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A straight-pull marvel

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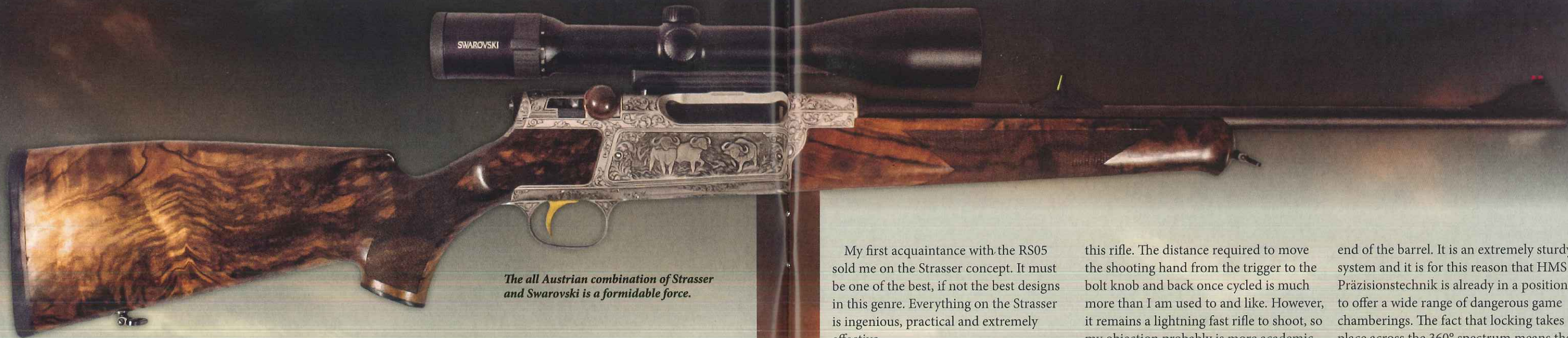
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The all Austrian combination of Strasser and Swarovski is a formidable force.

Strasser RS05 a straight-pull marvel

By Pierre van der Walt

Company history

HMS Präzisionstechnik GmbH, the manufacturer of the Strasser RS05 rifle, is a newcomer on the international firearm scene as it was only founded in 2004. The "HMS" represents the initials of Herbert Strasser, the founder of the company.

HMS Präzisionstechnik developed out of the main company of the Strasser family, Strasser Maschinenbau GmbH. This company was founded in Salzburg in 1947 as a small parts manufacturer by Herbert Strasser. From these humble beginnings Strasser Maschinenbau developed into a high-tech and precision concern that manufactures specialized parts internationally. These includes parts for the satellites of ESA, the European Space Agency.

It was probably inevitable that Strasser Maschinenbau eventually also manufactured parts for hunting rifle manufacturers. It only constituted a small aspect of production, but gradually increased. In this process Herbert's son,

also Herbert, happened to meet Horst Blaser, the designer of the famous Blaser rifle and founder of that company. Horst Blaser, as we know, has a fascination with machinery and precision mass component production and pioneered that concept in the sporting arms industry. Horst Blaser was intrigued by the Strasser Maschinenbau production facilities and after Blaser's sale of his company, Blaser and Strasser began working together.

This resulted in the manufacturing of the Sodia Super Light break-open rifle for the Salzburg based Sodia Jagdwaffen concern in 5,6x50mmR Magnum calibre. This planted the seed with Strasser and Blaser to build hunting rifles and eventually led to the incorporation of HMS Präzisionstechnik in 2004 in the Austrian town Eugendorf.

Horst Blaser then designed a rifle for the company and it became known as the Strasser RS05. The designation indicates the first year of production and a prototype was first exhibited at the IWA Show in Nürnberg, Germany, in 2005. The Strasser was well-received

and production launched in the same year. HMS Präzisionstechnik is a small company with less than 30 employees working for it and until two years ago focused on selling its rifles in central Europe. Two years ago it also began selling the Strasser RS05 rifles in Italy, New Zealand and Australia and since 2014 also in South Africa.

