

Shooter

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THE MAGAZINE FOR SPORTING SHOOTERS

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Size does matter

the right shot
for the job

Damien
Edwards

There's a good deal of credence in the gun press as to the correct shot sizes for your intended quarry, sizes 4 and 6 having long been popular in this country for the bulk of rabbit and duck hunting. While I agree size is important, it should be considered as only one third of overall gunning capability, the other two

comprising shot weight and choke. With lead bans in place for waterfowl hunting, experimentation has been carried out by committed bird shooters in patterning their guns with steel while fiddling with more open chokes for steel loads has been a priority for many. The switch has also meant taking into ac-

count pellet size difference - steel can't be made in the same size as lead at the same weight, so this must be considered. What I feel is being neglected is the selection of shot weight. As shot weight in any given size increases, so too does the shell's pellet count, resulting in more shot on the target. This can be controlled to

Damien with
magpie geese
taken with a
Lanber Model
2097EST Sporter
and Winchester
Drylok size 2 steel
shot with 36g load.

an extent by the more open choke but it can be done more reliably by choosing a lighter weight of shot and it's for this reason we rarely see heavy shot weights in smaller sizes.

Lighter charges of shot, anything less than 32g (1½oz), will have sufficient pellet count in the smaller sizes to effectively take smaller game and much can be learned from Trap shooters here. They don't need a 36g (1¼oz) load of size 7½ or 8 for their sport as their requirements are served by loads of 1oz and less and by shooting lighter charges, recoil and thus recovery times are greatly reduced.

Due to the lack of suitable loads for quail it's usually trap and target shells which are substituted. Loads of 24 and 28g are considered light in the 12-gauge but when after small game these loads are normally selected, so if we consider weights of 1oz and below as light then it's these which are best used on quail.

The 30g or 1½oz load is rarely encountered any more. About the only 30g loads available of which I'm aware come from Winchester in their Xpert high-velocity steel shot, made in sizes BB, 2, 3 and 4 which are too large for my liking. The 30g

is a fine load for rabbits in size 6 and this will also do for small ducks, it's a good load but has lost out to the popularity of the 32g.

With the grand 32g I have sentimental preference for sizes 4 and 6 and on occasions 7½, but only for teal. The 32g is also a good one for hares when used in size 3 or 4 and I've had much success with size 3 as a second barrel load for hares.

My thinking is the second barrel with its tighter constriction will offer more range. Since most second shots at hares are taken with the muzzle bead on its back, most pellets will end up in the rump where the best meat is. If shooting size 3 or 4 at a hare galloping at full steam, or size 5 or 6 at a rabbit in the same situation, it may be advisable to hold that trigger manipulation for an extra second as once dressed and cooked, a roast rabbit or casserole hare tastes better without lead.

I'm not a fan of shotgunning foxes and prefer to use hyper-velocity .22LR offerings, but find the .22 Magnum, .22 Hornet or .25-20 much better. However, if you employ your smoothbore on foxes, the 32g is fine in size 3 or 4.

Next step up is the 34g or 1¾oz load. This is loaded by Winchester in their Bushman line and available in most shot sizes including the mid-sizes of 3 and 5. Once again it's a perfect load for foxes and hares but like the 30g is losing out to the

This hare was taken with 36g of number 4 lead shot.



1½oz. To be honest, the 32 and 34g loads are so much alike there's not a lot of difference.

Which brings us to the 36g (1¼oz) load. To my mind this is where the heavyweights begin and for the novice the 36g is a fine starting load for magpie geese but the recoil can take a while to recover from and become used to. I feel shot weights of 36g and beyond are suited to magpie geese hunters in the far north but if the whistlers are to be found in flocks exceeding 1000 birds, as they often do, the 1¼oz may be for you. This is where range

and choke come into play. Team your Modified and Improved Modified with a fast-stepping 1¼oz load of size 3 or 4 such as Winchester Drylok and you have a fine combination, good out to around a full 50 yards.

This is about the heaviest practical limit in the 12-gauge, 2¾" case. There are a few 42g (1½oz) and 46g (1¾oz) loads about but due to the heavier weight and shot cup encroaching on powder space, a trade-off must be made in velocity. If high velocity, and hence range, are to be maintained with heavier shot weights

it's time to graduate to the 3" case.

A lot of guns can be ordered with 3" chambers and this is a sensible and practical option. My own Lanber Model 2097EST Sporter was ordered from the importer with 3" chambers at no extra charge and it's nice to know I have the ¼" longer chamber should it be needed. Steel loads in 3" shells rarely exceed 1¾oz, or around 40g, and this will suffice in size 2 for geese. Heavier charges of lead and copper plated lead can be found in the 3" shell in 1¾oz or 2oz loads which equate to 52 and 56g respectively. I've used



the copper plated 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz as loaded by Winchester in their Double X Magnum on large New England hares at distances exceeding 50 yards, and with open chokes the weight worked well. For weights in this region, open chokes of Modified and less are best.

To hit any target squarely with this much shot through a tight choke is to expect your game to be blown to smithereens. I primarily use shotguns for birds, rabbits and hares. If you aim at foxes, wild dogs, goats or pigs, these heavyweights in size 2 and larger are quite effective, but in most cases a .22 Hornet, .223 or .243 with well placed shots will do the job more emphatically, and at longer range. I've

never made a habit of using shotguns with any load of shot on larger animals as, to despatch them humanely, the solid slug should be deployed.

The use of solid slugs has never been popular in Australia yet in the US, solid slugs and heavy charges of our equivalents of SG buckshot are used for deer at moderate ranges. On a few occasions I've used SG to kill pigs as these heavy slugs cut an exceptionally wide wound channel and will plough through just about anything, including our toughest game animals.

