

# THE JUNIOR SHOOTER

AN INTRODUCTION FOR JUNIOR SHOOTERS & HUNTERS

Issue 14



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## Editorial

**W**elcome to Issue 14 of *The Junior Shooter*.

We kick off this issue with an overview of the 2014 SSAA National Junior Challenge. The Challenge, which is open to shooters aged 12 to 18, is a fantastic opportunity for juniors to try their hand at different events, develop their skills and spend time with other young shooters, all in the spirit of healthy competition. Congratulations to everyone who participated and especially to those who won events and shot new records!

Next, we speak with SSAA Western Australian 2013 Junior Hunter of the Year Ashley Bellotti-Mulders about his relationship with the environment and of course his award and plans for the future.

Following on from her fantastic recipe for honey-soy duck last issue, budding chef Elizabeth Mullens shares a recipe for traditional farmhouse-style rabbit pie, which she says was inspired by her life on a farm and hunting rabbits.

We also have a variety of short stories from juniors and their families about hunts from as local as the family farming property or an interstate trip, to as far away as a South African safari.

If you've got a hunting adventure to share, or you'd like to offer some target shooting or outdoor tips, don't keep it to yourself - contact the Editor on [edit@ssaa.org.au](mailto:edit@ssaa.org.au) or write to SSAA National, PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061. Who knows, you might even find your name and photos in the next issue of *The Junior Shooter*!

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# 2014 SSAA National Junior Challenge

by Greg Woolnough

The SSAA National Junior Challenge is a yearly event organised to give Australian junior shooters from 12 to 18 years of age an opportunity to get together, learn and hone their shooting skills and participate in friendly competition. The core disciplines for this event are 3-Positional Rimfire, Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire and Field Rifle Rimfire shooting.

In early July, SSAA Victoria was pleased to host the 2014 National Junior Challenge at the Springvale and Eagle Park ranges. The event was well attended by 47 shooters from the ACT, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.

On Friday, July 11, the Springvale Range hosted the 3-Positional Rimfire match, followed by an opportunity to participate in 10m Precision Air Rifle. Air Rifle is not part of the National Junior Challenge and therefore scores are not included in the 3-Gun Aggregate, but it is an additional event to give junior shooters an opportunity to experience another discipline.

In the 10m Precision Air Rifle, a new Junior Australian Record was set by Alex Payne from South Australia, with his aggregate of 398.21 beating the previous record (also held by Alex) of 396.23. The Junior Australian Record for High Card of 100.7 is also held by Alex and he matched this again in this event.

Shooters were able to try their hand at different disciplines, including a bonus 10m Precision Air Rifle event.



The next generation of Australia's sporting shooters.



In the 3-Positional Rimfire, there were some good scores achieved, with multiple shooters attaining their personal best scores. A total of 10 awards were claimed ranging from Junior to Gold.

On Saturday, the Eagle Park Range at Little River hosted the Rifle Metallic Silhouette Rimfire match. Some would describe the conditions at Eagle Park as a little brisk, but that did not seem to deter the juniors, and 14 awards were claimed ranging from Junior to Silver.

After the day's shooting was over, many competitors and their families went back to the Springvale clubrooms for a

roast meal and trivia night. It was a fun evening, with about 100 people filling the clubrooms.

The final day saw the Field Rifle Rimfire match held at Springvale. As with the previous two days, the juniors were all keen to produce their best scores. A new Junior Australian Record was set for Offhand by Mitchell Stevens from Tasmania with a score of 98.1, and a total of 17 awards were claimed ranging from Junior to Silver. During the day, the SSAA Victoria Military Rifle & Pistol Club put on a static display of historical firearms, which was of great interest to the participants, parents and visitors.

At the end of the Challenge, James Freeman from Tasmania came away as the Under 15 3-Gun Champion, and Emerson Shiel from Victoria was the Under 18 3-Gun Champion.

Many current and former participants in the SSAA National Junior Challenge say that it is a great event that provides an opportunity to share time with other people of similar age and interests, to refine your techniques and skills, and to improve on your best scores, and I definitely believe this is true.

The 2014 event would not have been the success that it was without the hard work and dedication of the volunteers from the Youth Training Schemes at Eagle Park and Springvale, the support and guidance from SSAA National Secretary Kaye McIntyre, the willingness by people from other branches to contribute and pitch in, and most importantly, the parents of the participants who go to so much expense and effort to enable their children to attend the Challenge. Special thanks must also go to our sponsors, SSAA National, SSAA Victoria and Alcock & Pierce.

For a full list of results from this year's SSAA National Junior Challenge, visit [www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports](http://www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports)

In 2015, the SSAA National Junior Challenge will be held at the SSAA Glenorchy Range in Hobart, Tasmania, from July 3 to 5. See you there!



