

News from IWA, Nurnberg 2013

Once again I attended the IWA trade fair held annually in Nurnberg Germany, this is the most important gun trade fair held in Europe each year, although dwarfed by the SHOT Show held in USA it suits us better as all of our suppliers are based in Europe and they come to the Fair to display their new and existing products. Most of our suppliers and indeed many others release their new lines to the World market at the show so it is easy to see the new products all under the one roof.

As you enter the complex of 8 very large halls (up from 7 last year) at each of the 3 entry points you find a pianist on a Grand Piano playing to entertain while you are getting your ID recorded and a ticket issued, the main ticket sales foyer is about the size of a typical Australian gun show display area complete with a fountain, a magazine stand where you can freely browse various trade publications, a coffee shop and two areas to leave your jacket and luggage etc. if you wish, as the outside temperature was under 5 degrees with snow on the ground this year, you need a jacket outside but the halls are more like 20-25 degrees you need to strip off before walking the halls. The deer was just a bit of decoration in the foyer that appealed to this visitor!



This year the organisers moved many of our suppliers to new locations within the 8 halls try to get visitors to go to halls they may not have in the past, the re-arrangement confusion was compounded by the unusual hexagonal floor plan of the buildings which can easily get the visitor lost and I did several times!

Pedersoli

Pedersoli showed their new 1886/71 Lever Action Model rifle now available in blued, colour case hardened or stainless steel finishes in 45-70 and 444 Marlin, this rifle was displayed with a range of sights including a "Ghost Ring", a standard buckhorn or a "Picatinny Rail" with a long eye relief scope to allow the top eject design to function. This model is an ideal choice for those who hunt in rough country, the 45-70 or 444 Marlin has adequate power for most hunting in Australia and I would expect it to be of interest to the Sambar hunter or indeed some of the Cowboy action shooters as well for rifle calibre events.

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Also new from Pedersoli was the "Doc Holliday" range of revolvers clearly inspired by the Colt revolver featuring a Birds Beak grip with 4.2" or 5" barrels chambered in 38 Special designed to complement the "Lightning" pump action range now also available in 38 Special specifically for the "Cowboy Action" shooter, this calibre is more pleasant to shoot than some of the more heavily loaded calibres and the revolver is sure to find favour due to its excellent balance and precise trigger system.

Another new item from Pedersoli is a traditional English style double rifle in .450 Nitro Express, we hope to have this model later in the year. There are also some new muzzle loading shotguns with back action locks and a single trigger which we have often been requested.



RWS

Ruag Ammotec, the makers of RWS and Geco ammunition have widened the range of the popular “Geco” branded rifle and handgun ammunition, this is their “no frills” line which uses the same metallurgy in the cases but skips some of the polishing and annealing processes which reduces the price of the product considerably, a number of the RWS ammunition lines have also been reduced in price due to improved production technology and the more favourable exchange rate. The new range of hunting ammunition under the Geco brand is now available in many popular and indeed some of the rarer calibres for various needs, this line is price competitive with other major brands, have a look at the website at www.geco-ammuntion.com for details of the new products.

We will have new stocks of Geco and RWS products next month when our next container arrives from Germany.