But the solid is not a long-range proposition as they have the ballistic coefficient of a 44-gallon drum and shed velocity

This Winchester Model 1887 lever-action 12-gauge is choked useful Improved Cylinder and using lead loads at a reduced velocity of around 1000fps is excellent in size 3 or 4 for hares, foxes and rabbits.

quickly - if you can place five shots into a 4" circle at 100m you're doing well. Some shotguns come equipped with special rifled barrels for this purpose and rifled interchangeable chokes are also available. Shotguns are truly versatile tools of the hunter. With sensible selection of shot size, weight and choke the smoothbore can be tailored to take any game in Australia but, despite this, I still prefer to use my own guns for birds, rabbits and hares.

By using the lighter weights you'll realise shooter fatigue becomes less of an issue, especially if it takes you a while to reach your duck limit or if you've a lot of shooting to do.

Heavier weights are better for large and dense flocks, such as those seen with the water whistle duck, grass whistle duck and magpie goose and there's a lot of emphasis on choke and shot sizes for hunting, especially in regard to waterfowl. Next time you buy a few boxes of your favourite brand, place more consideration on the weight. Loads like the 32g are not necessary for quail or small ducks and 40g can be destructive on rabbits. By following some of the suggestions outlined you can improve your comfort - and may just improve your bag tally too.

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A tale of two cities

Shooters spoil for choice in 'Aldonga'

Lionel Swift

It is the best of times, it is the best of times, to borrow loosely from Charles Dickens in describing two very interesting gun shops in Albury and Wodonga - or Aldonga as locals and visitors refer to these Murray River towns in New South Wales and Victoria respectively. Customers are provided the best service, equipment and information at both businesses, which I've visited on several

occasions over the years, and if you ever find yourself in the area both are well worth a visit.

Albury

• *Elk's Hunting and Fishing*
About 30 years ago Colin and Jane Elkington bought a firearms business from an existing owner in Smollett St, central Albury. The business increased steadily

and some 10 years later they bought a much larger, now heritage listed building on the outskirts of Albury CBD at the corner of Wilson and David Streets where the business continues to flourish (ph 02 6021 8494).

On the Wilson St side of the building the original name of the business can still be seen - The Model Store, General Merchants - and on the corner is a brass

plaque announcing the much more recent heritage listing. The building is now divided into two large departments, fishing and firearms, the latter covering hunting of all types with an emphasis on deer hunting while also catering to target shooters.

In the firearms department a huge range of guns and rifles are on display and on all four walls, under a very high ceiling, is

an extensive display of mounted game animals. These cover most of the deer found in Australia including a full body mount of a beautiful Sika deer, several African trophies, water buffalo, bison and others. Some archery equipment is stocked but this is not large when compared to the fishing and particularly firearms department.

No gun owner or history buff should miss this building, its people and the trophy display. For the many hunters who fish, as I do, the equally large fishing department will require a considerable amount of time to do it justice. A staff of eight full-time and five part-time workers are happy to answer any questions on firearms or fishing-related subjects with the shop open five-and-a-half days a week.

The success of the business has meant an early semi-retirement for the founder, Colin, and a busy work week for sons Jason and Dustin, with part-time assistance from their sister Hayley. Another sister, Tamora, participates in clay DTL target shooting, as do Jason and Dustin, so firearms more than commerce drive this family affair.

Wodonga

• *Bluey's Hunting, Fishing and Archery*
This business was established in Wodonga, coincidentally like Elk's about 30 years ago, by Bluey Williams and wife Lynda in the main street and after 20 years or so moved to its present location at 65 Thomas Mitchell Drive, just a kilometre or so east with more parking (ph 02 6056 1259). It sits on the main road to Dartmouth, a fishing

Jason and Dustin Elkington check out a sale item at Albury.



and hunting hotspot for so many from Victoria and New South Wales. Bluey is also semi-retired these days and the day-to-day operation is conducted by their son Luke. Like the Albury store, Bluey's trades in both hunting and fishing gear with the emphasis on firearms and hunting in general. Luke has shot targets and hunted from an early age, something he still enjoys along with simulated field clays.

Again like the Albury store Bluey's has an excellent display of mounted trophy animals, perhaps the most spectacular being two magnificent Red/Wapiti hybrid heads, as well as some interesting fishing trophies. Since these businesses are only about 15

minutes apart they can both be conveniently visited by a back road connecting them via the Hume Freeway. Hunters and fishermen of the 'Aldonga' area are extremely well served by these shooters' dens and many from further afield also recognise their worth and make the most of what they have to offer.

Common ground

Staff in both shops are familiar with all local hunting and fishing areas and happy to advise newcomers, and with several State Forests and National Parks nearby in northern Victoria, as well as Lakes Hume and Dartmouth, this pool of knowledge is well drawn from.



Luke Williams with one of Bluey's best-sellers

These two shops, just three kilometres apart, have much in common being highly regarded by visitors and locals alike, the proprietors both live on the Victorian side of the border and regularly play golf together. Yet there was a world of difference between them early in the COVID-19 drama.

While the NSW store continued to serve the community, the Victorian one under Premier Dan Andrews was shut down for months, as was every gun shop in Victoria, under the fear that family violence would spiral out of control during lockdown. It didn't, but this was just another example of anti-gun ministers punishing law-abiding firearms owners for no good reason.