**While the National Junior Challenge is competitive, the event also allows shooters to hone their skills and better their personal bests.**



**Juniors are given the opportunity to practise shooting in different positions, including the sitting position, which is regarded as one of the most stable platforms.**



**The participants of the 2014 SSAA National Junior Challenge.**



# Ashley Bellotti-Mulders

## - WA's 2013 Junior Hunter of the Year



Ashley with his grandfather's 6.5mm Swedish Mauser rifle.

by Media Officer Kate Fantinel

**A** young hunter living with a challenging learning disorder has been recognised as the Western Australian 2013 Junior Hunter of the Year for his compassionate approach to nature and conservation. Ashley Bellotti-Mulders, from Mundaring near Perth, was awarded the coveted title by the SSAA Western Australia Branch after demonstrating a commitment and skill for hunting, despite living with severe dyslexia.

The Hunter of the Year concept came about during SSAA National's 2013 Year of the Hunter campaign, which recognised the vital role hunters play in protecting our natural environment and wildlife. Each state and territory was given the opportunity to award an Adult and Junior Hunter of the Year, with \$16,000 in prizes on offer during the unprecedented celebration. The campaign not only focused on our long-serving hunters, but also invited the next generation of hunters to tell their stories and share their experiences.

Ashley has been a junior member of the SSAA since 2007 and began hunting with his mother, grandfather and uncle at a young age, shooting his first rabbit at just eight. His approach to hunting has always been out of respect for animals, and his understanding of the importance of hunting from a conservationist perspective is clear when talking to the 17-year-old.

"I love animals and I don't like seeing anything in pain," he said.

This mature approach to nature shone through in his entry and impressed the judges, who noted Ashley's skill and commitment to hunting.

"To have compassion and an understanding at his age and overcoming life's hardships encompasses the true grit of hunting and conservation and having a go," said SSAA WA Public Relations Officer Astrid Coleman.

Ashley points to his family as the influence on his hunting, with his grandparents giving him his first .22-calibre rifle, a 1951 Lithgow single-shot, for his ninth birthday. Together with his grandfather Bob, Ashley modified this rifle to add a scope and other minor changes. >



Ashley has had a long involvement with shooting and hunting, being first introduced to the recreation by his mother, grandfather and uncle.



Under Bob's supervision, Ashley uses a rifle chambered in 6.5mm Swedish Mauser to hunt camels - something he has done since he was 13. They have also modified this rifle to have a synthetic stock to make it more comfortable for hunting.

"I'm looking forward to having the .22 transferred into my name, and I would also like to buy the 6.5mm off my grandfather when I turn 18," said Ashley.

**Ashley hunts camels under the supervision of his grandfather (not shown).**



**Ashley with his Nissan Navara ute, which will be useful in his hunting activities in the often harsh WA landscape.**

Hunting trips include expeditions to the Western Australian goldfields, regular spotlighting for rabbits and foxes on his family's property, and also native fauna surveys and feral animal control as part of his mother Cyndi's environmental consultancy business.

"I try and get out [hunting] as much as I can," said Ashley.

Cyndi said regular trips and witnessing first-hand the important role hunting plays as part of conservation was a key influence on Ashley's passion for hunting.

"As hunters ourselves, we always want to make sure the animal doesn't suffer and that hunting is done as humanely as possible, so we always take Ashley as a backup, as he is very accurate," she said.

"We go on yearly hunting trips with a group of friends to stations bordering the Gibson Desert and north of Kalgoorlie, where we have permission to shoot feral camels and at times feral goats," she said. When shooting feral goats and feral camels, meat is always removed and taken home so it is not wasted, another skill that Ashley has learned.

In terms of club shooting, Ashley currently shoots military, centrefire and also rimfire rifle events, and aims to get his firearms licence and join the Mundaring Marksmen Association as a full member so he can shoot competitively when he turns 18.

"Ashley has been target shooting from a young age, initially with his grandfather and myself at the Mundaring Rifle Club," said Cyndi. "In 2013, we became members of SSAA Mundaring Marksmen and Ashley has been there as a guest."

In addition to rifle shooting, Ashley says he is also interested in getting into competitive pistol shooting.

"I've got a few pistols that I have in mind when I get my licence, but I've got my whole life ahead of me, so I'm just going to focus on rifles for now," he said.

Having just completed his final exams for his mechanical fitter apprenticeship, Ashley is hoping to put his skills to use as an armament fitter in the defence force in the future. For now though, Ashley has used the generous prize money from his WA Hunter of the Year award to put towards the purchase of his first car, a 2006 Nissan Navara D22 4x4 ute, which will no doubt prove useful in his future hunting expeditions.

He looks forward to getting his firearms licence and joining the SSAA Mundaring Marksmen club as a full member, but will always fly the flag for young shooters and hunters.

“It’s good to give it a go and get out to a range as much as you can,” he said.