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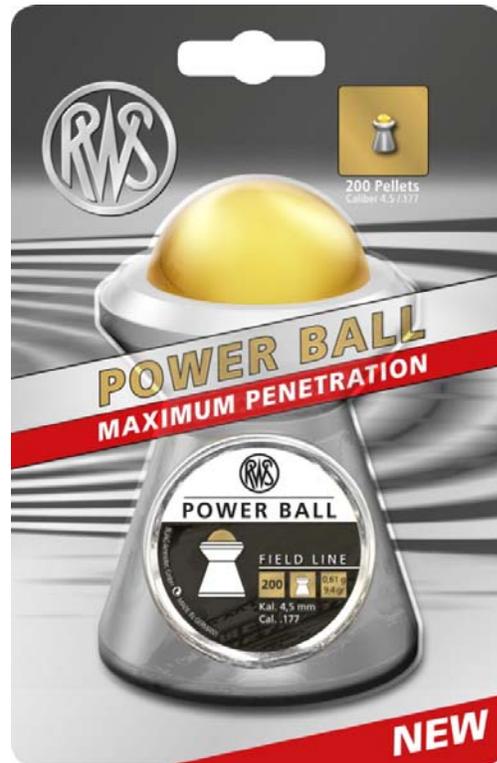
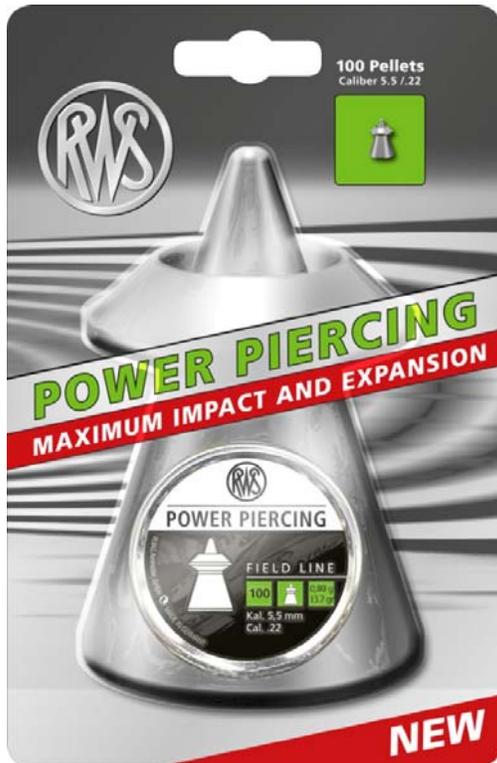
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RWS have also introduced a range of lead free rifle, pistol and shotgun ammunition for use in sensitive areas and indoor training ranges, which could be of interest to some shooting clubs and security trainers.

Also new from RWS is a range of air pellets especially designed for use in the latest PCP and .25 cal air rifles, these pellets are much heavier and more strongly made. New this year are the 0.89 gram 5.5 mm "Power Piercing" pellet with a combination hollow point and cone point, ideal for silhouette shooting and pest control. For the 4.5 mm rifles there is the new "PowerBall".0.61 gram pellet with a coated steel ball embedded in the nose, this pellet features near match accuracy for pest control use.



There are also some new ultra light lead free pellets made from tin and for eco friendly shooting in sensitive locations. These are extra fast due to their lighter weight.

The problem with low grade pellets is the high pressure required to accelerate a pellet to 1250 fps or thereabouts blows the skirt off the pellet as it leaves the barrel, the skirt stabilizes the pellet, without it the head of the pellet will rapidly tumble destroying any hope of accuracy, it matters little if you have the best air rifle made if the pellets fail in use, accuracy is everything. Well constructed pellets are necessary to withstand the greater firing pressure generated in modern air rifles, many shooters try to use cheap inferior pellets and then wonder why their air rifle wont group the size of a dinner plate at 20 metres,

While the RWS range of hunting ammunition maybe more expensive than other brands it offers totally reliable performance in use, the hunt of a lifetime can easily be ruined by inconsistent ammunition which fails to perform at the critical moment, as RWS say "The ammunition counts", have look at their website or download the free "RWS Game Guide" for the Smartphone from the "App Store" for information on the various hunting line rifle and shotshell products available and their recommended uses for various game hunting situations . The new "Silver Selection" range of rifle and shotgun ammunition offers the absolute optimum performance in any weather conditions with increased range, reduced muzzle flash with total reliability in the most extreme weather conditions from the Arctic to the Tropics

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There is also a new range of solid slugs for shotguns; the “Exact” line offers significant accuracy gains over the traditional “Brenneke” designs which have been in use for decades, with the new regulations which permit deer hunting with shotgun slugs these are sure to be of interest.