The Strasser RS05 rifle

Even a diehard traditionalist like me have to admit that the switch-barrel, straight-pull, calibre-interchanging Strasser RS05 is a fascinatingly impressive rifle and in a league of its own. For example, barrel clamping is hydraulic, but more about that later.

Although I really, really dislike the looks of modern Germanic rifles such as the Blaser, Merkel, Sauer and Strasser with their metal side panels below the action that interrupt the stock, I have to concede that I admire their ingenuity and that overcomes my aesthetic objections.

My first acquaintance with the RS05 sold me on the Strasser concept. It must be one of the best, if not the best designs in this genre. Everything on the Strasser is ingenious, practical and extremely effective.

The receiver body is unique in that it has two ejection ports on either side of a central integral riflescope base that connects the receiver ring and bridge. This feature provides the Strasser with the capability to ejection right or left, depending on the bolt used. It also employs a fantastically simple and effective method of riflescope mounting and removal which can be affect with one hand while on the move! The return to zero between riflescope removals and replacements in our case was one hundred percent.

The bolt handle protrudes horizontally to the right as is the case with many straight-pull designs and that is the absolute only criticism I can raise against

this rifle. The distance required to move the shooting hand from the trigger to the bolt knob and back once cycled is much more than I am used to and like. However, it remains a lightning fast rifle to shoot, so my objection probably is more academic than constructive.

The bolt proper has a safety on the very tail of the bolt shroud and it functions vertically. That is not only the most convenient place a safety can be situated for both right and left handers, but its function is perfect, silent and utterly reliable as it locks the firing pin directly. Very impressive. It also provides visual confirmation regarding the rifle's state of battery and a red section is visible when the rifle is cocked.

At the forward end of the bolt shaft sits the typical removable bolt head common to all interchangeable calibre rifles. The Strasser's bolt head has four massive locking lugs (quadrants) which expand into the lug recesses in the rear

end of the barrel. It is an extremely sturdy system and it is for this reason that HMS Präzisionstechnik is already in a position to offer a wide range of dangerous game chamberings. The fact that locking takes place across the 360° spectrum means that bolt wobble is reduced, if not eliminated, and an accuracy contributing factor. Since these quadrants lock into the barrel, the RS05 transfers no strain to the receiver.

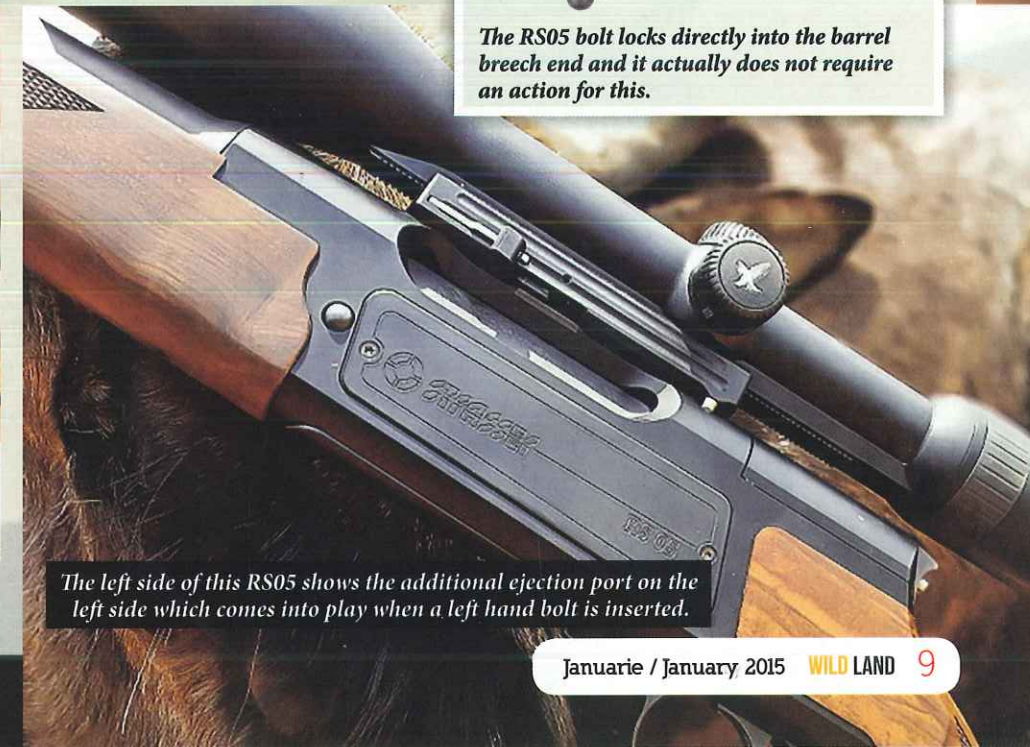
The magazine is removed by cupping the hand under the floorplate and depressing the magazine release buttons on the side of the receiver. The magazine then drops into your hand. It is ergonomic, smooth and unobtrusively impressive. The magazine accommodates and feeds all the calibres currently on offer in the Strasser RS05. Mini and Standard calibre magazines hold three cartridges, while magnum magazines only hold two.