Ashley Bellotti-Mulders is just one of the 80 per cent of SSAA members who choose to hunt either recreationally, for food, or as a wildlife management tool. The SSAA congratulates Ashley on his award and achievements, and will continue to promote the important service our hunters provide to conservation and wildlife management through our ongoing Always the Hunter campaign and other initiatives.

# A first South African safari

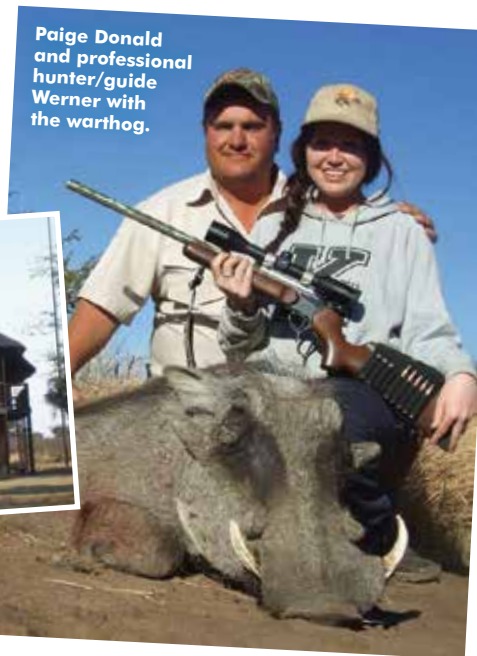
by Tom Donald

My granddaughter Paige Donald, some club members and I have recently returned from a safari hunt in South Africa. As this was my second visit there in two years, I attended only as an observer and photographer. Paige, however, who is shown in the accompanying photos with her professional hunter/guide Werner, took a warthog and a kudu, both with one-shot kills. The warthog was taken with a .375 Thompson Contender at 180m. They hunted the northern region of South Africa in the Limpopo Province on the Limpopo River bordering Botswana.

Paige is nearly 18 years old and has won the junior triathlon shoots at the SSAA Inglewood Branch in Queensland for three years in a row since the inception



The Aussies stayed in an impressive hunting lodge.



Paige Donald and professional hunter/guide Werner with the warthog.

of the event. The training at SSAA Inglewood has been critical in her understanding of good shot placement, ethical hunting and one-shot kill principles.

The other club members who travelled with us were Wayne Wright, Dick Rouse and his grandson Harry. We were hosted by Jaco and Victor Wentzel of Kirabo Safaris. Jaco took care of Dick and Harry, and professional hunters Werner and Kirabos looked after Wayne, Paige and I. Wayne, Dick and Harry were also very successful in their hunting. The hospitality of all those at the lodge cannot be exaggerated. Sure, they are in it for the business, but we could tell they genuinely love what they do.

This trip was a little different from other trips we have taken because we were hunting the border region of the Limpopo River this time. As Paige and Harry, guided by Werner, were stalking the riverbanks, they came across a trio of poachers and their dogs. I’m not sure who was more surprised, but congratulations to the good guys for surprising and frightening off the poachers.



Check out the horns on this kudu!



# Looking down the barrel of success

by Media Officer Kate Fantinel

Shotgun is a popular discipline of choice for new shooters, with its fast-paced, competitive nature attracting a new generation of competitors. From Sporting Clays to 5-Stand, Trap to Skeet, the many competitions provide different challenges that require good concentration and precision aim. With competitions held across SSAA clubs, the variety of types of targets thrown, angle, height, speed and field layouts keep it exciting for young shooters.

SSAA Shotgun National Discipline Chairman and Griffith Branch President Warren Brown keeps a keen eye out for promising juniors involved in the sport.

Brandon Gugliemino, from New South Wales, is passionate about shooting and eagerly applied for his minor's permit on his 12th birthday. Brandon readily accepts advice, learns from his mistakes and is able to control his emotions under pressure. At just 13, he's already set his eyes on the big leagues and is showing promise as a future athlete for Australia.

"Brandon has developed the skills necessary to become a precise rifle shot while also developing the quite different skill set required for breaking clay targets," Warren said. "He is very proficient with both.

"The coaching and support he has received from his father has certainly paid off, with Brandon often outshooting his mentor. Brandon's success is a very creditable achievement for a young junior and signals that he has great potential for future shooting successes, be it with a rifle or shotgun."

Across the other side of the country, William Freni-Lizzi has been shooting clay disciplines with great success in Western Australia since he was just eight. His story shows how age isn't a barrier for young shooters, with his commitment and passion from a young age making him a competitive and accurate shooter today.

"William is an excellent example of what a very young shooter can safely achieve when commencing shooting under the supervision of his supportive father," Warren said. "The coaching and support he has received from his father has produced some fine achievements with William developing into a very capable clay target shooter at an early age.

