



WINGSHOOTER

Magazine of the SA Wingshooters Association Vol. 30 No. 4 – November/December 2024



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Publisher "Wingshooter" Magazine

Advisory Bureau for Development (Pty) Ltd.

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Editor, Design & Layout: André van der Westhuizen

For Printed editions: Typo Print.

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A WORD IN YOUR EAR



Photograph by Wynand Visser on a shoot in the Western Cape

Inadvertently making the right choice...

As I am writing, there are fireworks detonating all around Johannesburg suburbs. Neighbourhood WhatsApp groups in our area have been inundated with requests, pleas and legal posts regarding the bylaws of the use of fireworks. It's the time of Diwali, Guy Fawkes and other festivals!

When you unknowingly made the wrong choice when selecting the breed of your best companion, then this time of year, in most South African cities, can be quite a stressful situation, especially for dogs. It sure is handy if one can safely ignore all these neighbourhood posts, some of which unfortunately become tense online arguments.

However, if you are lucky enough to have made a great choice selecting the right breed of puppy, then festivals such as Diwali and Guy Fawkes are just another bird dog training opportunity!

Our bird dogs are excited to hear loud bangs, which mostly resemble shotguns being discharged, and are out in the garden looking for birds that now surely must have fallen somewhere close by. Quite a comedy to say the least.

I must admit that some loud, closer fireworks detonations, give me quite a surprise for an instant, and send my thoughts and instincts back to earlier times in my life, as for many of the older of us, which in turn presents me with immediate excitement along with sharp focus for a few seconds with every close proximity det. For most of the dog breeds we choose to spend our lives with, such nights are fun-filled with normal hunting season sounds. I guess we unintentionally made the right choice! Lucky us!

As always, and most importantly, we'd like to thank all our members for your support, interaction and making the right choice to be a member of this, actually your, association. We wish everyone a blessed festive season and holidays. May you be blessed. Godspeed to you all.

Thanks to the National Council members and the Executive Committee for your continued teamwork and guidance.

Waidmannsheil

André –



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The new old...

Oak's nice! Especially when it's wrapped in quality leather, edged with beautiful brass and laid out inside with plush felt (baize) in a colour of your choice, as long as it is a royal colour.

Leather gun cases have been made and used for centuries to protect fine firearms such as shotguns and rifles. Apart

and design - along with the guidance of the case builder - a unique gun case that will accommodate your hunting knife, gun oil bottle, binoculars, firearm licence holder, gun cleaning paraphernalia, and more. The felt is your oyster, so to speak.

As time goes by, fewer and fewer artisans retain the knowledge to continue the trade. In South Africa, however, we are fortunate to still have such knowledge and ability, when it comes to gun case making. Country Crafts is a new name, however,

piece of wood for the entire case's build is critical, for the wood grain to match directionally all around the case. It is a matter of millimetres when working with wood to get it perfect in every dimension for a finished case to be perfect. Even the brass fittings are custom made.

Oak and leather cases are not limited to guns these days, and Tinus makes bespoke cases for ammunition, handguns, field bars... anything and everything you would need, really. All cases are custom



from traditional elegance, beauty and exquisite craftsmanship, the leather and oak gun case has the significant purpose of protecting valuable and bespoke guns. The pure artistry and incredible craftsmanship by the artisans who make these cases is nothing short of exquisite. Sadly, as technology advances, many of the old school and traditional crafts and skills fall by the wayside and are forgotten.

Over the years, modern advances and innovation have improved manufacturing techniques, and cases have undergone improvements. Modern cases can include reinforcement, padding, weather resistant leather and canvas coatings, which give added longevity to a gun case and the gun it is meant to protect.

A huge benefit of a custom-made gun case is that you can choose the entire design to suit your specific requirements and style. You can think out of the box,



their knowledge is old and well rounded. Tinus Tredoux, the owner, has decades of experience making and crafting gun cases for gun enthusiasts and is well-known to many in the industry.

His attention to detail when making a case is aimed at perfection and natural harmony, going the extra mile and spending time making it perfectly. Selecting the correct wood grade and using the same

made to the specific firearm dimensions and to the client's specifications and needs.

Why have an oak and leather, canvas and leather or all leather gun case? Why not go with new technology? Modern factory-made cases might be more popular, but they are not works of art. The modern, factory-made goods including gun cases, made with advanced materials such as thermoplastic polymers, alloys, and so on, might be stronger, more durable and longer lasting, sure, but these most certainly lack style and flair!

The photographs were taken at the recent Country Crafts by Tinus Tredoux exhibition hosted by Buffelsfontein Wapens and Kretschmann Art Gallery. For more information please contact Tinus Tredoux at 082 556 3004 or goodpowder123@gmail.com

– André van der Westhuizen – SA
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Some Statistics for 2024

As the second-oldest SAPS accredited hunting and sport shooting association in the country we strive to give members the best possible service and opportunities possible.

These benefits range from our in-office services to our R20 million third-party liability insurance cover for each and every



paid-up member individually, as well as for the Association itself.

Apart from the countless shooting and hunting venues, sport shooting competition days and events, we host various training days as well. We hosted shotgun shooting training, rifle shooting training and handgun shooting training at various venues for no less than 193 members, including a few international course attendees.

More than 430 members attended the Singita and Witkoppies Pigeon/Dove shooting venues this season and we hosted upland gamebird shoots for almost 70 guns who booked on our official upland shoots during the season.

Our annual Christmas clay target shoots are attended by 115 to 125 guns annually. As a huge membership benefit

this year's Christmas Clay shoot and lunch is FREE of charge for members. This is a value of R650 – a direct saving to the value of very close to half of your total annual membership fee!

All the other pigeon/dove, upland and waterfowl shoots that members attend through the year, in various provinces, are not calculated here.

We have vastly experienced and professional trainers and coaches in most all disciplines of shooting in our association, ready to assist you!

If you have not yet attended any of our shoots, events, training days, or fun days, then we urge you to join us, and we hereby cordially invite you! Come with us!

– SA Wingshooters



New Bird Vest from KUIU

The Upland Field Vest effectively carries everything you need for a successful day of bird hunting. It's lightweight, ergonomic and highly

straps while lightly loaded, with the ability to transition the weight of a limit of birds entirely to the waist belt. Everything you need to access quickly, like shells, is within easy reach, while providing storage for extra clothing, food, hydration, and dog accessories.

Kuiu says it's built to carry better than any vest on the market so you can



functional. Every design aspect was taken into careful consideration – from the diameter of the water bottles for optimal elbow clearance, to its ability to carry an injured dog out of the field if needed.

With a clean intuitive design, it comfortably carries from the shoulder

be prepared in the field.

These vests are only available from KUIU in the USA. US\$ 249. For more info and to order, visit their website: <https://www.kuiu.com>

– SA Wingshooters

THE BALANCE OF SOUND

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Sound is a powerful sensation that excites the hearing mechanism and enables humans (and animals) to communicate – the joyful skill that keeps us connected. Excessive exposure to noise may jeopardize the way you perceive sound and your communication in the long run. Finding the balance between enjoying the shooting range now and being able to partake in the conversations later is possible. FitSonic strives to help shooters find the balance.

Although there are many complexities relating to the transmission of sounds, at the point of reception (at the level of the ears), sound is readily dividable into two simple elements: pressure and time. As sound pressure or intensity increases, so does the impact it will have on your ears. Likewise, as your exposure time to that sound increases, the more likely it is to cause permanent injury.

In other words, a very loud sound may damage your hearing in just a fraction of a second, while a less intense noise may require a few seconds of exposure to have a harmful affect.

To avoid permanent damage, you must protect yourself. The main benefit of using hearing protection is the fact that it will protect your ears from loud sounds by reducing the level of noise that is able to enter your ears. With CENS Digital hearing protection however, you are still able to hear normal conversations while the sound of impulse shots is reduced to a safer hearing level. Provided that CENS Digital hearing protection are custom made with a leak tight seal, the comfort thereof keeps your hearing protected each time and for the full duration of your visit to the range or in the field. Don't wait another season, get your hearing protected today and enjoy the sense of hearing for a lifetime.

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2024 Competition Target Shooting Results



Annual PSP Target Shooting Winners 2024



HANDGUN – Centrefire

Gold –

Mrs Zania Harrison: 100 (9 x-rings)

Silver –

Alan Harrison: 100 (8 x-rings)

Bronze –

Wim Lambrechts: 100 (6 x rings)

RIMFIRE HANDGUN

Gold –

Wim Lambrechts: : 98 (5 x-rings)

RIMFIRE RIFLE

Gold –

Simon Steyn: 100 (10 x-rings) 15mm

Silver –

Wim Lambrechts: 100 (10 x-rings) 17mm

Bronze –

Glen Moola: 98 (6 x-rings)

CENTREFIRE RIFLE

Gold –

Simon Steyn: 100 (5 x-rings) 13mm

Silver –

Alan Harrison: 100 (5 x-rings) 14mm

Bronze –

Mrs Zania Harrison: 100 (5 x-rings) 16mm

SEMI-AUTO RIFLE 50m FH

Gold –

Alan Harrison: 100 (10 x-rings)

CENTREFIRE RIFLE 300m

Gold –

Simon Steyn: 33mm Group 5 shots

LRSC 2024 Winners

OVERALL 2024 Points Winners:

Gold: Shaun Ellithorne

Silver: Bernard Cilliers

Bronze: Johan Maree

.338 F-BA Division:

Gold: Friedel Kirstein

.300 NM F-BA Division:

Gold: Johan Maree

Silver: Mongezi Milela

.300 Win. Mag. Division:

Gold: Shaun Ellithorne

Silver: Tony Ernst

Bronze: Dane Allen

.308 F-BA Division:

Gold: Kristina Gallow (Lady)

Silver: Christiaan de la Rey

Bronze: Dane Allen

6.5 F-BA Division:

Gold: Shaun Ellithorne

Silver: Johan Maree

Bronze: Christiaan de la Rey

.30-06 F-BA Division:

Gold: Jacques Mey

.243/6mm F-BA Division:

Gold: Mongezi Milela

Silver: Etienne de Waal

Bronze: Charl Jacobs

.22-250 F-BA Division:

Gold: Friedel Kirstein

.223 F-BA Division:

Gold: Shaun Ellithorne

Silver: Bernard Cilliers

Bronze: Niel van Vuuren

.223 F-SL (Self-Loading Rifle) Division:

Gold: Jordan Toy

Silver: Marius Gericke

Bronze: Noel Gibson

Open Division (Major):

Gold: Johan Maree

Silver: Shaun Ellithorne

Bronze: Mongezi Milela

Open Division (Minor):

Gold: Marius Gericke

Silver: Cliff Alexander

Silver: Vernon Harms

Open Sight Division:

Gold: Noel Gibson



TPS 2024 Winners:

Final 1:

4-Gun Division (SG / HG / SLR / Bolt):

Gold: David Lillico

Silver: Bernard Cilliers

Bronze: Shaun Ellithorne

Trad 3-Gun Division (SG / HG / SLR):

Gold: David Lillico

Silver: Noel Gibson

Bronze: Angus Rheder

3-Gun Division (Handgun / SLR / Bolt):

Gold: David Lillico

Silver: Marius Gericke

Bronze: Shaun Ellithorne

2-Gun Division (Handgun / Self-Loading):

Gold: André van der Westhuizen

Silver: David Lillico

Bronze: Marius Gericke

2-Gun Division (Handgun / Bolt Action):

Gold: Bernard Cilliers

Silver: David Lillico

Bronze: Marius Gericke

Final 2:

4-Gun Division (SG / HG / SLR / Bolt):

Gold: André van der Westhuizen

Silver: Charl Jacobs

Bronze: Marius Gericke

3-Gun Division (Handgun / SLR / Bolt):

Gold: Tony Ernst

Silver: Marius Gericke

Bronze: Shaun Ellithorne

2-Gun Division (Handgun / SLR/Rifle):

Gold: Hulme Scholes

Silver: André van der Westhuizen

Bronze: Bobby Lotter

2-Gun Division (Handgun / Bolt Action):

Gold: Marius Gericke

Silver: Shaun Ellithorne

Bronze: Tony Ernst

.22PSBC 2024 Winners



.22 LR Tactical Division:

Gold: Bernard Cilliers

Silver: Johan Maree

Bronze: Tony Ernst

.22 LR Hunter Division:

Gold: Bobby Lotter

Silver: Angus Rheder



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JUGLANS REGIA

Or “English walnut” as it is more commonly called, which is ironic in that now-a-days just about every plank comes from the Eurasian continent, not England.

| by Charles Duff



image from www.uplandguncompany.com

It is also known as Circassian and sometimes Persian walnut and in fact the species can be found in a broad swathe from southern France right across Europe and into Asia, across the southern Himalayas, and culminating in southern China. The genus's name frequently changes with the country of origin, such as *juglans sinensis* for the Chinese variety. According to Wikipedia the largest forests now extant are in Kyrgyzstan.

It's widely cultivated as much for its delicious nuts as for the beautiful wood. Much prized by woodworkers through the ages for its durability, shock resistance, workability and 'chatoyance' – a wonderful French word meaning showing changeable colours and lustre. A good black dye can be extracted from the nut husks.

The trees take about four years to bear fruit and can grow as high as 35 metres, the trunk can achieve a diameter of over two metres. Life-expectancy is 200 to 300 years though they can be susceptible to disease, notably the 'thousand cankers' disease. It prefers deep rich loamy soils



image from www.hollandandholland.com

with full sun and long subtropical summers allied to short winters. The colour of the wood varies due to the soil; sandy and loamy soils producing lighter colours and dark rich soils with high organic content very much darker varieties.

While the trunk and branches tend to produce straight-grained wood the most spectacular with the most figure, contrast, colour and variety comes from where the roots and trunk or bole join; so to get this the tree must be killed. It's tough, dense yet not over-heavy wood, qualities which led to its being used for all sorts of applications until its increasing rarity and spiralling costs resulted in it being restricted as the favoured wood for top quality veneers and of course, gunstocks.

In 1881 W.W. Greener noted that the English wood tended to be heavy, tough and well-marked. The French variety, being lighter yet richer in colour, marked with broad black streaks and slightly more porous. Eastern Europe, into which can be included Turkey and the next-door Caucasus, producing very close-grained wood, with good colour and figure without cracks and galls. For

a long time, the French was held to be the best, but the continuing European wars thinned out the forests and like the English walnut, it is now very expensive and rare. Today most gunstock walnut comes from Turkey.

The North American species is *Juglans nigra*, a rather straight-grained and dark variety, according to Greener much inferior to *Juglans regia* insofar as gunstocks are concerned. However, I made a .22 Hornet mini-Martini stock a long time ago and there's not much wrong with the colour or figure. It is definitely American walnut aka 'claro walnut', so it can be dangerous to generalise.

The root ball, which contains the densest and most-figured wood can weigh as much as four to five tons, and this has to be dug out of the earth after the tree trunk has been cut down – usually this is cut off at about a metre or so above the ground.

Once the stump is unearthed it is sliced vertically into blanks and then, after being given a wax covering to slow down the process, is air-dried for four to eight years. Overly rapid drying leads to 'shakes' – splitting of the wood – and can result in the

“The French variety, being lighter yet richer in colour, marked with broad black streaks and slightly more porous.”

loss of the valuable blanks. Chemical processes and temperature control to speed up the drying process have never proved to be successful.

The patterns of the grain and whorls in the wood have led to a number of adjectives such as curly, bee's wing, rat-tailed, birds-eye, barring, marbling and 'fiddle' or 'fiddle-back';



Blaser Grade 8
Below: Blaser
Grade 10

but generally the more the figure the less the intrinsic strength. What is needed for a strong stock is straight grain from the top of the pistol grip, or hand, at the breech through to the toe of the butt. In ‘The Gun’ Major Sir Gerald

was that its conductivity of recoil could have, with advantage, been lower. Other woods have been tried and

pleted a bird’s eye maple rifle stock for a friend from a blank he’d brought back from a visit to the USA and - never, ever, again! Inletting and shaping were a nightmare and most of the work could only be done with a variety of mechanical or hand rasps and sanders.

Burrard waxed positively lyrical with “we have in walnut an ideal wood not only tough, hard and split-resistant, but also figured in a beautiful manner so as to jog the eye”. It is a fact that, on viewing any gun for the first time, it is the wood that always first catches the eye.

W.W. Greener in his ‘The Gun and Its Development’ was more prosaic and stated: “Walnut seems to be purposely designed for gun stocks. No other wood or material possesses qualities so admirably adapted to the requirements of the gun maker, and for sporting weapons it is doubtful whether anything will ever supersede it”.

Well, modern polymers might be more practicable, but there is absolutely no contest when it comes to beauty. His only negative comment

beech is frequently found in cheaper guns and military models, it is somewhat denser and usually almost devoid of any figure. Birch has been used, also mainly in military weapons, but though lighter than beech, is not as durable.

Oak is far too heavy. I’m told that ash, if carefully selected, can have appealing figure. In the United States bird’s eye maple and cherry are frequently used. The latter tends to be rather plain and straight-grained, but eminently workable, while the former’s whorls are a stock-maker’s nightmare as the grain goes through a 360° turn in every one. I once com-

Then there is hickory, the *Carya* species, of which there are six in Asia and a dozen or so in North America. A very hard, stiff and shock resistant wood, similar to walnut in colour and with plenty of figure.

The trees growing as big and for as long as walnut and preferring hot moist summers. The species that produces the best pecan nuts is *Carya disambiguation* and this is grown in orchards all over the USA and also here. Illustrations show good colour and figure, it should be more widely used than it is in the USA.

Locally, black stinkwood (*Ocotea bullata*) has been used in the past,

***“Annual sales
of walnut stock
blanks are held in
Europe; the
supplying
of desirable
blanks is
obviously highly
profitable...”***

illustrated and the third from the top was stocked by me in wild pear wood, left-handed to suit his wife, for a .22 Hornet Improved. There is prolific contrasting colour and the wood was easily worked. However, it is just rather hard to find in suitable sizes, if at all.

Tamboti (*Spirostachys africana*) should be ideal as a stock-wood being sufficiently dense and with great colour contrasts and figure but its toxicity is a drawback. A possibly urban myth of many years ago told of a sugarcane farmer near Stanger who had a rifle stocked with the wood from one of his trees. In use the comb-to-face contact gave him a painful skin eruption to the point where it had to be discarded.

salers having individual scales. When you get to the top grades, terms such as ‘Exhibition’, ‘Fancy’, and ‘Select’, appear as the prices skyrocket.

The intricacies of what makes one blank better and more expensive than another are often not immediately apparent. One attempt that I have come across a couple of times is:

Grade 1 – Utility, straight grained, plain with little to no figure.

Grade 2 – Some colour with 10% or better figure.

Grade 3 – Good amount of figure and improved colour.

Grade 4 – Superior figure and colour contrast – a minimum of 75%.

Grade 5 – Often referred to as ‘Exhibition’ grade – very rare blanks,



image from www.uplandguncompany.com

but it is of course now completely protected. But for pattern, figure and colour African wild pear (*Dombeya rotundifolia*) – Drolpeer in Afrikaans – is, in my opinion, on a par with walnut.

If you can lay your hands on the September 1983 Man/Magnum, there is an article ‘Kiwi Gunsmith’ about John Hall, for many years a good friend. Four of his rifles are

Annual sales of walnut stock blanks are held in Europe; the supplying of desirable blanks is obviously highly profitable and makers have to lay in stocks in advance as the wood on offer is often not completely weathered and usually requires a few more years drying/storage.

The grading of the walnut blanks is an arcane occupation, as there is no universal standard, with most whole-

especially in pairs or trios with superb colour and contrast and 80-90% figure. Only 1 in a 100 blanks so qualify.