The RS05 bolt locks directly into the barrel breech end and it actually does not require an action for this.



The barrel of the RS05 locks hydraulically into the receiver by means of an Allen key.



The left side of this RS05 shows the additional ejection port on the left side which comes into play when a left hand bolt is inserted.



The sling swivels on the RS05 also serve as tools for the assembly and dismantling of the RS05.



The barrel channel and underside of the RS05 are extremely neat.



The grip area of the RS05 is typically German and not always to the taste of new world hunters.

magazines in which case the figures become six and five respectively.

A feature of the Strasser RS05 I really liked and where it puts its competitors to shame was trigger adjustability. The modular RS05 trigger assembly can be removed without tools in a second. It then offers three hand-adjustable settings – light, medium and heavy. These settings are changed by simply changing the angle of the trigger support pillar in less than a second. The trigger pull can be further refined with the use of tools. No need to take the gun in to a few and far between brand dedicated gunsmith.

The Strasser RS05 is unique in that the front sling swivel also serves as the Allen key with which you remove the forend

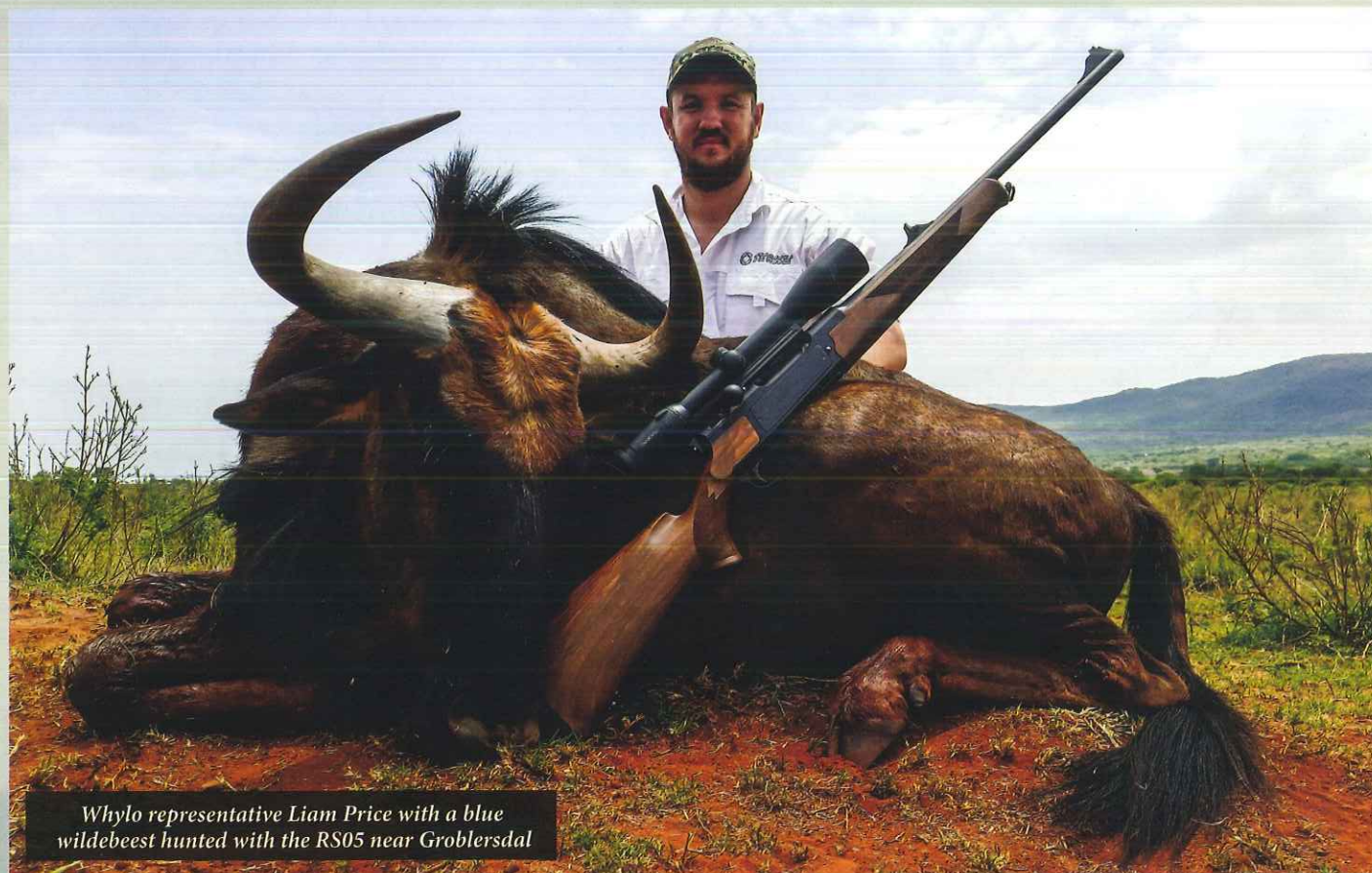
so that you can effect a barrel change. It is not necessary to carry any tools around to do so. It is all contained in the rifle. So is the Allen key required to change barrels; it is recessed inside the forend where it cannot be lost.

I first fired the Strasser RS05 with open sights at a buffalo target placed at 25 metres. The rear sight is a standing pyramid with a square partridge cut atop fluorescent green vertical insert about 3 mm wide. The front sight is a flat-topped pillar with a round red bead on the face thereof. Both sights sit on reasonably elegant saddles. As I progressed through my fifties I began to suffer from hyperopia and I battle to see gun sights. Although it was blurry I was still able to offhand place

all my shots in the buffalo's brain without wasting time aiming. A person with normal vision will find the sights very effective; but I have to say that I outshot the much younger Strasser rep and the two gunsmiths. No names no pack drill. To be fair; they probably are not as used as I am to a light rifle in 9,3x62mm calibre or a buffalo's face.

The Strasser undoubtedly has amongst the best ex-factory short-range iron sights on the market. Personally I am compelled to opt for a reflex sight for dangerous game use, or a riflescope for plains game hunting. My reflex sight choice undoubtedly is the Trijicon RMR RM08G with its green triangle.