"William's passion for breaking clay targets, his constant striving to improve his scores and to master targets he finds difficult augurs well for the future and demonstrates that he has the ability and the temperament to go a long way in this sport. He is certainly off to a great start."



## Eye on the prize

With a recent spate of outstanding results and a national champion for a mentor, one young shooter's quest to eventually compete in the Olympics is well on the way to becoming a reality.

Brandon Gugliemino, 13, only began shooting Shotgun competitively around 12 months ago, and compete he has. He started out participating - and convincingly winning - a handful of club events at his SSAA New South Wales Griffith club.

"I reckon I've competed in about 45 to 50 shoots since I first started when I turned 12, mostly Shotgun events, but I really enjoy the bigger competitions," he said, speaking to *The Junior Shooter* from the Griffith range where he trains.

The bigger competitions include the recent NSW Sporting Clays State Titles, where he was named the Junior High Gun Champion after posting a worthy score of 114 out of 200 targets, picking up a brand-new rifle for his efforts.

Brandon also dominated the junior rounds at the NSW 5-Stand State Titles this year, averaging 15 across eight rounds and adding to his success on a state level.

On a national level, Brandon received the Best Junior award from the Australian Tin Can Shooting Championships after finishing in the top 10 out of more than 140 competitors. His score of 165 out of a possible 200 points earned him the coveted title at the annual event, which was held at the Ardlethan Sporting Clays Club in NSW. The competition started as a casual game between a few mates throwing up beer cans more than 30 years ago and now attracts around 180 shooters.

Brandon's most recent success came in the form of a rifle competition at the SSAA Wagga Wagga Blue Heeler Fly Weekend in August. He outshot the likes of Australian Team shooters and more than 60 competitors to rank first overall in the 300m Fly Factory Class.



Brandon competing at the SSAA NSW Sporting Clays State Titles.



Brandon with his collection of trophies and awards.

The event saw Brandon shoot a group of 1.2" in the 300m, after shooting five shots into a target the size of a 50 cent coin.

Brandon's firearm of choice is his Beretta 682 Gold Sporting shotgun, using Bronze Wing Terminator cartridges. For any rifle events, he uses a Sako 6mm PPC. Although he has competed in more Shotgun events, he enjoys the rifle disciplines equally.

"I don't really have a favourite yet; I'm just giving them both a go to see what I'm best at," he said. He practises at least twice a week for two hours in the lead-up to competitions, and has just starting shooting Trap again.

"Practising my technique will help with my shot," he said. "I've still got a few more areas to improve. I get tired and find it hard to concentrate after a while so will need to get better at that.

"I also get a bit nervous during the shoot-offs, but Dad keeps telling me to forget everything and just concentrate on shooting well, so that's what I've been doing."

Father and mentor Alf is also a successful shooter, having competed for a number of national teams including the SSAA Australian Shotgun Team and Australian Trap Shooting Team. A huge supporter of Brandon's passion for shooting, Alf also takes him on rabbit hunting expeditions.

"I don't mind hunting; it doesn't really matter what type of shooting I'm doing as long as I get to shoot," Brandon said.

As Brandon prepares for another competition, his passion and commitment to shooting is certainly evident when he says, "I want to get to the Olympics and compete for Australia."

Only time will tell, but one thing's for certain: The future of Shotgun looks bright with juniors like Brandon involved.

## Clay king

William Freni-Lizzi is not a common name; nor is his shooting story.

At eight, he picked up his first gun - a .410 shotgun aged around 100 years old - and successfully hit 10 clay targets, much to his father's astonishment. By 10, he was the youngest shooter to compete in the Australian Clay Target Association Down The Line (DTL) Nationals in Perth. Now aged 12, the Western Australian has his sights set on finally competing against the big guns.

Despite his age holding him back in the past, William is well on the way to becoming a national champion clay target shooter, having three years' experience and exposure to competition shooting already behind him.

"I entered my first DTL competition when I was nine, I won an encouragement award," he said. "I qualified for the State Junior DTL and Skeet Teams, but could not go because I was too young."

From his first shot using the .410, William moved on to a 20-gauge Sporter which he described as "light and small and fitted me. It was like the proper guns that everyone else was using."

Today, he competes with a Beretta 686 Sporter due to its shorter barrel suiting his smaller stature, but he has his eyes set on a Perazzi. "I am saving up for it now," he said.

His Beretta has come in handy for the SSAA 5-Stand competitions, which he describes as one of his favourite Shotgun events. "I like the SSAA 5-Stand the best because they get to shoot Birdbrain, which is when you don't know which target you are going to get," he said.



William competing at the 2014 SSAA 5-Stand National Championships.

William participated in the 2014 SSAA 5-Stand National Championships in Perth earlier this year, after missing last year's event due to his age preventing him from shooting legally in other states. He has stuck with the sport regardless and thrives on the shoot-offs, saying coyly, "I usually win them."