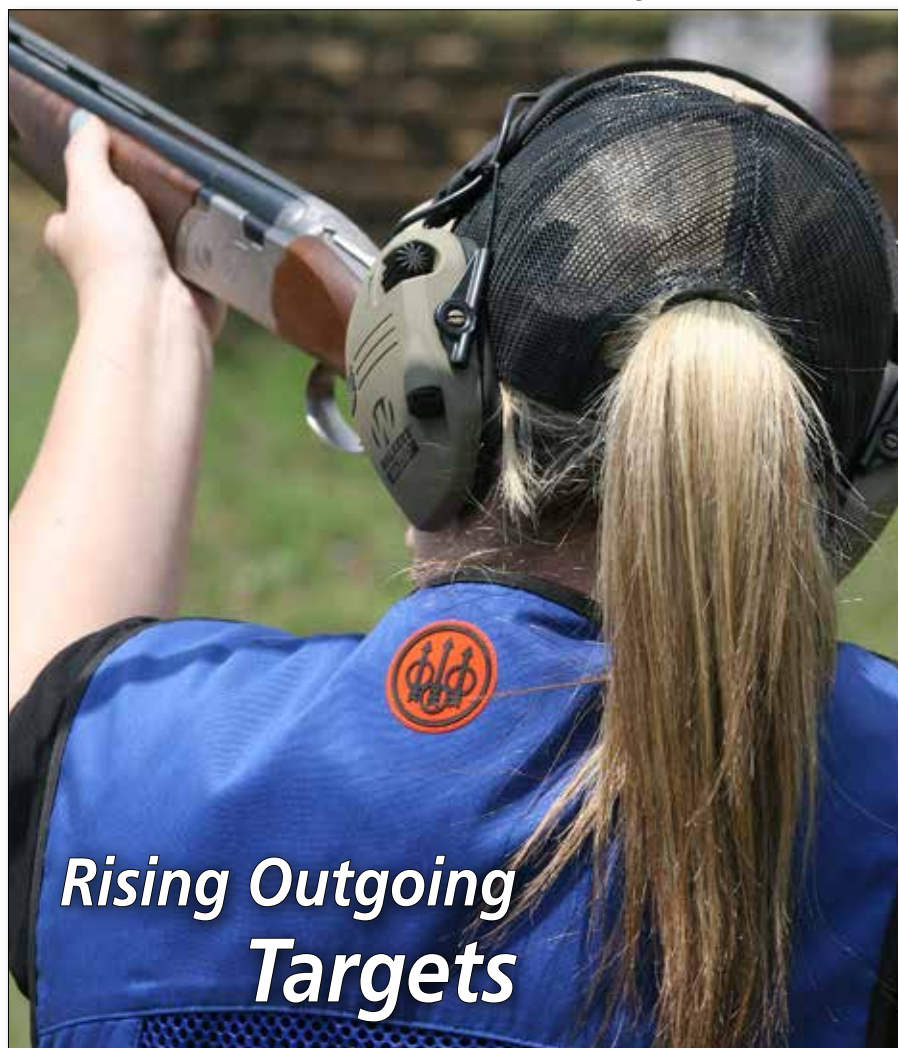
There is no real international standard for wood grades on guns, and gun builders such as Blaser go up to Grade 10 on their wood grades.

Of one thing we can be sure, as long as there is good *Juglans regia* available, the better guns will all be stocked with it.

SHOOTING TIPS

*Some tips to help you shoot better –
clays and birds...*

By Don Currie



Question: *I have trouble with rising going-away targets with a bit of an angle to them. They look so easy, but I am very inconsistent with this type of target. What's wrong?*

Answer: Here's the thing about rising quartering targets. Our bodies naturally want to move either vertically (between 6 o'clock and 12 o'clock) or horizontally (between 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock). Our bodies don't move as "obediently" on targets with a complex angle.

Let's take a target presentation in which the machine is about 10 yards to our right and in line with the front of the shooting stand. The target is an outgoing target with a lot of spring (fast), rising at about a 30-degree angle above the ground and quartering slightly from right to left. The biggest shooter-induced error I see on this presentation is occlusion, also known as spoiling the line or blocking the target.

The shooter's hold point is a bit to the right and slightly underneath the break point and on the line of the target. As the target appears and the shooter moves the

gun along the target line with a move that is up and slightly right-to-left, the barrel tends to encroach on the target line and block the shooter's visual connection with the target.

For this particular target presentation, the shooter should instead establish a hold point directly below and about a third of the way back from the inside (left) edge of the target at the planned break point. Now, instead of moving along the line, the shooter will move directly up to the left edge of the target and execute the shot.

In so doing, the shooter maintains his visual connection with the target from his ready position (aka hold point) all the way through the break point and shot execution. The focal point on the target, where the shooter applies acute focus, is the left edge (aka inside edge) as the shot is executed. The approach is the same for a rising outgoing target from the left, except the focal point is the right edge of the target and the shooter moves vertically to the right edge of the target.

– This tip came from: <https://www.doncurrie.com/post/ask-the-instructor-rising-outgoing-targets>.

Sharp Eye Focus:

As the eyes lock onto the focal point of the target and the comb reaches the cheek, a shooter should decisively execute the shot at the break point.

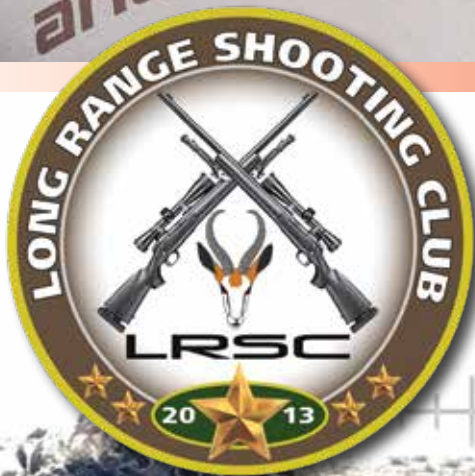
Many shooters, however, "ride the target," thus reducing the quality of the information the eye is capturing, often resulting in a visual "check" of the barrel-target relationship at the end of the stroke. For a target with a long flight time, timing your focus is critical. Remember, the eye can only hold sharp visual focus for about a second.

– This tip came from the book "Mastering Sporting Clays" by Don Currie.

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7 shooting myths you need to

stop believing



We debunk some of the most common myths about shooting - how many have you encountered in the wild?

by George Brown

images from
Guns On Pegs, UK

Shooting, while generally populated by well-meaning and friendly people, is nevertheless awash with misconceptions, misinformation and myths. Here are a few of the things that we should probably all stop believing.

1. A new gun will improve your shooting

Game shots, like participants of all sports, are always looking for the next purchase that's going to suddenly turn them into George Digweed. Like a high-handicap golfer dropping three figures on a new driver and space-age golf balls, some shots would rather

spend their money on a new gun that will surely improve their ratio, rather than on honing their technique, which will actually help improve their shooting. Ultimately, it doesn't matter if you're shooting a new custom-built, handmade London best gun or a fourth-hand "farmer's gun"; if your technique is faulty – especially your gun mount – you're probably going to miss more often than you hit.

2. Side-by-sides are obsolete

Sure, these days most shooting instructors will start new shots off on a gun with stacked barrels, and such guns may be more robust and a bit easier to shoot. Nevertheless, recent

years have seen a small but measurable resurgence in the popularity of side-by-sides. There are plenty of people who shoot far better than most of us ever will and use a side-by-side. What's more, there's a modern crop of side-by-side shotguns designed for use with steel shot, so they'll likely be around for a long time yet.

3. Shooting is expensive

Sure, shooting can be a costly hobby, and once upon a time it was the preserve of the landed and the titled, but these days shooting is more accessible than ever, and there's plenty of ways to enjoy a day in the field without a fat wallet (current

bird-supply issues notwithstanding). Find a friendly farmer, ply him with a bottle of something, and he'll more than likely give you the all-clear to walk a few hedgerows in the season or do a spot of roost shooting. In the event that you can't manage that, walked up shooting, mini-driven days and wildfowling can be very affordable, and easy to find.

4. Practising is cheating

I have long felt that there is an unspoken assumption that it is simply Not The Done Thing to practise one's shooting, and that spending

even harder. As the shooting world makes the change to steel over the coming months and years, your best bet is to find a choke and cartridge combo that patterns well in your gun at the ranges at which you typically shoot, and then stick with it.

***Big bags are inherently bad*¹**

There are plenty of people ready to blame all of shooting's woes on 'corporate big bag days'. But one man's big bag is another man's bread and butter - in fact, our research in 2018 revealed that pinning down exactly what constitutes a big bag is

them yourself. While there may be a little truth in this, a true driven shooting expert will be employing all kinds of fieldcraft from the moment they step out of the car in the morning.

Whether it's making predictions on the likely path of the birds given the topographical and meteorological conditions, or straining their hearing and keeping a beady eye on the behaviour of the songbirds in the hedgerow for clues as to when and where the first partridge will break cover, or even studying the movement of the clouds to help ascertain



time on the clay ground is akin to cheating. Nothing could be further from the truth – the great Gentlemen Shots of the Edwardian era even went so far as to practise their gunmount in the drawing room after dinner the night before a shoot. We have a duty to our quarry to be as accurate as we can be, so get down there and smash a few clays before the season rolls around again. You could even – gasp! – book yourself a lesson!

5. Changing your chokes will make you a better shot

The truth is that for the majority of guns, myself included, messing around with our chokes is more likely to hinder our performance than help. All it does is add in another variable, making consistent shooting

pretty tough. Either way, the fact is that the shoots that put on the biggest days are often those with the best conservation credentials and the strictest adherence to best practice when it comes to caring for their birds and handling shot game. What's more, the fact that they attract the big spenders is a significant contributor to the overall value of shooting to the UK economy.

6. Driven shooting requires no fieldcraft

You'll often hear 'hunters' from other parts of the world – and even holier-than-thou Brits – suggesting that shooting driven birds isn't real hunting. Standing waiting for the birds to come to you, goes the thinking, is not as pure as going to find

what a really high bird is doing, the best shots know that there is far more to shooting driven birds than standing on the peg and waiting.

7. Using bigger cartridges will make you a better shot

You may have seen videos on YouTube or read articles by noted high bird shots in which they're putting 42g loads of number 3 shot in their gun and pulling down 60-80 yard pheasants, and have concluded that you should be doing the same on your local syndicate. Stop it. Unless you're shooting at birds of a similar ilk, the bigger loads won't help, and if you do connect, you're likely to do so much damage to the meat as to render it unusable.

– Editor's note: 'In the UK they may breed Pheasants for shooting. In South Africa we may only shoot wild birds, hence our bag limits!

– With kind permission from George Brown: Guns On Peg, UK.

<https://www.scribehound.com/countryside/shooting-talk/shooting-debates/7-shooting-myths-you-need-to-stop-believing>

Official Shoots...

Kendal,
Uitkyk,
Poortjie...



Above: Stephan Röhrs at the Kendal shoot.

Below left: Andrew Cameron at Kendal.

