

# 2008 SSAA NSW SHOT Expo

by Technical Advisor Brendan Atkinson



An aerial view of a section of the bustling Expo.

The SSAA SHOT Expo for 2008 was held at the Sydney Showgrounds, Homebush, over the weekend of May 24 and 25. During the two days, a total of just more than 7000 people passed through the turnstiles. This was a pleasing result for the organisers.

Putting this type of function together is a massive task, with all sorts of problems that arise before and during the event to tax the patience and expertise of the people in charge. The buck stopped with Expo Coordinator Michael Gill, who worked tirelessly to ensure that things happened when and where they were supposed to. Michael was ably supported by a team of SSAA volunteers, who ran the shooting ranges, collected the entry tickets, manned a lot of the SSAA stands (such as St Marys Shooting Centre and SSAA H&C) and generally helped out. In fact, there were volunteers from not only the SSAA, but many other associations.

People attending the Expo were able to have a try at air rifle and air pistol shooting, as well as archery, and it was pleasing to see many juniors joining in.

With around 3000 sq m of floor space and in excess of 90 stands, there were plenty of exhibits to see covering just about all aspects of shooting, hunting and outdoor trades, including a display of very desirable ATVs. A total of 430 exhibitor passes were handed out. Some stands, such as Horsley Park Gun Shop also incorporated representatives from major distributors, so shooters could talk one-on-one with the guys that bring 'the good stuff' in. I noticed Brad Webb from Nioa and Stewart Wong from Winchester in among the throng. A throng it was and, at times, it was very crowded around some of the better-known product stands. Even with the 3m aisles, there were some 'traffic jams'.

Those looking for bargains were not disappointed, particularly on Sunday afternoon when many dealers dropped prices



Training up the juniors.



Juniors being supervised on the shooting range.



The archery range proved to be very popular.

considerably so as not to have to cart things back home again. Those prepared to buy bulk items such as ammunition did very well.

It seemed that riflescopes were everywhere, from ultra expensive down to the bargain basement stuff - something to please everybody. Knives were also popular, from hunting styles to collecting to beautifully handmade swords.

Ray Mack from Earmold Australia drew crowds as he fitted people with his well-known personalised earplugs. This involved injecting a quick-drying compound into the ear, which takes up the exact shape, and I can confirm that they are very effective and comfortable to wear.

Extravision Australia has lots of good stuff on show. They donated a Yukon digital night and day binocular (worth around \$900) as a prize for filling out a survey about the Expo. The night and day binocular prize was won by Brian Herbert.



From left: the SSAA Merchandise team of Kris Lawn, Ron Bryant, Megan Arndell and Vikki Bourke.

SSAA National President Bob Green surrounded by Australian Shooter editorial staff, Brendan Atkinson (left) Judy Ward and Kaye Jenkins.



The Beretta stand had Olympic gold medallist Russell Mark in attendance and he was kept busy with a multitude of questions and, of course, lots of photo opportunities.

SSAA Media & Publications was represented by Associate Editor Kaye Jenkins, Production Coordinator Judy Ward and myself.

Of great interest to shooters were the booths by the NSW Police Firearms Branch and the Australian Customs Service. Here, shooters were able to ask questions one-on-one and not just rely on hearsay. It was good to be able to clarify a few points with the Customs Service as to the import of certain items pertaining to shooting.

During the weekend, I visited as many stands as possible to obtain comments and suggestions from the exhibitors. The following are just a few of the ones received.

### Lapua

Andrew McDonald from DW Custers said that he felt the Expo was a success and he was keen to have the VihtaVuori and Lapua name out there on public display. He has attended the past four events and had good sales at each.

### Safari

Gary from Safari was very pleased with the event and they shifted a large amount of stock, from scopes to bullets to firearms and just about everything in between. A \$1700 Miroku shotgun was given away to a lucky Safari shopper in a prize draw at the end of the event.

### YorkOptical

Glen Jobson from YorkOptical said that this Expo was his company's first and that he was very happy with the overall result. Having a stand near the food stall was a bit of a plus, as those standing in the food queue could see his range of optical products for shooters, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

### Wild Dog

Wild Dog stocks had an interesting display of their quality products and Don Caswell was pleased to have had the chance to talk to so many people about precision rifle stocks.



### Horsley Park Gun Shop

The Horsley Park Gun Shop display was one of the biggest at this year's Expo. It was in the shape of a rectangular enclosed area with a turnstile at the entry end. At most times over the weekend it was jam-packed with eager shoppers and David Abela was very pleased with the results. Various prizes were given out over the weekend, including a Winchester 10-gun safe, a Lanski knife sharpening kit, Leupold binoculars and a Badlands backpack.

### Lightforce

Steve Smith from Lightforce was satisfied with the way things went and although they were not there in a retail capacity, he was able to demonstrate some of the range of scopes and lighting equipment. There was also a display of Ace Precision Rifles, produced at the Lightforce headquarters in Adelaide.

### Parabellum Imports/ Victorian Arms

David Sandground from Parabellum Imports/Victorian Arms was pretty happy with the overall event, as they have a range of new products about to be released onto the Australian market. Sure, it's a hassle to bring all the gear required up from Melbourne, but the end rewards were worth it.

### Frontier Arms

Mike Papps from Frontier Arms, and his three sons, were kept very busy over the two days explaining their range of firearms and accessories. Mike, who was a world-class pistol shooter, enjoyed the chance to deal face-to-face with clients.



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## Dahlgren Trading

Lars Dahlgren had an interesting display of axes by Grandsfors, considered by those in the know to be some of the best axes in the world. When I spoke with him, he was pleased with the response from the public at the Expo.

## C&A Canvas

Chris Boon was busy fitting people with various bits of camo gear every time I passed by, but he had time to comment that the Expo had gone well and sales had been steady.

## Kizlyar Knives

Zobair Bary from Kizlyar Knives had

nothing but praise for the Expo and during the course of the event, he donated four of his quality knives as prizes. Lucky winners took away a Scorpion M, Sobol skinner, U-5 utility knife and a Bars folding knife. Kizlyar knives have been at the past four SHOT Expos.

All in all, the 2008 SHOT Expo was a great success and the SSAA hopes to see even bigger crowds in Melbourne at the same time next year. ●

*Note: For further information about any of the companies and products mentioned here, contact your local gunshop or dealer.*



SSAA National President Bob Green mingling with the Single Action shooters.



Ray Mack from Earmold fits another customer.



Greg Chan from Beretta testing a spotting scope.



Storm rifle cases display.



The Roger Vardy stand with stock timber on show.

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