"There are not a lot of juniors here [in Perth] so I am usually shooting against the grown-ups," he said of his competition experience. "I have been lucky enough to shoot with the people who went to the Commonwealth Games."

Along with competing against some of Australia's top shooters, William has rubbed shoulders with the likes of famous Australian shooters Michael Diamond, Adam Vella, Suzy Balogh and Russell Mark, and even meeting Italian champion Double Trap shooter Alessandro Chianese who "gave me some tips".

William is using the tips to perfect his technique, which his father Vince describes as "'into my gun' like Nidal Asmar".

"Technique is really important. If you do not have good technique, you cannot get really good scores," William said.

Good scores are aplenty for William, who recorded 23 out of a possible 25 points in Sporting Clays, 25 out of 25 points in Skeet, and 75 out of 75 points in DTL.

"When I get really good, I will be able to shoot 100 straight in DTL," he said.

It shouldn't take long for William to reach the next level in Shotgun, as his passion and willingness to practise make it easy for him to stay committed to the sport.

"I would like to shoot more, but we usually go to one competition every week or so, and try to practise after school sometimes too," he said. "Whenever Mum lets us really!"

William was busy preparing for the WA State DTL Titles when he spoke to *The Junior Shooter*, where he is aiming to make the National Team and compete in New South



2013 ACTA Junior High Gun for DTL and Skeet Combined.



An excited William with Olympic gold medallist Russell Mark in 2012.

Wales next year. He made the cut last year, but because of his age he was once again unable to compete.

Now that he has turned 12 and can compete in other states, William isn't holding back on where the exciting sport of Shotgun can take him - and other interested juniors.

"Shooting is a lot of fun. Some people get scared of guns, but what we do is very safe and people should not be scared. I would tell them to have a go because it is a lot of fun.

"One day I want to go to the Olympics too," he said.

# Juniors-only competition

Only junior 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:

October Junior competition  
SSAA Media & Publications  
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at [www.australianshooter.com.au](http://www.australianshooter.com.au)

Competition closes October 31, 2014

WIN 1 of 3 LED caps



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# An Anzac Day pig hunt

by Joseph Nugent



**A**nzac Day was very different for me this year - my father and I had been invited to go pig hunting for the weekend by one of his workmates and I was able to shoot my first feral pig!

As usual, my entire family was awake at 4.30am to attend the dawn service in Toowoomba. This is a tradition for us. This year, I wore my grandfather's medals, as he had passed away last April. The dawn service is always very moving and I am proud to say that we have never missed one.

Once home, we finished packing the ute and were at our friend Kent's house by 8.45am as arranged. We then collected our other friend Kurt and headed off to Moonie. About two and a half hours later, we arrived at our destination, a mixed farming property outside of Moonie. Kent and Kurt had hunted the property before, but it was a first for both Dad and me. While Dad had hunted pigs before, I had not. My only hunting experience had been with hares and also in stalking red deer with my dad on our block at Blackbutt, watching as he shot meat animals and then helping to carry out the venison.

We were introduced to the property owner who explained where he would like us to hunt for the weekend. We had a quick lunch, and by 1pm, we were out hunting. The country was fairly open, dotted with low scrub and 'melon holes'. A melon hole is a shallow depression full of water. Pigs are often attracted to them because of the cover they provide from the heat.

I would be hunting, under Dad's supervision, with my Winchester 96 .22 Magnum rifle using Federal solids. Dad also had his .45-70. There were lots of pigs around; in fact, almost as soon as we left the ute a small black pig darted away from a bush near me. Then I saw a large grey and white pig bolt into the distance - Kent actually shot this pig in the adjoining crop paddock the next day. The sounds of shots to our right told me that our friends had also found some pigs.

Dad spotted a good-sized pig, a sow, wallowing in one of the melon holes. He motioned me over and because it had not seen us, we were able to stalk to within 10m. I slowly cocked the hammer and lifted the rifle to my shoulder. Using the see-through mounts, I used the iron sights to aim at the sow's upper spine. I pulled the trigger and following the shot, there was silence, and I realised that I had just killed my first feral pig. My shot was good and the pig did not move from the mud.

We waited a few minutes as a precaution, in case the animal got up, but it didn't. Dad then went over to the animal, with me closely behind, where we again waited for a few moments and then hauled the pig from the melon hole. The other guys came over to inspect my first kill and congratulate me. I felt great. I thought of my granddad, who would have been very proud knowing I was becoming a pig hunter like he was.

This success was followed by another a short time later when I was able to take a second pig as it lazed in the shade of some low bushes. What a way to start the weekend! Our tally for the trip was 17 pigs, which is a great success, and I was very happy to have contributed.