Below right:

From left: Gert de Wet, Ivan Holden, Ralph Davies, Zane Nel and Colleen Ndlovo at Kendal



& Witkoppies

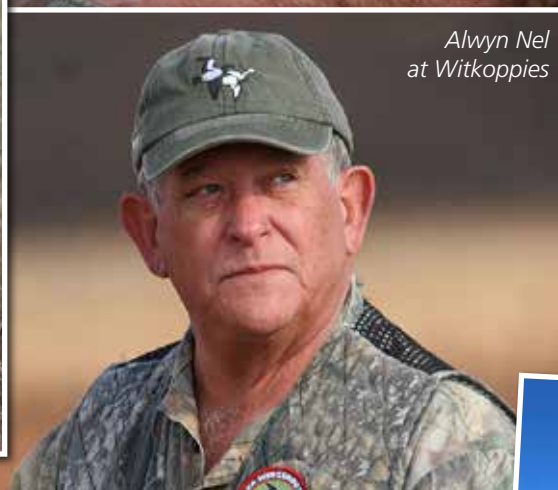
Blikkies Blignaut at Witkoppies



Giuseppe Cannito at Witkoppies



Alwyn Nel at Witkoppies



Rodney Nielsen (left) and Brett Laidlaw



Angelo Spada & Jacques Naude at Poortjie



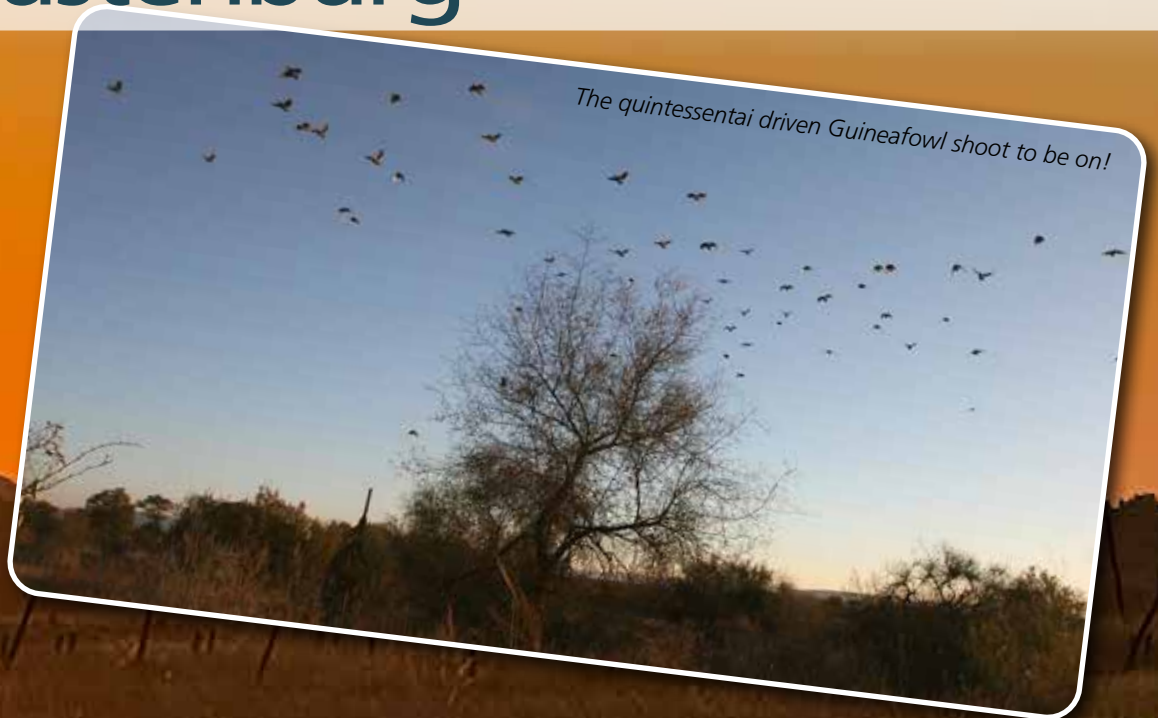
Join us on these fabulous Official shoots next season! See the dates in next year's shooting calendar, out in early February.

Below from left: Dr Byron Rudman, James Combrinck, Gawie Combrinck. Background image: Richard Curtis with Theo, Kaptein & Korporaal. Below Right: Brad Smith & Johan Bam.

Official Shoots...



The Rustenburg



The quintessential driven Guinea fowl shoot to be on!

*Below: David Taylor, Below right: Rian Strydom, Bottom left: Edward Vorster & Jean Polson.
Bottom right: The catering at the Rustenburg is mouth-watering to say the least.*



Official Shoots... The Rustenburg continued



Background photograph: Jacques Naude about to take a Guinea. Left: Proper spurs on this cock bird. Below: Edward Vorster taking the incoming Guineafowl. Right: Corrie Jordaan in his element.



Jakkals Bothma with a beautiful Crested Francolin



Upland birds & Driven Guinea fowl



Tyler Lillico shot like a champ! ... as always!



Relaxing after a long day. Left to right: Ruben Strydom, Jakkals Bothma, Rian Strydom & Derek Garton.



Carlos von Engel always first attending his dog.



Oliver Harmer and Frans van Wyk with a bunch of birds

Members in the field...

Andrew & Tanya Toy at the Kendal



A good late afternoon shoot at the Kendal



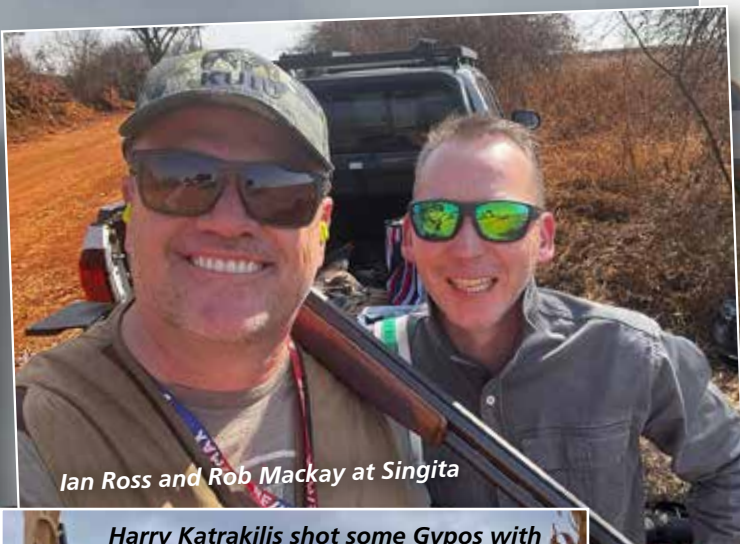
Anthony Coward & Thomas Ochsenbein at Singita



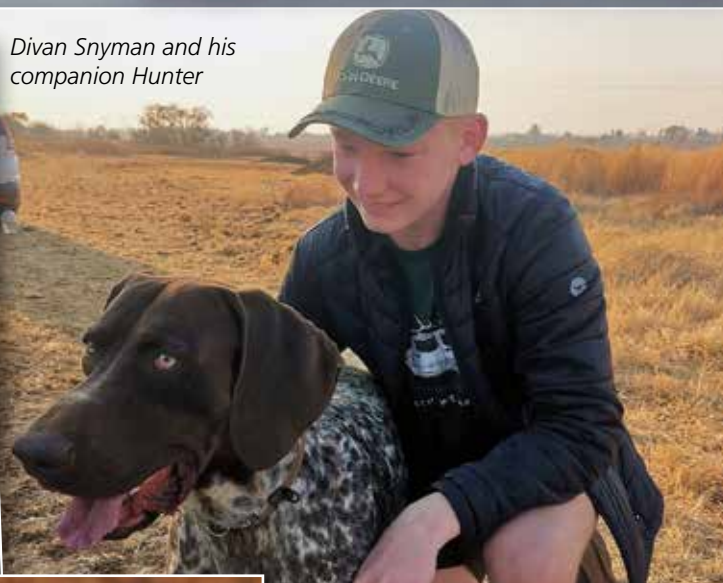
Philipp Schulz, Neil Swart, Craig Sweet and Tim Martin on a Redwing shoot with Ourano Pointers.

From left: Paul van Niekerk, Paul Boyers, Gerhard Laubscher, Ryan Hammond, Tim Babich Greywing shooting with Rob Stretton of Stormberg Elangeni Safaris





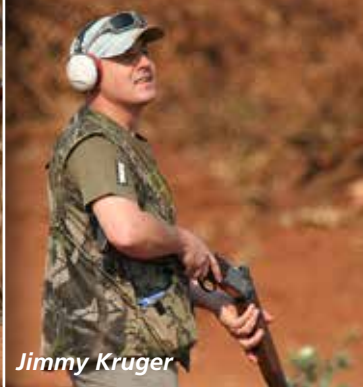
Ian Ross and Rob Mackay at Singita



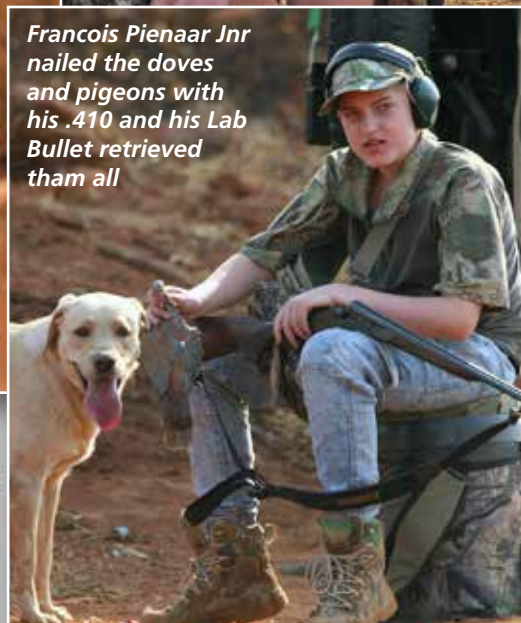
Divan Snyman and his companion Hunter



Harry Katrakilis shot some Gypsos with his beautiful GSP Molly-Moon



Jimmy Kruger



Francois Pienaar Jnr nailed the doves and pigeons with his .410 and his Lab Bullet retrieved them all



Julie Lakin and Roco enjoying the Singita venue



Michael Anderson & Roland Boesch on high flights at Singita

Official Events... Timbavati Course for members

Members attended the advanced handgun and SLR shooting and animal tracking course during July, as advertised in the calendar hosted and instructed by friend and member, and super qualified Andreas Liebenberg. As always, a valuable and unforgettable experience. Below: Andreas & Mark Schuurmans on the handgun range and team shoot drills below right.





