list comprises of the very basics. These include the firearm (or bow), ammunition, a knife, your licence and SSAA Membership card (for insurance). Second to that are what many good hunters deem as optional and for me, the sign of a good hunter is how little equipment they require to carry out their task.

Of course, Australia is a land of extremes and it is ideal to cater for these which, for many, makes clothing just as much as an essential as anything else. This is because the combination of form and function in clothing can play a vital role while in the field and it is one that Ridgeline clothing have mastered since inception in 1994.

Ridgeline have launched their summer range donning Micro-Lite fabric in their newest of camo patterns. You may not realise it yet but the use of camouflage is considered controversial in some circles. Many argue that it does not work and is therefore not necessary. This is because many places all over the world actually require that you wear blaze or hi-viz clothing while hunting. So, this begs the question – if you can be successful in that, why not just wear plain-patterned clothing?

I will agree that it is not necessary for all types of hunting as some animals can't even tell the difference due to limited colour vision (rabbit shooting, for example). It's also not necessary when hunting from a blind for duck shooting. It

is especially not important while shooting at a range. However, my overall opinion on camouflage is that it can't really hurt you, only help you while out in the field. And anything that may give us an advantage in this area can only be good, right?

From here it is important to understand the differences in camo patterns and how you can use it to increase your chances out in the field. The key idea behind camouflage clothing is to enable the hunter blend better into their surroundings by coming as close to the landscape they are stalking in. Also to break up the body outline which is usually the main reason for animals recognising us.



The blend of camo and fabric choice will make or break the level of success a hunting clothing line will have.

Spotting your quarry before they spy you.

tee

Luckily, clothing companies such as Ridgeline put a lot of effort and thought into their camo designs, mostly to suit the Australian and New Zealand landscapes. Ridgeline have chosen to include their latest camouflage pattern 'Realtree Escape' throughout this new line, which blends better with our landscape and most importantly helps break up the body outline.

Ridgeline have designed this collection with the younger or more athletically inclined hunter that is seeking to hunt, stalk and climb with greater dexterity and stealth. An exciting aspect is that, in the past, most of Ridgeline's clothing lines have catered to the average male. This time, they have put a lot of thought into the fit, style and function of their clothing for us women, too.

This was widely discussed in Sam Garro's article in Issue 72 of *Australian Hunter* magazine. Sam states that 'through progressive thinking and their focus to remain at the forefront of development and innovation, Ridgeline has brought in fresh gear for both men and women branded W2020 Performance Range.'

I have had the pleasure of putting my hands on their women's Micro-Lite s/s (short-sleeve) tee for myself to test out. Now it's warmer I can safely say I was able to gain a good idea of the technology behind the fabric and not just focus on the camo pattern. This is important for me because I tend to only dabble with hunting, and don't have a use for camo clothing on the range. But I am often interested in a clothing variety's quality and fabric.

This lightweight shirt is comfortable no matter what the task.



This means a lot of the time, ill-fitting and non-breathable shirts are one of my biggest bugbears while shooting. If I find a shirt starts bunching up or has a seam along the shoulder where I mount my shotgun, it's fast-tracked to the clothing bins. Second to this, shotgun shooting is mostly done out in the elements. We don't often shoot under shade structures so having a decent, breathable fabric is a priority while I'm competing. Often, in clothing design, these elements are overlooked due to higher cost and lack of consultation with our industry.

This is something that clearly comes through as a priority for Ridgeline, as they continually deliver clothing lines made specifically for the shooter in mind, fabric included. The Micro-Lite tee comes with many functions such as being lightweight, quiet (and super soft too, I might add), having an anti-bacterial finish for odour control, moisture wicking finish and UPF 40 sun protection. These combined elements make for a great

outdoor tee that is fitted for us ladies and comfortable to wear all day long. Not only this, Ridgeline are backing their performance rated products with a lifetime warranty.

The W2020 bracket offers a wide variety of clothing options, not just with Realtree Escape camo or Micro-Lite fabric. This particular shirt does come in different options for the ladies such as tank and long sleeve. The only thing I would have liked to see would be some non-camo picks. Understandably Ridgeline are mainly catering for our hunters but for shooters like myself, and many others, I think some solid colour alternatives in this fabric would be ideal, so they can be worn at the range or in general day-to-day activities.

RRP for the Micro-Lite s/s tee is \$69.95. To see the full array and current pricing head to ridgelineclothing.com.au or go to your local stockist to check them for yourself.

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