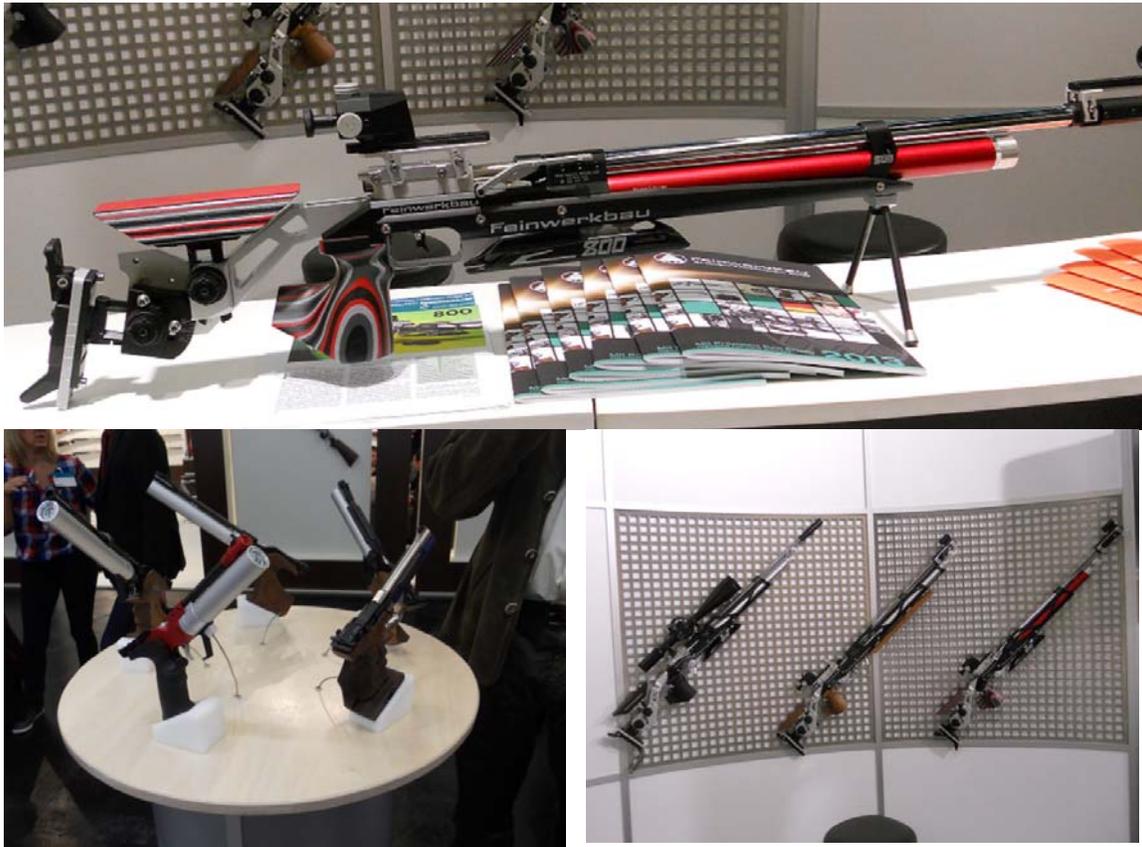
Gehmann

Gehmann, our longest established supplier presented a wide range of new products, Gehmann have over 200 patents for innovations for the target shooter, this company specialises in target shooting and has a well deserved reputation for their products. Of interest is a new translucent front tunnel system which provides a sharper sight picture in low light conditions, another innovation is a modular rear antiglare tube system with many adjustment facilities to optimise your sight picture in many circumstances.



Feinwerkbau

Feinwerkbau have also increased their range this year with some detail changes to existing models, there are now a number of variants to the recently introduced Model 800 air rifle range, there is now a “Benchrest” model which will suit the older shooter wishing to continue to shoot or for wheelchair shooters, there is also a new model 800X which has more adjustment possibilities than the standard 800 model and there is also a new wooden stocked version for club use, the models 700 & 500 continue as a lower priced option for the new shooter or club use.



The P44 air pistol is now available in the short or long models with 4 grip sizes with right or left handed grips, also available is the P58 5 shot version designed for rapid fire practice.

The AW 93 Standard pistol continues largely unchanged apart from some very minor engineering details to improve performance and reliability available in the full weight and lightweight versions.

FWB have continued with the new entry level air pistol the "P11" which is an ambidextrous model aimed at the new pistol shooter or club use. Available in the standard or "Piccolo" size, they said that they have introduced this model to replace the ubiquitous Model 65 first released in 1954 as they cannot economically continue to make parts for a model out of production for over 15 years. This model should suit the new shooter or the club with older guns which can no longer be maintained.

Kurt Thune

Kurt Thune showed a new range of shooting clothing designated as the X.9 line now being used by top shooters, World and Olympic champions, 40% of the medals at the London Olympics went to shooters wearing Kurt Thune gear. Kurt is proud to still be an active shooter having represented Finland at the Olympics some years ago however he puts his shooting knowledge to good use in the design of his product range, all his jackets are proudly made in Finland from the finest materials available.