The weekend seemed to rush by and we were home again in Toowoomba by 10.30am Sunday morning. I was hoping that there would be other opportunities to visit this property again this year and was pleased to hear that the property owner had recently contacted Kent to ask when we might return, as he had seen a mob of 30 or more pigs on his dam just the week after we had been there. They don't take long to come back, I guess.

In the meantime, I will have to work on my dad about acquiring a suitable centrefire rifle to let me take my own trophy stag!

# One big cat and some bunnies

by Liam Crespo

**M**any people around Australia can sometimes find it hard to find properties to hunt on. To my advantage, 13 years ago, my dad bought a farm and we started to run cattle on it. For as long as I can remember, I have been a big fisher, especially trout fishing around our property. I have also been around shooting and hunting for a long time.

My first gun was a cheap air rifle and I busted a couple of pest birds with it then and I still do now. But early in 2013, for a birthday present, my father took me to Safari Firearms and I chose a .22 Magnum. I got a really good deal with a bag, scope, strap, bipod and some ammo.

My dad and I took the air rifles to see if we could get any bunnies - there are usually bunnies around on different parts of our property. We looked everywhere around the farm and at around midday, in an open paddock we saw a rabbit sprint out of a dry little dam and into the blackberry bushes. We sat and waited for about three minutes, when a much bigger rabbit from the other side of the hill came out for a graze. On two occasions, Dad and I were about to take a shot, but that bunny was just too quick and ran for his life.

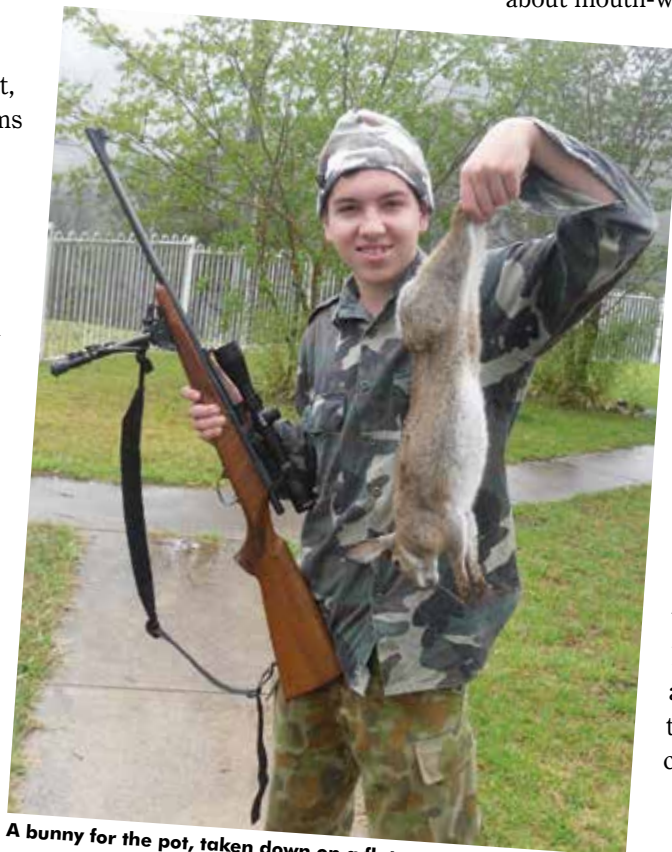
## Hunting with a friend

About five weeks later, I invited a friend to do some rabbit shooting in an open, flat paddock on our property. On Saturday morning, when the sun was just poking its head over the mountain, the alarm on my iPad woke me up. I got up, got ready and then Dad drove us to the paddock.

I filled my magazine with five rounds and as I thought about mouth-watering rabbit, I looked at my

friend and said, "Let's not shoot every single one, so we always have game to eat." By the look on his face, he didn't look like he was going to complain if every time he came up we had wild rabbit for dinner! We took my .22 Magnum and one of our air rifles.

We sat on a little hill and waited. Every minute we waited, the sun poked more of its head over the mountain. By the time the sun was halfway over the mountain, a big rabbit came out of the brush and started to graze. I had a clear shot at 25m, so I aimed at the rabbit's head and took a shot. It felt amazing to collect my first rabbit.



A bunny for the pot, taken down on a flat paddock.