Hopkins & Allen rarities to treasure

Senior correspondent

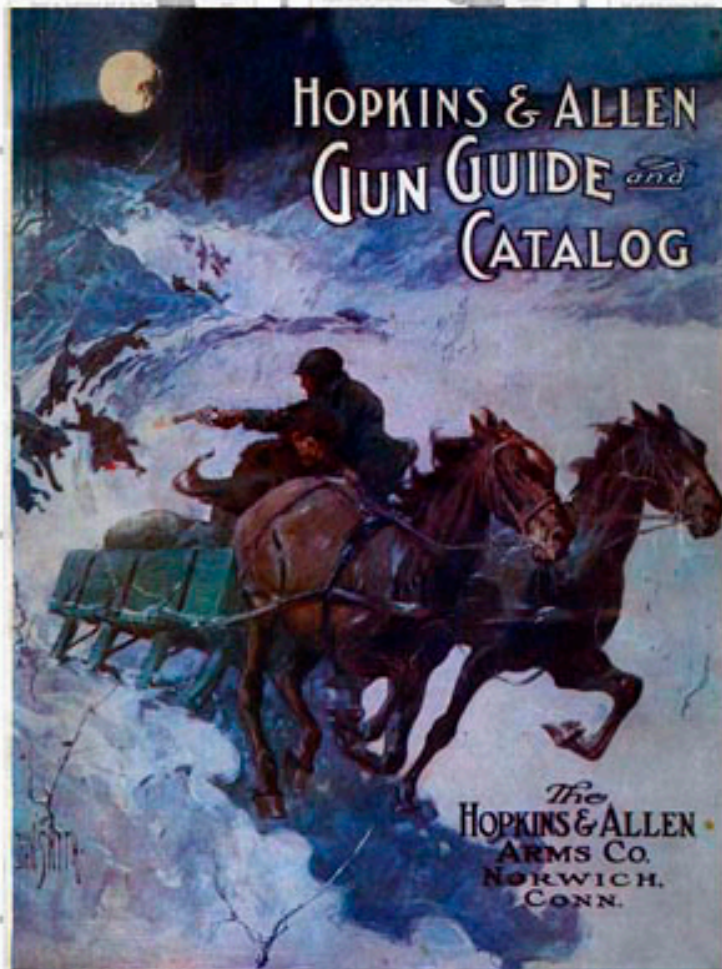
John Dunn

Writing about the two Hopkins & Allen rifles I have in my collection of single shots is one of those things I've been meaning to do for years but never quite got around to. That all changed last year when I spent most of the latter part unable to do any serious hunting and, being not much good at sitting around doing nothing, I passed time researching my single shot

collection and in the process came up with information about Hopkins & Allen I didn't even know I had.

Potted history

The Hopkins & Allen Manufacturing Company began producing firearms at Norwich, Connecticut in 1868, most of their early creations being revolvers. In the 1870s their entire stock was sold



The Hopkins & Allen 722 boys' rifle.



The Hopkins & Allen Gun Guide and Catalog.



The 722 taken down.

by Merwin & Hulbert who were the sole marketing agency for Hopkins & Allen. All revolvers carrying the Merwin & Hulbert tag were actually made by Hopkins & Allen and both names are stamped on some of them.

By 1890 H&A was also turning out shotguns and a single shot boys' rifle called 'The Junior' which was based on the Bay State rifle but wore the Merwin & Hulbert moniker. In 1897 Merwin & Hulbert went into liquidation owing H&A \$90,000, the latter receiving just 10c in the dollar as settlement. As a result they reorganised as the Hopkins & Allen Arms Company in 1899 and began selling firearms direct to the shooting public.

On February 4, 1900 their plant burned to the ground with the company suffering a loss estimated at \$500,000 but, despite this, the concern reopened in new premises and soon was bigger and better than ever. James J. Grant in *Boys' Single Shot Rifles* records that: "Around 1904-1905 the company was manufacturing

186 varieties of revolvers, rifles and single and double-barrelled shotguns which found a market all over the United States and Canada. The export trade included Australia, South America and Europe." At the start of World War One H&A ceased output of sporting arms to meet military contracts. Around 1915 the firm was taken over by the Marlin Rockwell Company and their plant used to pump out machine-gun barrels for the government.

Single shot rifles

Eight pages of the 1908 *Hopkins & Allen Gun Guide and Catalog* were given over to single shots and a rimfire magazine rifle produced by the company, prefaced by the following: "A small calibre rifle is a source of pleasure to all the family and can be very useful in training the mind and eye of the growing boy to accuracy and quickness of action.

"The next eight pages describe and illustrate the different Hopkins & Allen models and you will find among this large



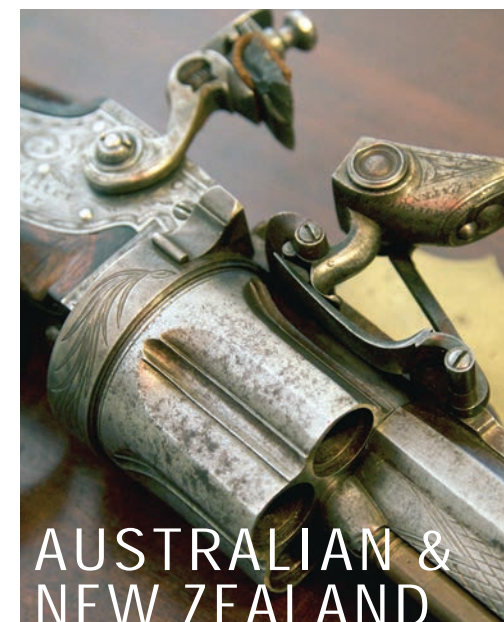
The 722 action ready for loading. The hammer had to be on full cock to open the breech.

assortment just the rifle which suits your particular needs. There are rifles for the boy, the young man, the 'grown up' man and the hunter. The expert rifleman can also pick from among these the best gun for his purposes and we even make heavier calibre arms for those who wish them, as shown by our 25, 25-20, 32 and 38 calibres.

"From the smallest and cheapest to the largest and highest priced, each is guaranteed to the fullest extent for accuracy, reliability and durability. None but the best materials are used and the finished arm is perfect in every detail. Hopkins & Allen rifles have a worldwide reputation for accuracy and lasting qualities and this reputation is upheld by every rifle shown in the catalog."