Below: Jacobus Bothma enjoying the SLR training with his tactical shotgun.
Left: The Team!



Team clearing



Adam Speedy – what an extremely competent member



Members received handgun, SLR, night training, CQB and basic Budjinkan training



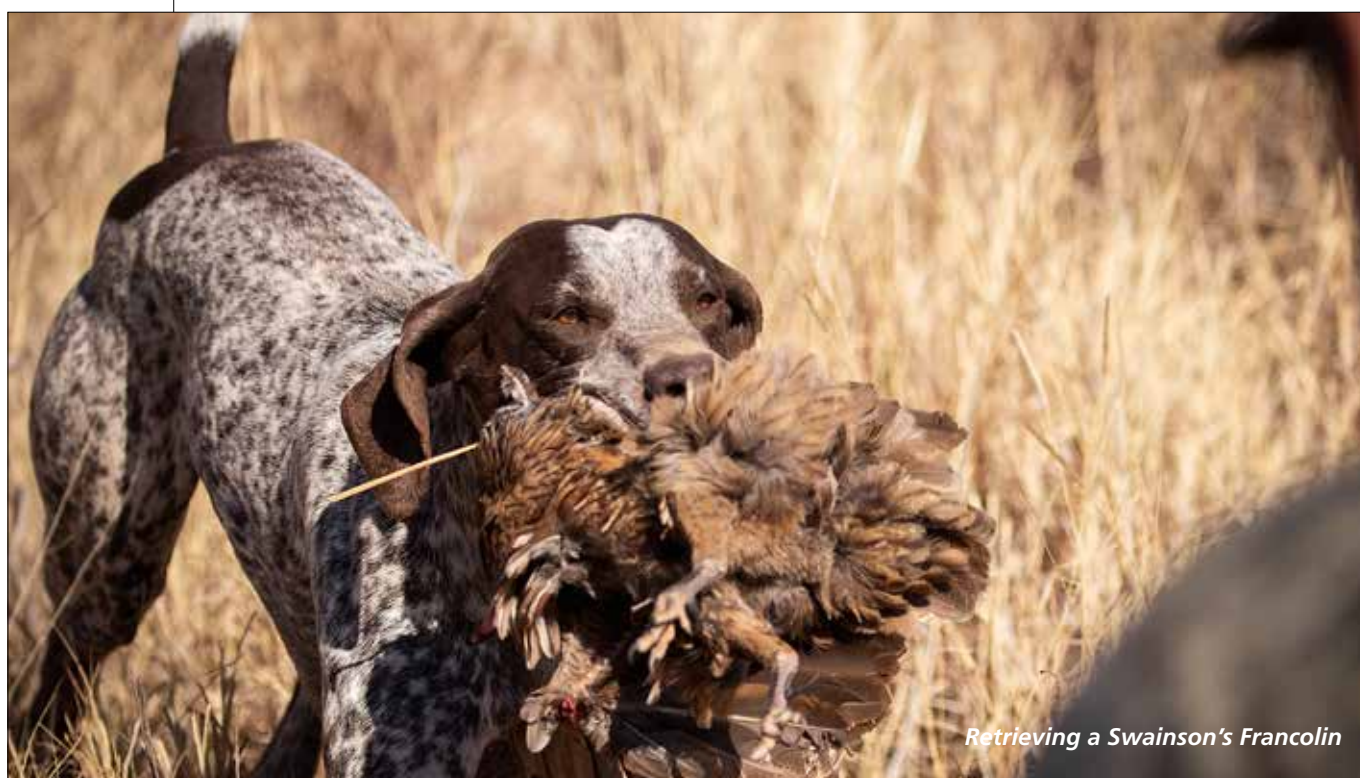
Alan going through the SLR module



The handgun instruction is of the best in the world!

2024 GSP Field Trial Results

The Tvl HPR Field Trial Club's Field Trials for German Short-haired Pointers was a great success with 27 of the top dogs from all over the country competing in the Club's 72nd Field Trial.



Retrieving a Swainson's Francolin

by Dr P.J. Viljoen
Photographs by Lenka Znamenackova

Field trialling – where efficient hunting and the standard of good dogs and sportsmanship is the norm. Some of dogs were nothing short of spectacular! Some of the experienced dogs and handlers showed exceptional skill, teamwork, and precision on wild birds in the

bushveld terrain.

From ground covering ranging, exceptional scent detection to flawless points and impressive retrieves, these dogs often left the judges and spectators in awe.

Congratulations to everyone who participated – you made this event a huge success!

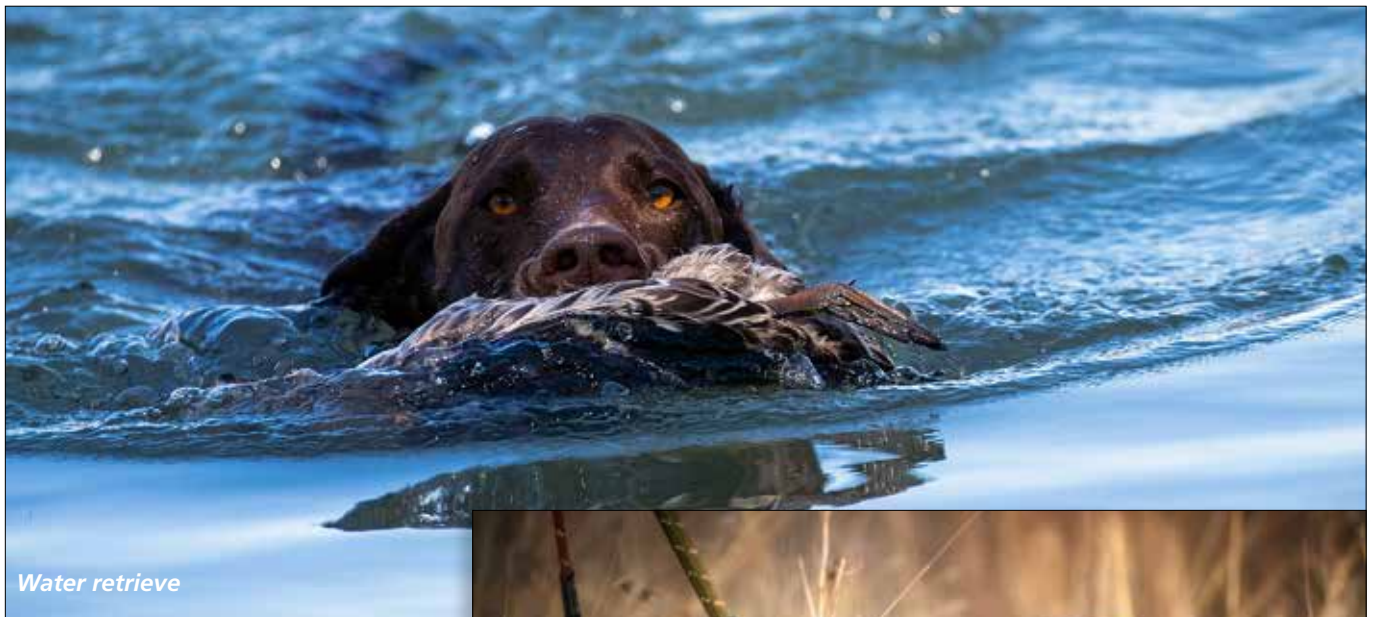
These Field Trials played a major role in maintaining and improving the standard of the GSP in South Africa. In fact, most of those characteristics that you admire so much about your GSP are as a result of selection of dogs identified at Field Trials, albeit with some dogs it was generations back. Whether you have a couch dog or a Field Trial Champion, that fantastic temperament and human affiliation all have their origin from Field Trial selected

whose dogs were the best hunters, much like we brag about our dogs today. To make it uniform and fair, a set of practical hunting rules were devised, and objective and qualified judges were appointed. The rules were devised to reflect efficient hunting to determine the best hunting dogs on that day.

Qualification of judges were also standardised and today it takes on average seven years to qualify as a senior or chief judge in our Club.

English Pointers at Irene, Pretoria. In 1985 the first Field Trial for German Short-haired Pointers was held by the Tvl HPR Field Trial Club in Parys, Orange Free State. Ever since, our Club has held Field Trials every year for Hunt, Point and Retrieve dogs.

During the Field Trials a dog's hunting desire, scenting ability, work rate, pointing, presenting for the gun, backing, retrieving and discipline are tested and evaluated and compared to the other dogs compet-

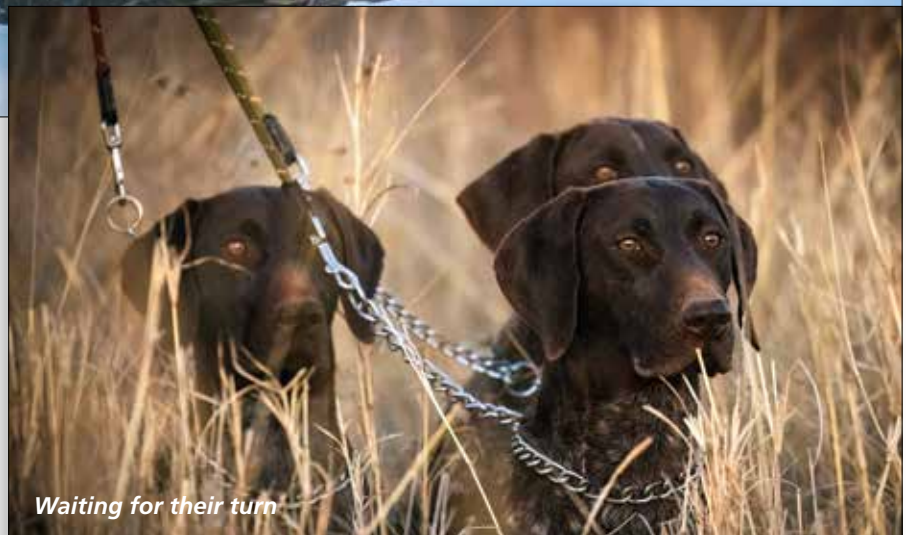


Water retrieve

dogs in South Africa and from the Tests in Germany. On the other hand many of the bad traits in some GSPs have their origin from a breeder's subjective selection.