The most fascinating aspect of the



Whylo representative Liam Price with a blue wildebeest hunted with the RS05 near Groblersdal

Strasser RS05 is the barrel clamping system. It does not screw in. It is not held in place by blocks or clamps or pins, nor screws. It slides in and then one simply turns the barrel clamping Allen key to clamp the barrel in place by hydraulic force! Yes, hydraulic force! It is lightning fast, but most of all, it exerts absolutely uniform tension right around the circumference of the barrel and chamber area to ensure absolute consistent tension. When I first saw this my jaw dropped. It is wear and tear free. It is incredibly uniform. It is quick and shockingly simple. Why hadn't anybody thought of this before? Horst Blaser, you are a marvel.

During 2013 HMS Präzisionstechnik also introduced the so-called Strasser RS Solo. The RS Solo is a fixed barrel version of the RS05. It is a cheaper version of the RS05 and can be had in a wooden stocked version or a rubberized stock over a wooden core known as the Panther. Thumb hole options are also available.

On the range

I always joke that muscles do not have brains and muscle memory therefore constitutes stupid terminology, but for lack of a more accurate description I will use it. There is no denying that one's mind becomes used to a set of movements, or drills to the point where it is so natural that you instinctively execute it.

A hunter used to a turnbolt will have

massive muscle memory and will initially struggle with the simplicity of a straight-pull action. Fortunately this can quickly and easily be overcome by drilling it in. They say that 21 correct repetitions instill the muscle memory. Once instilled it has of course to be perfected. It is therefore very important that a hunter, especially a dangerous game hunter, not only instills straight-pull muscle memory, but perfect it through regular repetition. Once mastered, the benefits and speed of these systems really are impressive and not one of us were not impressed.

In the veld

On this occasion the actual shooting

during the hunt was done by Liam Price, former optics expert at Safari & Outdoor and now a Whylo representative.

Courtesy of PH Francois Swanepoel of Weltevreden farm near Groblersdal, Liam, a Strasser RS05 chambered for the venerable 9,3x62 mm cartridge and loaded with 286 grain PMP Pro-Amm ammunition made easy meat of a blue wildebeest.

Just to test the Strasser's cycling speed for follow-up shots Liam doubled up. The first shot went through the boiler and the second through the neck. The Strasser worked flawlessly and the Swarovski scope made it that much easier. It proved a most satisfactory performance by all the items



The compact and practical case furnished with the Strasser RS05.

Riflescope – Swarovski 3-18x50mm P Z6

The Swarovski Z6 range rate amongst the very best optics one can buy today. The 3-18x50mm PZ6 model was firstly designed for long-range shooting, but with medium and short range usefulness.

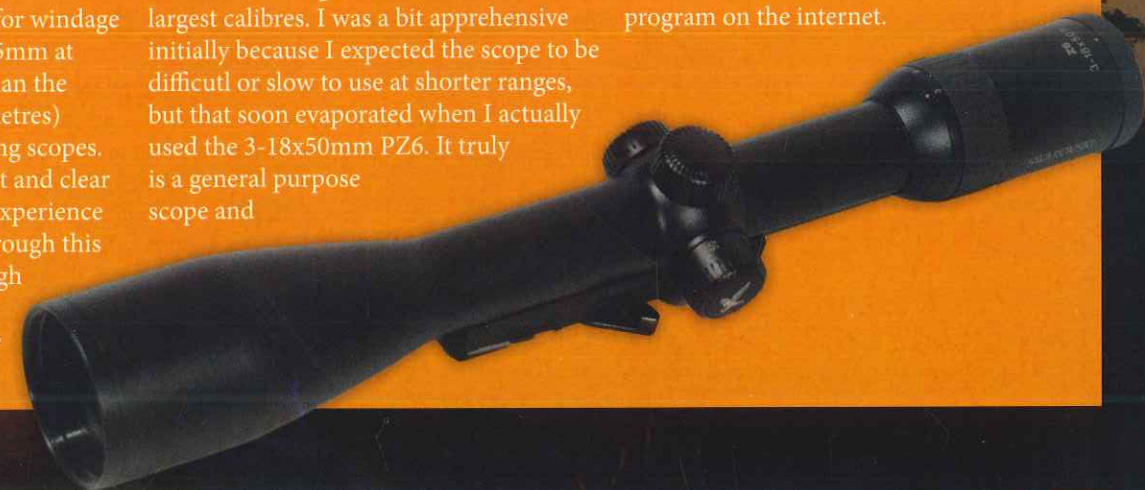
Point of impact adjustments for windage and elevation both are a mere 5mm at 100 metres, which is smaller than the 1/4" (6,35mm at 100 yards/91 metres) customary on American hunting scopes.