The 722

This was the cheapest and smallest of the boys' rifles produced by H&A from 1903-1915. Weighing just 1.58kg (3½lb) it had an overall length of 86.3cm (34") with

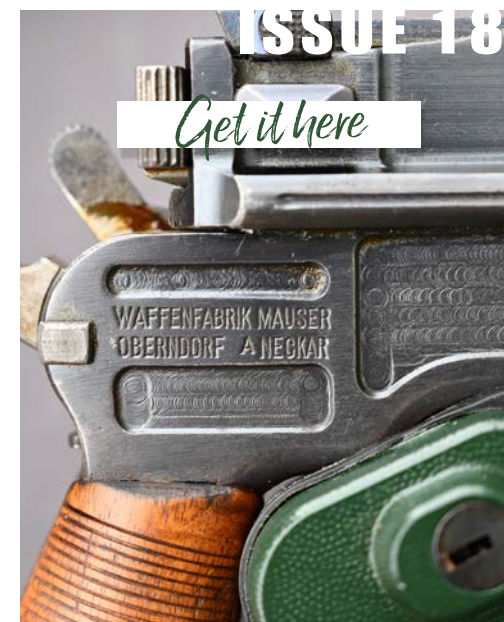


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The 932 Hopkins & Allen rifle.

a 49.7cm (19½") gain twist rifle barrel that shot the .22 Short and Long rimfire cartridges, sights consisting of a bead front and non-adjustable open rear.

The blued, take-down barrel slip fitted into the receiver where it was secured by a screw through the bottom front section of the frame. Top of the barrel at the breech end is marked with the model designation and calibre and the word TESTED in small print. Forward of the rear sight the top of the barrel is stamped THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS CO. NORWICH, CONN. U.S.A., also in small print.

The receiver was made from colour case hardened malleable cast iron and used a thumb operated rolling block-type action which was more than adequate in terms of strength to handle the .22 cartridges it was chambered for. Like the Remington rolling block rifles before it, the hammer

of the 722 had to be cocked to open the breechblock and load the rifle.

The stock and forearm were walnut, the buttstock held between the tangs of the frame by a single screw from the top, the buttplate hard rubber with a chequered face. The forearm was secured to the barrel by a screw directly into the bottom of the barrel. In 1908 the 722 was advertised by H&A as "an up-to-date rifle made to shoot straight yet small enough in weight to meet with the requirements of a boy". It cost \$3.50.

The 722 example I have has had a fairly hard life. None of the colour case hardening is left on the now dark receiver and the barrel has light external pitting under what remains of the original blued finish. The barrel has been bobbed almost to the front edge of the fore sight dovetail and the bore is rough, the action still tight

The 932 action set for loading. All the rifles in the Hopkins & Allen 9 series could be opened and closed with the rebounding hammer resting in the safety notch.



though the rifle doesn't shoot particularly well. In the greater scheme of things that's hardly an important consideration as it's one of only three such rifles I've ever seen and accordingly is a valued part of my collection.

The 922, 925, 932 and 938 rifles

After the fire in 1900, the 9 series rifles were a reprise of the Junior rifle first made in 1890 - take-down, lever-action falling

block with rebounding hammers. They had colour case hardened receivers and were initially fitted with a 55.8cm (22") blued, round barrel in .22 Long rifle, .25 and .32 rimfire as well as .38 Smith & Wesson centrefire, all with gain twist rifling. Around 1904 the barrel length was changed to 60.9cm (24"). Standard sights were a bead fore sight and Rocky Mountain rear, step-adjustable to 182.8m (200 yards), Lyman

THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS COMPANY

Hopkins & Allen Rifles

TAKE-DOWN PATTERN

No. 1922. 22 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$6.50
Shoots 22 calibre, short, long and long rifle rim-fire cartridge.

No. 1925. 25 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$6.50
Shoots 25 calibre, rim-fire Winchester single shot cartridge.

No. 1932. 32 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$6.50
Shoots 32 calibre, short and long rim-fire cartridge.

No. 1938. 38 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$6.50
Shoots 38 calibre, S. & W. center-fire cartridge. Both black and smokeless powder.

These various calibres give you the choice of a rifle for light, medium or heavy shooting.

Rocky Mountain rear sight adjustable to 200 yards. Bead front sight.

Rebounding safety hammer resting at safety notch and eliminating danger of accidental discharge.

Take-down pattern—takes down in two parts and is easily carried in suit case or bag. (Take-down shown at bottom of page 14.)

These rifles are guaranteed to the fullest extent for accuracy, reliability and durability.

[16]

THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS COMPANY

Hopkins & Allen Rifles

TAKE-DOWN PATTERN

No. 2922. 22 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$7.00
Shoots 22 calibre, short, long and long rifle cartridge.

No. 2925. 25 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$7.00
Shoots 25 calibre, rim-fire Winchester single shot cartridge.

No. 2932. 32 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$7.00
Shoots 32 calibre, short and long rim-fire cartridge.

No. 2938. 38 calibre, 24 in. barrel, weight 5½ lbs. . . . \$7.00
Shoots 38 calibre, S. & W. center-fire cartridge. Both black and smokeless powder.

These various calibres give you the choice of a rifle for light, medium or heavy shooting.

The barrel is octagon and bored from the finest rifle steel, rifled with our patented increase twist.

Rocky Mountain rear sight adjustable up to 200 yards. Bead front sight.

The accuracy of this arm is guaranteed by us, as are also the wearing qualities.

The same take-down feature and quick lever action as applied to the No. 922 are used in this rifle, and in every way it is a gun of which you may be justly proud.

[17]

Combination sights available on order as an extra for \$4.50. The two-piece stock was walnut, fitted with a military steel buttplate, the weight listed as 2.38kg (5¼lb) and in 1908 it sold for \$6. H&A advertising of the era described the rifles as "for experts; quick-acting, accurate, long-range rifles that cannot be surpassed at any price". My example of this model is a long barrelled 932, a bit rough around the edges. The woodwork has been knocked around and the rear sight has suffered an application of soft solder somewhere down the line. As it often is with .32 rimfire rifles,

the bore is in surprisingly good condition with sharp, clean rifling, the action still in sound working order with a five-digit serial number in the mid-20,000 bracket. Like the 722, examples of the 9 series rifles are hard to find these days.

Other H&A single shots

Hopkins & Allen made other single shot rifles as listed below.