Before we come to the results, something about field trials in general. There is often a misconception regarding field trials, which are often fuelled by breeders and trainers who perhaps are not well informed, or do not really have up to standard dogs, or do not really understand the training of gundogs. As we all know, our children and our dogs are the best in the world and there is no way we can be totally objective about our own dogs. Doing Tests and Field Trials are the only means to be objective about selecting the best dogs.

Let us explain: Formal field trials for bird dogs started more than 100 years ago by hunters who bragged



Waiting for their turn

The Field Trials enable us to identify the top dogs with which we can breed to improve the breed. The only difference between our trials and real hunting is that two top marksmen do the shooting instead of the handler, for obvious reasons.

The first Field Trials in South Africa were held in 1908 by the South African Field Trial Club mainly for

ing. Dogs that chased birds or other game, stealing another dog's point or retrieve or are gun shy etc., are eliminated from the competition.

The dogs work in pairs (braces) and their primary function is to locate gamebirds by scent and then to point the bird so that the hunter can move into position. After the shot the dog must retrieve the dead



Competitors and officials

bird for the hunter. It follows that the dog with the best 'nose' and the best working rate will find the most birds and the dogs with the best manners will present more birds for the hunter.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that most of a hunting dog's hunting ability comes from his parents and is therefore genetic. That is why the right breeding is so important.

One cannot just put two German Short-haired Pointers together and then expect a good hunting dog. Yes, training also plays a role but the best training in the world cannot get a useless dog to hunt. Here also, genetics plays a role in that a hard-headed or over sensitive dog will be much harder to train. Therefore, it follows that genetically trainable dogs will also tend to do well in field trials.

We therefore would like to appeal to all breeders of German Short-haired Pointers to make sure that your breeding material have at least passed the minimum requirements for a German Short-haired Pointer, namely the Working or Natural Ability Test, but preferably also have a Field Trial record. In so doing you will contribute to the standard of the GSP in South Africa.

The buyer also has a responsibility, towards the standard in South Africa; make sure that both parents have working certificates to proof that they come from working lines. *Caveat emptor.*



Results of the TvI HPR field trial club's August 2024 trials – Springbok Flats.

Plenty of gamebirds in a typical bushveld trial with an abundance of francolin, guineafowl, quail, long grass and thick bush, which makes for super hunting and close ranging dogs. Scenting conditions vary throughout the day, with the best scenting during the dusty and hot midday section. According to the chief judge, the standard was high, but discipline was often lacking. Seventy-five percent of the dogs in the open stake lost due to a lack of proper discipline and not due to a lack of hunting standard. Cool camp-fire evenings and camaraderie completed the picture. It is Basjan's second win, which now makes him South Africa's latest field trial champion. A remarkable feat, considering that last year in September the vet fought to save Basjan's life after he was poisoned, which left him with a lot of nerve-end damage.

Open stake

- 1st Slang Viljoen's GSP dog Jagblits Basjan
- 2nd Stephan Buys' GSP dog von Jagdwebel Cruiser
- 3rd not awarded

Maiden stake

- 1st Karl Dedekind's GSP dog von Jagdwebel Lexie
- 2nd Johan Meyer's GSP bitch Stormberg Vygie

Derby stake

- 1st not awarded
- 2nd Karl Dedekind's GSP bitch dog von Jagdwebel Holly
- 3rd Lothar Dedekind's GSP bitch Jagdwebel Missy (handled by Karl Dedeking)

Com: Frederick Cillier's GSP bitch Matotland Dixie.

Gun's choice: Slang Viljoen's GSP dog Jagblits Basjan

Best chase: Brits the warthog who chased the living daylights out of Mossie.

Best camaraderie: Stephan Buys and Cruiser

Most promising dog: Hannes Davel's Jagblits Fiela.

Best first time handler: Morné Marx

Great thanks to all the judges, guns, field stewards, competitors and, of course, the farm owners.

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Cast & Blast...

"Spots of time"

What draws us to adventure travel? Is it the promise of the unexpected, those unanticipated moments that throw us off balance and make us reconsider what we thought we knew?

by Gustav Vermaas

This particular 10-week journey began in Alaska and ended in Toronto, but as with all great adventures, it wasn't defined by its start or finish – it was shaped by everything that happened in between.

Originally, we had planned a multi-activity trip to Alaska, Western Canada, and the Big Sky States near Yellowstone, focusing mostly on hiking, with a bit of kayaking, golf, and hunting sprinkled in. But that all changed when an old friend made an offhand remark that completely recalibrated my thinking: "You can't go to Alaska and not catch salmon." That single statement shifted the entire focus of our trip. We started thinking about what we hadn't done before, and slowly, the adventure evolved into what Americans call a "C&B" – a Cast and Blast.

There was just one problem: I'd never fly fished in my life. Fortunately, many of my golf and wingshooting friends are avid anglers, so my already packed hunting season was squeezed even tighter to accommodate a few fishing excursions. A borrowed rod soon became a permanent fixture in my Prado, and my dog Roga got used to me practicing my casts at the end of our walks. The only thing that puzzled him was when we finally reached some water and the rod came out – he'd stare at the sky, confused about why this strange-looking "shot-



gun" wasn't bringing down any ducks.

Fast forward six months, and the journey was about to begin. After 39 hours of travel – 29 of which were in the air – we landed safely in Anchorage, Alaska: the Last Frontier.

For a long time, Alaska has been seen as an exotic destination where only those with deep pockets could hunt for big game like brown bears, moose, caribou, and Dall sheep. But hunting for upland birds in Alaska was almost unheard of. That's changing now, and the secret is out. Ptarmigan hunting tops the list for many traveling hunters, but Alaska offers much more than just ptarmigan. In addition to ptarmigan, you can hunt the four grouse types being Ruffed, Sharp-tailed, Spruce and Sooty grouse – all in uncrowded



coverts that rival the best hunting spots in other states.

It's impossible to think of upland hunting in Alaska without ptarmigan and Alaska has three species: Willow, white-tailed, and rock ptarmigan. Rock ptarmigan will hold up in some of the highest elevations.

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Willow ptarmigan can be found as soon as you break past the tree line, and white tails tend to like the elevation in between. In a simplistic sense, anywhere there's a mountain you can find ptarmigan. Hunting in Alaska is as vast as the landscape itself, and while grouse hunting is tough in the winter, that's when ptarmigan hunting truly shines. The best time is February to March when heavy snowfall pushes the birds to lower elevations. Covering ground is essential, and you'll need to be prepared to hike for miles – snowshoes or skis are a must in the deep snow.

But back to our journey.

Our guide, from Drifting on the Fly, was ready when we arrived, and Johan, who had joined us on the

in a matter of weeks. For all these reasons, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game calls sockeye the “most economically important species of salmon in Alaska.” And this all makes Alaska the perfect destination for anglers from all walks of life.

On a cold morning, we set out for our first day of fishing on the Kenai River. Surprise number one: salmon stop eating once spawning season starts. Scott had all the right gear and quickly trained us in the “flossing” technique. Also known as “flipping,” flossing involves positioning yourself in the river and allowing your line to drift downstream through the path of sockeye salmon swimming upstream. Unlike conventional fishing methods, flossing aims to hook these fish in

Dolly Varden trout keeping our fly rods busy.

Day two was something else entirely – a fly-in to Crescent Lake accessible only by Seaplane. Crescent Lake, in the heart of the Chigmit Mountains, offers outstanding fishing and bear viewing opportunities. Salmon run up the Crescent River each summer and Bears travel the shoreline of the lake and river in search of their next meal. Crescent Lake is a spectacular and wild place. The 40-minute flight was an experience in itself and it didn't take long before we were on a sandbank, fly fishing for trout.

Twenty minutes into the catch, Sue hooked a nice trout. But the fish's thrashing attracted an unexpected visitor – a brown bear. The bear clearly had no idea who it was dealing with. As any South African would say, “Hulle weet nie wat ons weet nie.”

Sue wasn't about to let her first fish slip away.

Now picture the scene. The bear is right by our boat and waist-deep in water. Sue, laser-focused on keeping her trout on the barbless fly, is 30 meters away. The guide and I are another 20 meters further, trying to make sense of the situation.

One thing I've learned over the years—always trust the guide.

Our conversation went like this:

“Bill, do you have a gun?”

“Yes.”

“Do we need it?”

“Maybe.”

“Where is it?”

“In the boat.”

“S*%^ Bill, the bear's between us and the boat!”

“Yay?”

In the end, some huddling and serious shouting scared the bear off.

In the chaos, we even managed to snap a few photos. In that moment, we all looked exactly how we felt – experiencing the unanticipated.

For a fleeting moment, we were just... there.

This was day three of our journey. I thought, “I'm ready to head back to South Africa – nothing we do here will top this.” Or so I thought.

Ahead on our journey, we still had the Big sky states of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.



previous Texas hunting trip in 2022, flew in from Naples. The stage was set for two days of fishing before we joined G Adventures for two weeks of hiking, camping, and kayaking. The plan was simple: partake in the annual Sockeye run, then focus on the trout that follow the spawning salmon.

Salmon fishing is a quintessential Alaskan experience. Southeast Alaska sees about 120,000 sport anglers catch close to a million salmon annually. With five species of Pacific salmon, the state is an angler's paradise.

In the Bristol Bay watershed in southwestern Alaska, you'll find the largest sockeye salmon run in the world. Naturally, Bristol Bay is also home to the world's largest commercial sockeye salmon fishery, where about 46% of the world's sockeye is harvested. Anywhere from 10-30 million salmon are caught in the area

the mouth, not by the fish actively hunting the fly. It sounded simple enough, but after two hours without a single fish, we began to have doubts. Salmon were swimming all around us, but we just couldn't hook one. Then, finally, my rod came alive. The salmon darted left and right, and I was sure this one was mine – until the line went limp. It was gone.

In the book “A river runs through it”, Maclean refers to what the poet William Wordsworth calls “spots of time.” Maclean says “...it is really fishermen who experience eternity compressed into a moment. No one can tell what a spot of time is, until suddenly the whole world is a fish and the fish is gone.”

Eventually, we got the hang of it. The first salmon landed, and soon the second, third, and more followed. Fishing for trout that afternoon was just as rewarding, with Rainbow and

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Regular kennels may not understand the needs of a working gun dog, and even small mistakes can interfere with your dog's instincts, potentially ruining their hunting abilities.