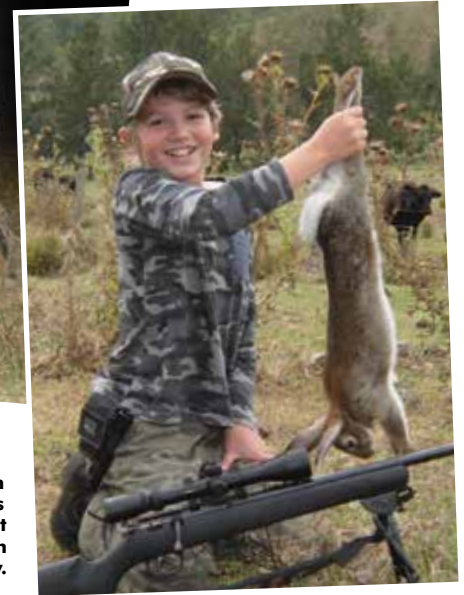
## Hunting with my grandfather

My next rabbit was a big girl. This hunt was planned before we arrived. My grandfather and I were going to drive around the flat paddock, then I was going to sit behind this little dam on the other side of the fence, while he was to wait with his 12-gauge in case any rabbits backtracked and ran along the fence line. I set my bipod down and waited. The beautiful sunset was setting in.

As I sat there, I checked the wind and yes, it was right into my face. While this was happening, some five or so rabbits were playing in a little open place in the blackberry bushes. One of them stopped, I aimed for a head shot, but 'pulled' the trigger instead of squeezing it, which resulted in a fatal neck shot. I picked her up then walked to the yellow truck with my grandfather. As we walked up, the sun went down.



Another nice-sized rabbit for the pot.



Liam's brother gets in on the action too. This is his first rabbit shot on a cold afternoon on Australia Day.



A big female shot in the chest at 75m with the Zastava .22 Magnum.

## Hunting with my dad

Another afternoon, another rabbit in the bag. This time, Dad and I were out in the field for a hunt. We set out at about 6pm in the yellow truck, which is a bit later than we normally do, but never mind. We went to our usual place and sat there for 10 minutes, just watching the rabbits playing and chasing each other, but never getting an opportunity for a clear shot.

Suddenly, two rabbits out of about seven that we saw ran across the open paddock. My dad was lying on the ground next to me. I told him I was going to walk slowly to the fence post and use it to rest my rifle on. I walked very carefully to the fence post. I couldn't see the rabbits, which I guessed were behind the mound of rocks that had been piled up, so when I got to the fence post, I waited.

A minute later, I looked at my dad and said quietly, "I am going under the fence." Almost as soon as I had finished talking, a bunny came out about 70m away. Because of the distance, I shouldered the gun and aimed for a chest shot. It was an excellent shot. Another bunny!



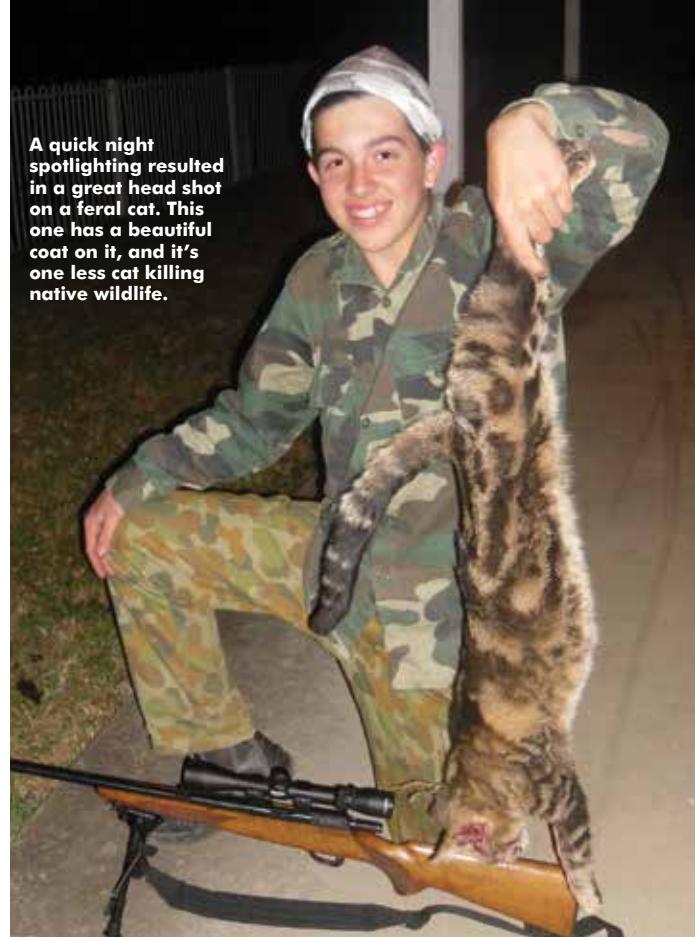


## One silly cat

Over the years, we have seen rabbit droppings up on the hill - a place that we call the Saddle. One night, Dad and I decided to go for a spotlight for a couple of bunnies. It was a warm night with a light wind blowing. We drove three-quarters of the way to the Saddle then walked with no lights on, even though we had my great Nite Core 860 lumens torch with us. With no moon, it was pretty hard to see. The only other thing we'd brought with us was my .22 Magnum rifle.