The 822/832s

These had a finger lever operated rolling block action with the lever and breech-block in one piece. They could be loaded

Advertising for the 822/832 lever-action rolling block boys' rifle and the Hopkins & Allen Schuetzen rifle.

The 19 series rifles (left) had an octagonal barrel. The 29 series (right) had an octagonal barrel and chequered walnut stock. A two-page spread from the 1908 catalog.

THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS COMPANY

Hopkins & Allen Rifles

TAKE-DOWN PATTERN

No. 822
22 calibre, 20 in. barrel, weight 4 lbs.
Shoots 22 calibre, short and long rifle rim-fire cartridge.
\$4.50

No. 832
22 calibre, 20 in. barrel, weight 4 lbs.
Shoots 22 calibre, short and long rifle rim-fire cartridge.
\$4.50

Our complete guarantee for safety, accuracy, reliability and durability goes with this gun.

These rifles are a little heavier than the No. 722 and are intended for longer range shooting, and for older boys.

The lever action is quicker and insures prompt ejecting and loading. Safety device allows the hammer to rest at safety notch and eliminates danger of accidental discharge.

This rifle takes down in two parts, allowing the gun to be changed from the breech and to be easily carried.

Sporting front and rear sights.

All the materials used are the best. Stock and fore end good quality walnut and hand fitted with our patented increase twist, adding greatly to the accuracy and range.

Hand rubber butt plate.

[18]

THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS COMPANY

Hopkins & Allen Schuetzen Rifle

TAKE-DOWN PATTERN

No. 3922
22 calibre, 26 in. barrel, weight 6½ lbs.
Shoots 22 calibre, short, long and long rifle rim-fire cartridge.
\$12.00

No. 3925
25-20 calibre, 26 in. barrel, weight 6½ lbs.
Shoots 25-20 calibre, center-fire cartridge.
\$12.00

The balance, handling and shooting qualities of these rifles are superb, and we guarantee them in every way for accuracy, reliability and durability.

The nickel Schuetzen butt plate is shown in the photograph, which also gives a faint idea of the beauty of this gun. The stock and fore end are of the finest English walnut, hand-fitted and hand-checked.

Rocky Mountain Adjustable Rear and Sporting Front Sights, but can be supplied with Lyman Combination Peep and Gallo-Sights (as shown in the cut) for \$4.50 extra.

Hammer rebounds and rests in safety notch, eliminating chance of accidental discharge.

Chequered hand barrel from solid bars of the finest rifle steel, rifled with our patented increase twist.

Fitted with quick working lever action and rebounding hammer. Easily taken down in two parts (as shown by cut at bottom of page 14).

[19]

The 3922 and 3925s

Promoted as Schuetzen rifles, the 39 series had 66cm (26") barrels in .22 Long Rifle and .25-20 calibre respectively. They were stocked in English walnut with chequered wrist and forearm, the buttstock fitted with a nickel Schuetzen buttplate. According to H&A advertising they were "intended for the finest target work and meet every requirement for the man who knows and wants a perfect rifle". In 1908 they were advertised at \$12 each with an additional \$4.50 required if supplied with Lyman Combination sights. As mentioned, none of the Hopkins & Allen rifles seem to be particularly common in Australia and even ordinary specimens are rare. Over the years I've seen no more than a handful or 722 and 922/32 rifles - the main reason I'm so pleased to have one of each in my strong room. Or perhaps I just haven't been looking in the right places.

Get the most from game meat

Thomas Tabor



Not all sinew is as easy to spot as shown here, but it's important to remove all of it.

Cutting the carcass down the backbone can make processing easier.



To achieve the highest degree of palatability from game meat requires a different set of procedures and higher attention to detail than normally employed by butchers of domestic animals. Secretly I've envied the carefree way these practitioners seemingly whack away, giving only minimal attention to the fat deposits, bone and sinew in the meat.

But when it comes to wild game these areas, along with any bloodshot portions, must be completely removed as it's these

parts which often harbour the strong and unpleasant tastes so many people associate with meat from wild game. Obviously trimming meat to this degree will significantly increase your processing time and often result in reducing the size of cuts, but reward will come when your taste buds react.

In the field

Temperatures in the outback can sometimes be extreme which only adds to the challenges and difficulties hunters face.



Tenderising can be easily done using a hand-held mallet.

But no matter the ambient temperature, first and foremost the animal should be gutted and skinned out as quickly as possible. In this process careful attention must be given not to puncture the stomach, urine sack or other organs which could result in contaminating the meat. In a few cases I chose to leave the hide intact long enough to move the animal to a cleaner and healthier environment for skinning, but generally the quicker you can take the hide off the better, as doing so allows the meat to cool and helps discourage the growth of bacteria.

When facing extremely hot conditions some hunters have even resorted to submerging the skinned carcass in a stream, river or lake for rapid cooling of the meat. I know doing so is a bit controversial but when done properly it can have beneficial results. I opted to do this only once when the mercury was about to crack the thermometer but on that occasion it seemed to work well.

This technique should only be used under strict guidelines. The water source must be cool, clean and uncontaminated and the carcass left in the water for just a few minutes, after which it needs to be removed and wiped completely dry - and this should only be attempted immediately after the animal has been killed and



skinned. Once the surface of the meat has had a chance to dry out and skin over, submerging it in water or having it wet in any other way should be avoided.

Hanging and ageing

Every effort should be made to keep the hide or loose hairs from coming into contact with the meat, yet no matter how careful I am I always seem to find a few hairs on the surface of the meat. In this case a cloth soaked with white vinegar works fairly well to wipe that hair free. As long as there aren't too many flies to contend with, I like to hang the carcass for several hours in a shady cool area

prior to covering it with a game bag, as doing so allows the meat to cool down quicker and the surface to dry more rapidly. If flies are present they can be deterred by either sprinkling the carcass with fine ground black pepper, or my preferred method of spraying it with vegetable cooking oil. I'm frequently amazed at how well spraying the carcass in this manner discourages these pests. Ageing the meat is a controversial topic. Some people feel because wild game is in such good physical condition, allowing the meat to hang for an extended period before processing doesn't produce any real benefit, something I don't

Get the most from game meat

agree with. When conditions are right I like to hang game meat for up to a week before I begin the cutting process, particularly if the temperature is ideal from about 1 to 4 degrees C, and I believe doing so encourages the meat to be a little more tender and firmer, making the cutting processes considerably easier.