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f schatziwingshooting

Images from our 2024 *LRSC events*



Right: Johan Maree won two calibre divisions this year (see page 8 for results).

Below: Kristina Gallow won the .308 calibre division outright! Middle right: Junior Leo van Vuuren won the junior divisions. Below: Shaun Ellithorne shooting in one of the many divisions he competes in. He also won the sought-after Overall Points competition for 2024. Sometimes when shade eludes the shooting slab one has to improvise!





Left: Corporate Training with members and friends. Below left: Christa Bowles, one of our top lady shooters ready to engage the targets. Below: Christiaan de la Rey & Cliff Alexander taking a break between divisions. Bottom: Member Sam Monkoe getting kit ready.



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Members hunting & shooting

2024

Left top: Philipp Schulz with a massive Aoudad hunted in Carnarvon.

Below: James Gordon with his son Nick, who shot this mountain reedback ram outside Tarkastad, Eastern Cape, in July 2024



Arnold Slabbert with a trad bow harvest



Clyde Ferguson and GSP companion Milo on an evidently good goose shoot near Gariep



Jean Struweg with a nice Mountain Reedback



*Tim Babich's retriever Lilly working like a champ.
photo by Stuart Harley.*



Philip Jacobs with a beautiful central Karoo Kudu



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SA Wingshooters Association is truly the one association for all shooting disciplines. With us you can do it all. We offer shooting events and venues in all divisions, including shotgun, rifle, handgun, semi-auto rifle, long range target shooting and multi-gun sport shooting...



The SA Wingshooters Association has been accredited by the CFR as a Dedicated Hunting Association, since 2004.

In fact, we are the second oldest accredited association in South Africa.

We have current members, many of whom regularly participate in the various sport shooting disciplines available and thus have a definite need to be able to grant such members the Dedicated Sport Shooting status, in order to enable them to fully participate in their chosen sport.

So, we are both an accredited sport shooting and hunting association, as we have members who want dedicated status, but who do not hunt.

We currently offer the following sport shooting disciplines to our members, either at our own facilities/ranges, or at any range country-wide and internationally:

PSP (Postal Shooting Programme) target shooting for handguns, manual rifles and self-loading rifles. Various target shooting tables/disciplines are offered, which can be practiced at any range world-wide. All our targets are available on our website.

Clay Target Shooting – all members have access to Clay Target

Shooting using shotguns at any accredited clay target range or club (CTSASA, COMPAK, etc.) country-wide.

Long Range Rifle Shooting – we have our own dedicated long range rifle shooting range in Gauteng, where members compete over shooting distances ranging from 100m to 1900m. This range also affords us the opportunity to offer a 2-gun sport shooting discipline (handgun and rifle combination shooting with movement and transitions), starting at 10m for handguns, to 100m and then up to 600m for self-loading rifles, with official division categories for calibres and types of rifles.

Handgun Shooting – we offer handgun shooting, again at our LRSC range, or any other range world-wide via the PSP, on our 17 target steel pistol range with targets from 10m to 100m, and includes a 6-plate duelling tree.

Multi-gun (4-gun, 3-gun & 2-gun) sport shooting – we offer multi gun events, where self-loading rifles, handguns and bolt action rifles are used, at our LRSC range and elsewhere

Membership of the LRSC gives you additional membership of the following sub-clubs:

- The LRSC (Long range shoot-

ing club for rifles in both Bolt Action and Self-loading rifle, which are to distinct separate divisions).

- The .22PSBC (Precision Small-Bore Club)

- The TPS (Tactical Precision Shooting) multi-gun club for 3-gun and 2-gun shooting and competition

- The LR Open Sight club (Open Sight rifle division)

- The LR Handgun and Revolver sub-club – for handgun shooting in various divisions.

The Long Range Shooting Club (LRSC) and the PSP (Postal Shooting Programme) are part of SA Wingshooters and are subject to its constitution, disciplinary codes and rules of ethical conduct.

Lastly, as you know, the SA Wingshooters Association has R20-million liability insurance to cover the Association, with each individual member also having R20-million liability insurance as individual cover, for all shooting-related activities.

We are proud to be an association that offers all forms of shooting and hunting to our members. Thanks for your support!





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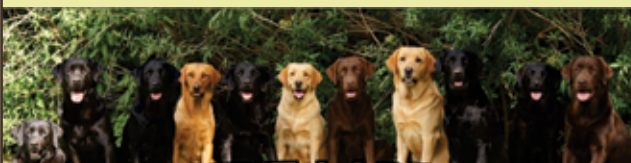


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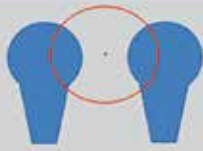
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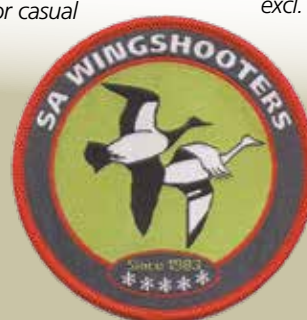


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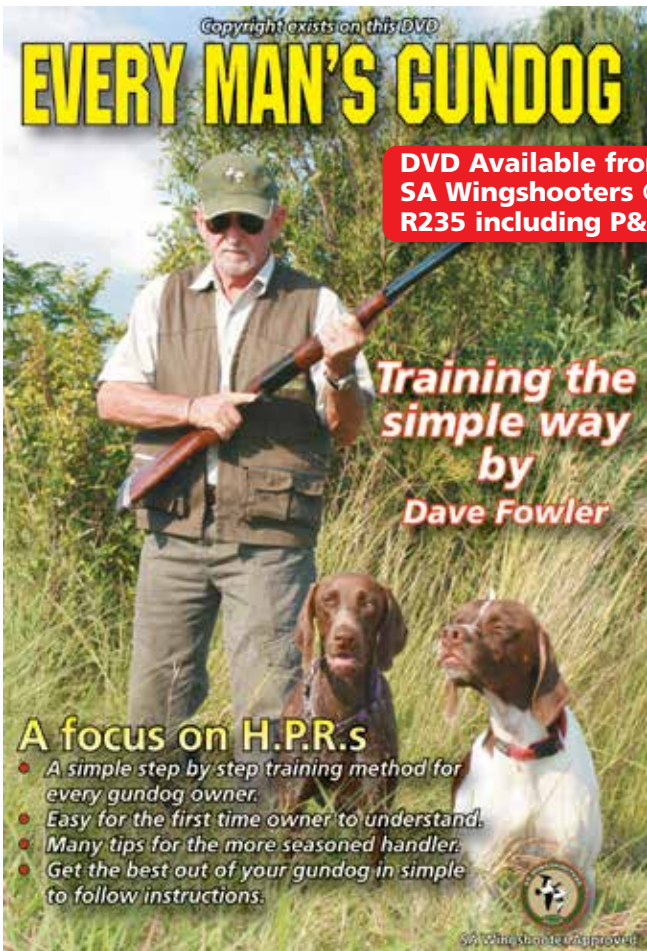
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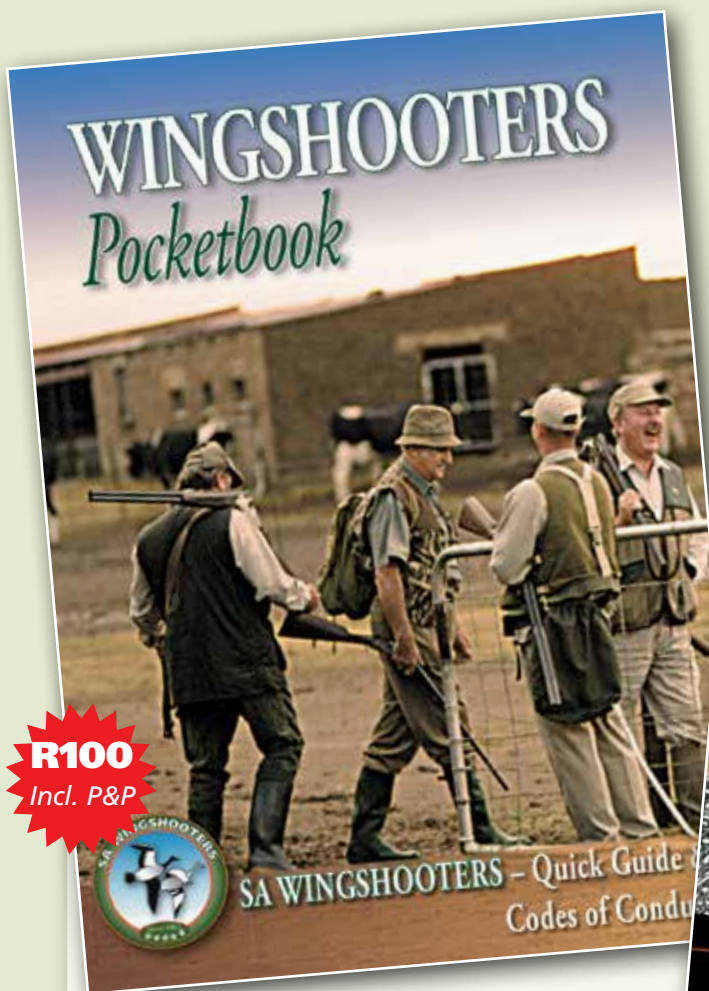
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— Dr Alan Kloock