There is also a new line in shooting jackets and pants branded "Smart" these are new design to replace the "Adventure" jacket and can be supplied as either stock sizes or "made to measure"; these are priced between the excellent value for money "TL2" stock sized jackets and the X9 range.

This year's ISSF rule changes have seen a number of products which have had to be modified; we have ordered a few of the new compliant boots for shooters who have been caught by the new rules.

All Kurt Thune product complies with the ISSF rules extant at the time of shipping, older jackets etc. can be modified however the cost of sending them back and altering them makes it an expensive choice forced upon the shooters by the ISSF's desire to become a TV sport at the Olympics, I wonder if it will have the desired results but we will see in the future, I doubt we will ever see more than a few seconds of our wonderful sport on Australian TV and then I would say only if we had a contender in the Final "Duel" for the Gold.

Other interesting features at the show.

I looked at a wide range of other product much of which could not be sold in Australia, US suppliers seem to be promoting more and more "Tactical Weapons Systems", sniper and assault rifles plus ammunition described as "Tactical Home Defence Munitions" such as solid slug ammo for shotguns and hollow point pistol ammo "to stop home invaders etc" Most of these products look very military and they are also becoming more widespread in the EU market, the Americans label the dozens of variants from air-soft, rimfire and centerfire semi auto rifle styled after the AR-15 and its clones "modern sporting rifles" to me they look much more like military issue firearms which is bound to scare politicians frightened of such things.

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The "Air Soft" lines with > 0.5 joules muzzle energy can also be had in just about any scary looking configuration you want, AK 47, AR-17 MP3, MG42 etc and the locals have war games with them using soft plastic pellets, these very low powered toys are of course a prohibited import here in Australia as they look too scary for our politicians but they are a huge market in the rest of the World.

Silencers where also popular as in many parts of Europe you are required to use one when hunting. We have had to request one of our air rifle suppliers to ship his products without the standard equipment "sound moderator" as they would be a prohibited import as normally sold in most sensible countries!

At the other end of the scale from the air guns etc. are the high grade handmade hunting rifles in various designs, single shot's, double and triple rifles engraved like works of art at very high prices, if you think a Blaser or similar is expensive think again, many of the rifles on offer would start at about \$30000.00 before they started the engraving and gold inlay work etc. I looked at a few single and double rifles in .600 & .700 Nitro Express, I would say these would be ideal for the man who has everything and wants to go on Safari in Africa.

There were plenty of very nice repeaters starting at about \$10,000.00 ex factory, just the thing for shooting pigs from the back of the Ute or on the quad bike in the lignum!

I would be amazed to see any of these high grade guns in an Australian hunting situation, as an example Perrazi was offering a 4 gun set of shotguns in .410, 28#, 20# and 12# for a mere €399,000.00, I am expecting a few of these on the local duck swamp soon!



Plenty of more basic rifles on display starting price around \$500.00 but quite a few around \$50,000.00 too, the wealthy European hunters actually do use these very expensive guns but hunting in most parts of Europe is a wealthy man's sport. Many of the custom gun exhibitors even had dog feeding facilities for the customers who turned up dressed in the typical Germanic hunter

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wear complete with their generally well behaved hunting dogs although there were the odd dog fights in the halls.

There was also a huge range of accessories for every hunting need from the cheapest products from China and Pakistan to the best products of Europe particularly in optics and gunsmiths equipment, stock makers, barrel makers, tool makers, special steel and walnut suppliers abound, anything for the gun trade can be found here, it is truly a major event for the firearms trade. Clothing and accessories is a huge feature of the exhibition, some of the hunting clothes are exquisite, too fancy for me but some of them would be ideal for those days in the mountains when the weather turns nasty.

We try to make a point of attending the fair each year to see the latest developments and talk to our suppliers to find the latest developments for our customers.

One thing that was very evident this year was the scramble for supply of product, I ran into quite a few local dealers looking for product as many of the US suppliers are unable to meet the demand from their home market and many of them have advised their Australian dealers that they are unlikely to get much of some products before 2014.

I hope some of our customers will enjoy the new products we propose to bring to the Australian market this year. We look forward to your enquiries.