We got very close to the opening on our side of the mountain when we heard something. Dad was getting ready to turn on the torch when I said, "Stop! Wait for me to get ready!" I went down on one knee and whispered, "Ready!" He turned on the torch and I saw three black things run down the mountain at a top speed.

We continued down the other side of the mountain, with my dad lighting the way, and then we saw a pair of massive yellow eyes staring straight at the light. It kept ducking in and out of the light and we weren't sure what it was. We walked towards it until we were about 10 or 15m from it. Through my scope, I saw its massive, pointy ears. I knew instantly it was a feral cat. "Shoot it!" Dad shouted. It only took one shot and it was down. This is a great story to tell.



A quick night spotlighting resulted in a great head shot on a feral cat. This one has a beautiful coat on it, and it's one less cat killing native wildlife.

# My 100kg Territory boar

by Bailey Hourigan

I recently took my first trip to the Gove Peninsula in the Northern Territory. Coming from Victoria, it was a big change, but one that I was looking forward to.

We arrived in Nhulunbuy and while I wanted to go hunting straightaway, we had a couple things to do first, so I had to wait. It was then about a two-hour drive to where we would be hunting and it was good to see the differences in the landscape and environment between my home state and the NT.

We arrived and after setting up a few things, on we went to the first billabong. We saw one really good pig, but it was just too quick and we couldn't get a shot off. I have to admit that my hopes were a bit down after that, but I knew there'd be another chance.

We moved on to another billabong and looking over it, we saw a monster of a pig. With this sighting, my hopes and mood improved immediately. The boar was at the far end of the billabong and I knew that it was going to take a bit to get to him.

After around 45 minutes of walking through very thick mangroves, we came out the other side to within about 70m of the animal. I lined him up in my sights, took aim, squeezed the trigger and the .308-calibre rifle dropped him on the spot.

It was a great hunt and one I will definitely never forget!



# Rabbit pie

by Elizabeth Mullens

**G**rowing up in a farming and hunting household, the stories of Little Peter Rabbit and Mr McGregor's pie didn't have the same effect on me as they may have had on other children. I always thought that if the rabbits were wrecking his garden, he had full right to bake the pests! Now, I am a bit older and I love cooking, and I made this recipe inspired by Beatrix Potter's stories.

The process for this pie may take a while, but the result is a filling, tasty dish that can be eaten with vegetables or accompanied by a green salad.

This recipe makes two medium-sized pies, which should nicely serve 8 people.

## Ingredients

- 1 medium rabbit - jointed
- 1/3 cup flour
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon chicken seasoning
- oil - for frying
- 1 onion - finely chopped
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 2 medium-sized potatoes - cut into small cubes
- 2/3 cup carrot - cut into small cubes
- 250g mushrooms - sliced
- 3 tablespoons extra flour
- shortcrust pastry\*
- 2 sheets puff pastry
- 1 egg - to glaze



## Method

Coat the rabbit pieces in a mixture of flour, salt, pepper and chicken seasoning. Pan-fry gently in oil in batches until golden brown.

Fry the onion in oil until translucent and set aside. Place chicken stock, potatoes, carrots, rabbit and onions into a slow cooker or a large stewing pot. Season with salt and pepper and 1 teaspoon extra of chicken seasoning.

Set the slow cooker on high, or stove to a slow simmer, and cook for 1 hour, then reduce the slow cooker setting or stove to low and cook until meat is falling off the bones. Remove the rabbit pieces from the pot and strip the meat from the bones (you may have to use a fork or your fingers for this); return the meat to the pot and add the mushrooms.

Remove 1 cup of the excess stock from the pot and set aside to cool to lukewarm.

In a separate bowl, mix the extra flour with some salt, pepper and a pinch of chicken seasoning. Gently pour the stock into the flour, stirring until it is a thin paste. If it is too thick and doesn't run off the spoon, mix in more stock. Pour this gravy into the pan of pie filling and stir gently until combined. Continue cooking for 5 minutes, then turn off and allow to cool. Preheat oven to 180C while the filling is cooling.

To assemble the pie, grease 2 medium pie dishes or springform tins and line with shortcrust pastry. Prick the base with a fork and blind bake for 15 minutes or until golden.

Spoon the filling into the cases and top with puff pastry. Glaze pastry with the beaten egg and bake in the oven for 25 minutes or until nicely browned.

## Pie base\*

Store-bought shortcrust pastry may be too thin to hold the filling, but making your own is relatively simple. You can even make it ahead of time if you wish, and wrap in cling wrap and refrigerate.

- 2 cups plain flour
- 125g cool butter - cubed
- 1 egg yolk
- 3-5 tablespoons ice-cold water (as needed)

Sift flour into a large mixing bowl and rub in the butter with your fingers. Add the egg yolk and mix in with a butter knife, adding water as needed to form a workable dough. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead until smooth.



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