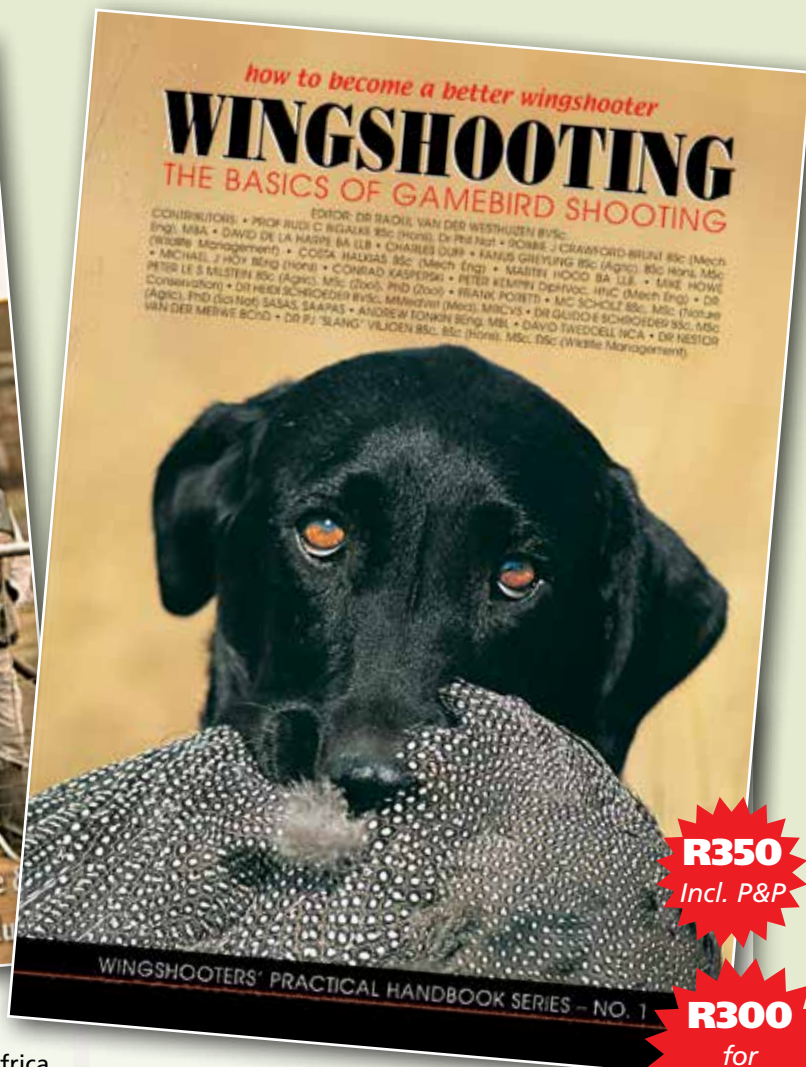
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Chairman: SA Wingshooters



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For the first time, this book brings together the collective know-how and experience in game bird shooting of many of the leading wingshooters in Southern Africa — be they scientists, field trialists, gun dog experts, veterinarians or lay people — who all share the passion for wingshooting and the joy of the great African Outdoors. The section on shotgun marksmanship alone makes the handbook worth having. In this section the greatest South African sporting clay shooter ever and 20 times Springbok tells how to shoot any target under any condition. The handbook is edited by the co-founder and first chairman of the SA Wingshooters Association, Raoul van der Westhuizen.

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Complete a report (you can download it from our website: www.wingshooters.org.za) and e-mail to: anel@wingshooters.co.za or fax to 086 211 5111, or you can email us a report listing 2 activities you did during the year. Dedicated activity reports are mandatory, by law, for all qualified dedicated members!

New Member Online Portal

For Dedicated Activity Reports & Firearm Licence Renewal Notices –

Firstly, It's nearing the end of the season, thus all Dedicated members need to send in their dedicated hunting activity report. **It's a legal (Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000) requirement for Dedicated Hunters and Dedicated Sports persons.** You can send any hunting activities report, whether it was plains game, bird hunting or range shooting and includes rifles, shotgun, handgun use, etc. You only need to list two (2) activities for the year. Remember to send us a report before end October, as we have to send a 'members activity report' to the SAPS every year in November, listing all the members who did not send in a report.

Our on-line member portal –

You can do it on our new member online portal. Please go to our on-line member area and 'Register' with us:

<https://members.wingshooters.co.za>

Once we've approved your registration request, you can 'Login' and start to use this service for your dedicated reporting and to list your firearms renewal dates for our renewal reminder service. Call the office if you don't know what to do! Tel: 071 132 5450.

You can also enter your dedicated hunting/sport shooting activities report online, on our website! Go to www.wingshooters.org.za and click on the "Dedicated Hunters" menu and complete the form right at the bottom of the page. It's quick and easy!

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SA WINGSHOOTERS 2024

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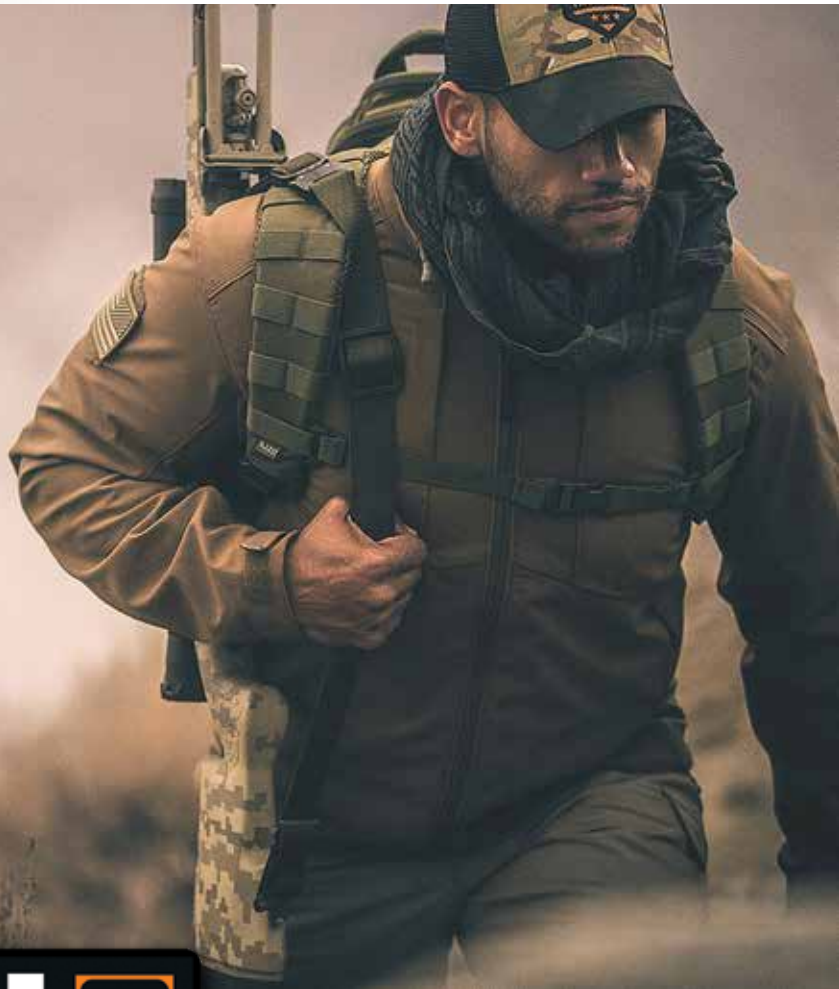
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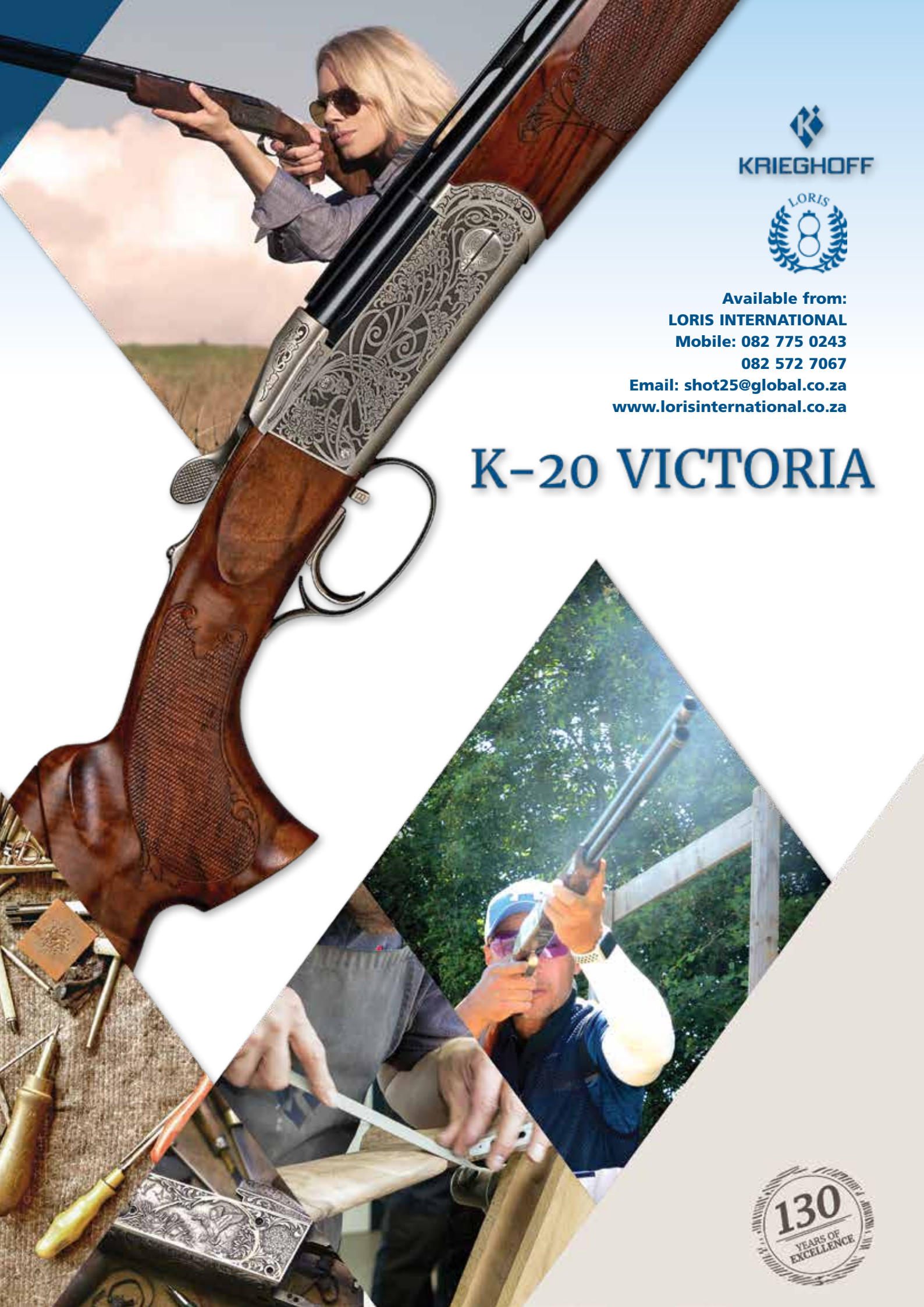
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