Dispelling the myths

For decades I've heard hunters talk about the need to cut away the scent glands on the inside of the rear legs on some deer species. Those individuals seem to harbour a fear that if these glands are not manually cut away it will result in transferring their foul odour to the meat. Ironically, if you attempt to cut these out with a knife it could easily transfer those same offensive characteristics directly to the knife blade, the same one you're likely using on the meat. In reality, if these glands are present they'll come off with the hide as it's removed.

Another misconception which has been around for decades is the belief you should cut the throat of a dead animal in order to bleed it out. The need to do this has no bearing in reality. If your animal is dead the heart has stopped beating, meaning blood is no longer being pumped through its arteries and veins. Consequently, at this point severing the jugular vein does absolutely nothing.

Cut, wrap and freeze

I can't emphasise enough how important it is to be diligent in the removal of



Enclosing meat in plastic freezer wrap prior to butcher paper adds to its protection.



Soaking meat in ice water prior to cooking can improve its flavour.

absolutely every bit of fat, sinew, blood-shot area and bones in the butchering process. If you wait to do this until you're firing up your frying pan it's too late, the strong flavour from these areas has already migrated throughout the meat to make it unsavoury to the taste buds. In order to minimise the potential for freezer burn it's best not to cut the meat into individual servings prior to wrapping. Leaving the meat in as large chunks as possible will provide a certain degree of protection from freezer burn when stored long-term.

A basic rule in butchering is to always make your cuts across the natural grain of the meat otherwise it will be tougher than necessary. Unfortunately this isn't always possible, particularly when dealing with meat off the front shoulders and along the brisket. For these cuts I

frequently tenderise them. Butchers often use electric-powered tenderising for that purpose, but a simple manual 'pounder' will also do the job. I use one of these units all the time and it works superbly for a lot less money.

Vacuum packing has become popular in recent years. Without doubt these units are great at producing near perfect airtight packaging but, like the electric tenderisers, vacuum packing units are also expensive to buy as is the bag material. As an alternative I wrap my meat first in a layer of 'clinging' plastic food wrap prior to its usual covering of butcher paper. The plastic wrap clings tight to the meat, providing an excellent seal to keep it fresh and free from freezer burn. My wife and I have kept meat sometimes for two or three years with little sign of freezer burn by using this method.



It's best to wait to cut meat into individual serving pieces until just before cooking.

More steak meat

In my house we like as much steak meat as possible from our hunting successes, so rather than simply making hamburgers or grinding out smaller pieces of meat, we separate the best of those pieces and package them for frying. These are every bit as tasty as larger steaks, you just don't have to cut them into bite-sized pieces on your plate.

Ice 'n' easy

Even when you take every precaution to ensure the best possible flavour of your meat, it can sometimes still taste a bit strong and much of that taste comes from blood which remains in the meat. In order to reduce that taste, after we've thawed and cut the meat into individual portions my wife soaks it in a pan of ice water for a couple of hours before cooking.



A meal fit for a king.

Soaking in this way effectively draws a significant amount of blood out, leaving the meat a pale pink colour. Some people prefer adding salt to the water but we find plain ice water works equally well. After soaking the meat, one of our favourite recipes simply involves rolling it in flour and seasoning then frying it quickly in a hot pan with olive oil.

Handy hints

There are a few basic rules to keep in mind when your hunt has been successful and you want to extend the enjoyment

by eating your hard-earned bounty. Follow these tips and you'll have a culinary delight the family will enjoy.

- Avoid placing meat in an air-tight container or plastic bag unless it's going directly into the freezer. Air must be allowed to circulate around the meat or it will encourage the growth of harmful bacteria and rapid spoiling.
- Remove the animal's entrails as soon as possible after the kill.
- Never allow meat to become contaminated by contents of the stomach, intestines and other organs - if contact is

made, be diligent in washing or removing the contaminated areas.

- Remove hide as quickly as possible for rapid cool-down of the carcass.
- Be careful to keep hair and dirt off the meat and don't allow the outside of the hide to come in contact with meat.
- Cut away all fat, sinew and bloodshot areas from the meat at time of wrapping and bone the meat out.
- Hang your meat in a cool, shaded area and never let it become wet after its surface turns dry to the touch.



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Rock Chucker Supreme Master reloading kit

Con Kapralos

The reloading of metallic cartridges, be it rifle or pistol, is something many shooters and hunters the world over subscribe to. While reloading of shotgun ammunition, at least here in Australia, has waned during the past 10 years, reloading of rifle and pistol ammunition continues to be popular. Whether as a cost-saving exercise or to tailor an exact load to a particular firearm and application, the benefits are obvious with improved accuracy being the main reason for reloading a metallic cartridge.

There are many manufacturers of quality reloading presses and accessories, most of them based in the US and one of the biggest and most respected is RCBS.

Whether you're a serious target shooter or avid hunter striving for accuracy, RCBS has the tools to make your handloading easy and trouble-free. Just check their

website and you'll realise RCBS take cartridge reloading seriously.

For the new shooter or hunter, getting into reloading metallic cartridges can be daunting. While most new handloaders will have a mentor to guide them, buying the right equipment can be confusing. Thankfully the folks at RCBS took notice of this and have some excellent reloading kits for those new to the game. One of these is the Rock Chucker Supreme Master reloading kit, which contains the legendary Rock Chucker Supreme reloading press and accessories to make your start to reloading easy.

The kit up close

Nioa, Australian agent and distributor for RCBS, supplied the kit which arrived in a sizeable and hefty box. The Rock Chucker Supreme press itself is made from cast

The reloading press itself.



Rock Chucker Supreme Master reloading kit

steel for strength and is heavy - it needs to be to perform its task with accuracy, precision and without compromise. The kit includes the following: Rock Chucker Supreme press, Nosler 8th Edition reloading manual, M500 mechanical reloading scale (0-500 grain capacity), Uniflow powder measure, hand priming tool, Universal case loading block, .17-.60 calibre deburring tool, hex key set, case lube kit (includes case neck lube brushes, lube pad, case lube) and powder funnel. All items are high quality as we'd expect from RCBS and in the traditional green colour synonymous with the brand.

Getting started

The kit contains everything you need to get you going but it's strongly recommended those new to reloading read the supplied manual before proceeding. Upon reading the handbook it's evident there are several steps in the reloading process which require some additional equipment not supplied with the kit. Firstly, a method to clean fired cases is highly recommended as this permits easier re-sizing and less wear-and-tear on your sizing die and can be done with either a vibratory/rotary case tumbler or ultrasonic cleaner. RCBS make some good units to suit all requirements and budgets. Secondly, a method of measuring the metallic case (to ascertain case length in several steps) is mandatory and a vernier caliper is a must to accurately do this. Thirdly, a means of trimming re-sized cases is required and RCBS make an excel-

Contents of the Rock Chucker Supreme Master reloading kit.



lent version in the Trim Pro 2 Manual Case Trimmer. Don't forget a set of dies for the calibre being loaded and a shell holder for that case is a must.

All items are simple to use with the supplied instruction manuals and it's imperative the press is set up on a solid, vibration-free bench with ample room available to accommodate the accessories you'll need in the various reloading steps.

Having a designated area to perform the reloading process without interference or distraction is a priority and RCBS make an accessory plate which can be screwed to your bench to which the Rock Chucker Press and other equip-

ment (powder measure stand, case trimmer etc) can be attached for use and removed when finished. This avoids the need to drill a multitude of holes in your benchtop and enables easy storage of your reloading gear.

The Nosler No.8 reloading manual is superb. Not only does it take you through the entire process, it looks at troubleshooting problems which may arise when preparing and reloading cases. Added to that it contains load data using Nosler projectiles in a complete range of rifle and handgun calibres as well as a foreword for each calibre.

One great resource for new reloaders is a series of YouTube tutorial videos by RCBS

senior product manager Kent Sakamoto. These short videos are an excellent training resource and I've watched them numerous times prior to starting my reloading. Mr Sakamoto's wealth of knowledge and expertise with his product base is evident and he makes it easy for new reloaders to follow with his clear and concise demeanour.

If you're new to reloading rifle or pistol ammunition, consider the Rock Chucker Supreme Master Reloading kit by RCBS. It retails for around \$850 and is available from all good firearms dealers Australia-wide. More at nioa.com.au

Hunting ammo needs to hit the spot

Dick
Eussen

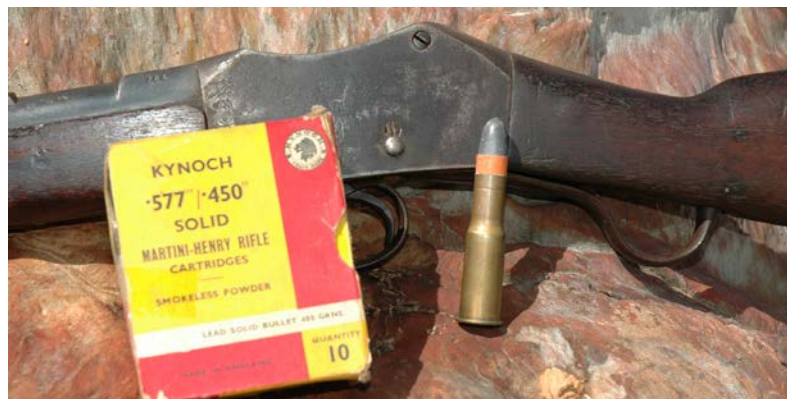
Handloading is a hobby which can save a few bucks and make purpose bullets for the game we hunt. And while saving money is our first consideration, that only happens when you shoot a lot. If you only shoot 100 or so rounds a year, be happy with manufactured ammunition.

What calibre

My own hunting centres largely on feral pigs, tough animals which can take a lot of lead if the right bullet isn't used. While I have .224 centrefire cartridges like the .222, .223, .22-250 and the venerable .22 Swift, even the .22 rimfire, I can't recommend them for solid animals like boar

Dick Eussen with a massive boar shot with a .243 Tikka and a 100gr Speer Grand Slam bullet.





In the old days hunters had no choice but to use lead bullets.

Custom-built ammo from Nosler makes handloading questionable unless you fire hundreds of rounds a year.



and deer. Much better are the 6mm and .25 calibre rounds as they fire heavier bullets which penetrate and kill and .270 and 7mm rounds strike like the Hammer of Thor, even with light bullets. The .30 calibres are excellent, especially the time-proven .30-30 with the .308W and the .30-06 favoured by many hunters. Both the new 6mm and 6.5 Creedmoor rounds are highly sought after and if you believe the hype, both kill elephants 1000m away. Reality is something else and they fit between the .243 and .270W when it comes to hunting performance and bullet weight. It matters little which calibre you prefer as the real killer is the right choice of bullet and shot placement. For instance, some years back I couldn't get Speer 100gr bullets but walked away with a box of 90gr Spitz SP projectiles. I killed three chital stags with one shot each and was happy until I used them on pigs only to find they failed to kill a couple of huge boars. I tracked one down and shot it - the first bullet had largely destroyed

itself on the mud-encrusted bony shoulder of the beast, wounded it and probably broken the bone but it would have recovered in time.

As with other hunters I hate wounding animals so stopped using 90gr bullets and switched to my .30-30W Marlin lever-action rifle. Next time I had 100gr Speer Grand Slam loaded for the Tikka .243W and shot 20 pigs during that trip with no second shot needed for any. I've used 90gr Nosler Partition bullets in the .243 which perform the same as the 100gr Speers. More recently I've turned to the .308W and bought 100 rounds of Winchester 150gr Power Point ammunition and when I had enough empty shells, reloaded them with 150gr Nosler Partition Spitzers.

Of course, apart from brain and spine shots, proper bullet placement is what kills game on the spot. Using light calibres and bullets does not always produce that 'dropped on the spot' kill and it may run for a few metres before col-

lapsing. A bullet must be strong enough to hold together on impact, yet immediately expand and retain weight as it punches its way through flesh and bone. Many hunters want total penetration, the theory being exit wounds allow the animal to bleed out and leave a better blood trail.

But having used them I've shot pigs which just kept on going and bled out, some looking as if they hadn't even been hit. I've seen the same when using military bullets in the .303 and the .30-06 and saw a bonded bullet kill four pigs in one go when a mate shot a big boar with his .308. The Barnes Triple-Shock travelled right through the boar's shoulders, killed a small sow beside it, exited and travelled on through a piglet before it ended its destructive path in a big sow. Yet some gun writers state that less than 30 per cent of power remains in a spent bullet after it has penetrated a boar or deer. Years ago, when we had little else but .303 ex-army rifles and full-jacketed

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Hunting ammo needs to hit the spot



The 220gr .303 military round saw a lot of action on buffaloes in the NT years ago when nothing better was available.

projectiles, I shot a lot of kangaroos for their skins and killed three with one shot. Several times I've shot two pigs with one shot because the bullet failed to expand into the first animal.

Many bullets exit - apart from those which expand and remain in the animal - normally when shot through both shoulders.

Bonded-core and copper 'premium' bullets are all the rage these days but I see little use for such expensive ammo on feral pigs and most other game, the same applying to solids which, apart from big buffalo bulls, are wasted on other animals roaming this land. The old-style cup-and-core bullets work fine, and while many claim the soft lead tips deform under recoil in the magazine and expand too early, the realities don't lie.

Flat-nosed lead bullets are a must in a lever-action tube-magazine rifle. They don't call the .30-30 Winchester 'the deer killing rifle' in the US for nothing. I've used it on deer, goats and pigs and nothing ever walks away when using bullets in

the 130-150gr range. Flat and round-nose bullets have more hitting power than pointed ones and expand quicker but shed velocity much faster, making them unsuitable for long-range hunting. Hollow-point lead-jacketed bullets expand much faster than flat or round-nosed and are at their best at short ranges but I love them and have used them in .357 and .44 Magnum carbines on pigs to devastating effect. Great also in the .30-30W.

Hornady has addressed the .30-30 flat-nose problem with the introduction of its polymer-tipped FTX (Flex Tip) Expanding 160gr bullet in its LEVERevolution ammunition, these also available for the handloader.

Jenny sights in on a bunny with a .223 Sako.



Affordable shooting

The cup-and-core bullet isn't going to go away. Most bullet makers continue to make them as they're their best-selling products. Expansion is largely controlled by the thickness of the jacket and the amount of lead exposed above it. The Hornady Core-Lokt bullet was introduced in 1938, making it one of the oldest hunting bullet designs still in continuous production.

Modern formats centre on bonded-core projectiles which have controlled expansion, lose little weight when punching through flesh and have an amazing 'mushroom' look when recovered, but making them is an expensive and compli-

cated method passed on to customers, the exception being Federal's Fusion bullet which employs a less costly method of production but is still a fine hunting option I've used in my .270W rifle.

I use 150gr Woodleigh lead-tipped bullets in my .30-06 on buffaloes, scrub bulls and brumbies and these are amazing performers with no second shot needed, this Australian-made ammo highly rated by the world's big game hunters, even though they're weld-core jacketed lead bullets.

Short-range hunting

Rarely do I manage a shot at a pig over 200m, most under 80m, meaning I don't have to choose an expensive target/



This trophy buffalo was taken with a .270 Weatherby Magnum and 150gr Nosler Partition projectile in the 1980s.

Reloading is fun and a rewarding hobby when matched to shooting and hunting.



long-range bullet or costly premium one and I've mainly used the Nosler Partition bullet for decades along with their ballistic tips.

Most bullets have coloured polymer tips which have largely replaced lead-tipped bullets, thus magazine tip damage is no longer a concern as the polymer tip has a memory and reforms itself, the Nosler being the first modern polymer-tipped bullet. They're standard cup-and-core bullets and not 'premium', especially when it comes to price, they expand rapidly and are accurate. The only problem I encountered was meat damage when I shot several chital deer with a .270 Weatherby Magnum using fast-stepping 130-grainers though it matters little on pigs as they're left as food for carrion. I'll mention copper, or homogeneous bullets, as I've used Barnes and Nosler Accubond, Bonded Solid Base and E-Tip in both my .270W and .270 Weatherby Magnum rifles with great success on big boars, bulls and brumbies. Copper construction limits expansion, especially at short ranges, but if you want total reliable penetration it does a fine job and

I've yet to recover a copper bullet from any animal as all penetrated and kept going. Due to their solid construction it's best to target the head or the shoulders of game, otherwise the bullets just shoot straight through the animal.

But in all, especially when considering costs, the old jacketed lead bullets are fine for hunting pigs and other medium and small game. Even for large game like scrub bulls and buffaloes I've never felt I needed expensive 'premium' bullets as there's no reason to waste money on ammo which can be matched by identical results from cheaper brands. If you do choose them though, there's a fine assortment in Barnes X, TSX, TTSX and LRX, Federal Trophy Copper, Hornady GMX and Monoflex, Norma Ecp-Strike, Nosler E-Tip and Ballistic Lead Free, Winchester Copper Impact and others.

We owe it to the game that we kill it as humanely and quickly as possible, calibre size matched with the right bullet the way to go, but never forget that placement in a vital area is the best solution to put it down on the spot.