This riflescope is really bright and clear in all light conditions. It is an experience to sit in poor light and look through this riflescope and then then through something lesser we normal mortals generally have to settle for.

It also offers an exit pupil of 2,8mm at maximum magnification and a comfortable 9,5mm for faster shooting at 3x magnification. Eye relief is a generous 95mm which is great for all but the largest calibres. I was a bit apprehensive initially because I expected the scope to be difficult or slow to use at shorter ranges, but that soon evaporated when I actually used the 3-18x50mm PZ6. It truly is a general purpose scope and

eminently useable across bushveld ranges.

The Swarovski 3-18x50mm PZ6 is only available with the 4P-300 reticle, which is an excellent long range option that combines well with the Swarovski ballistic program on the internet.





The high class action group of the RS05 ready for another barrel.



The RS05 is a modular design and the trigger can be had adjustable by moving the rearmost vertical pin angle by hand.



The bolt sleeve of the RS05 is designed to be a very effective gas shield in the event of case ruptures.

used.

Once again I realized that there is nothing wrong with tradition, but tradition need not stagnate. Tradition must use the best from the past, extract the most of the present and combine that to remain valid in the future of a fast-changing world. The Strasser RS05, straight-pull technology and barrel switching are concepts we must incorporate in our traditions.

Summary

I have stated that I am a traditionalist and on top of that I am a big-bore hunter. My natural inclination is to go for the tried and trusted and nothing will replace the traditional designs in my heart. I just like seeing an array of rifles with beautiful wood posed on a gun rack. It warms my heart.

On that note. In the world of cars we now drive Japanese vehicles with lines

designed by Italians and we are better off for it. The famous Pietro Beretta uses design houses to shape some of its guns and they are eye-catching. I really wish all the Germanic rifle manufacturers will follow this lead and have a leading English or American stockmaker design stocks pleasing to new world eyes. As stocks of Germanic origin come, the Strasser RS05 stocks have amongst the most pleasing stock lines, but I firmly believe that to truly win the hearts and minds of Americans, Africans and Australians, models with distinct Anglo lines should be optionally available in these markets.

I have however over the past five years increasingly been exposed to and forced to use modern rifles and particularly switch-barrel and switch-calibre rifles. I initially scoffed at them as they did not impress me, but despite being a traditionalist I also am a realist. Times are a changing and one must change with it or be left behind. As time progressed and I had the opportunity to test and use new and different versions of these space-age designs, my prejudices began to fade. In fact, as the designs improved I have now eventually reached a point where I have to force myself into finding any reason not to like them. And I cannot. The concept has grown on me.

Insofar as switch-barrel rifles are concerned, the Strasser RS05 was the last straw. It really changed my mind and I had to take leave of it with sadness in my heart and the realisation that the day for this kind of rifle system has truly dawned and has dawned brightly. The Strasser RS05 is a rifle I would be very proud to own.

Whylo of Durban is the official importers of Strasser and Swarovski products, for more information contact them on 031 584 8088 or send an e-mail to trevor@whylo.co.za

Technical data

| Calibre | Magazine capacity | Barrel length | Weight |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|
| Mini | | | |
| .222 Rem | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| .223 Rem | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| Standard | | | |
| .243 Win | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 6,5x55mm | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 6,5x65mm | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| .270 Win | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 7x64mm | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| .308 Win | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| .30-06 Spfld | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 8x57mm JS | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 8,5x63/.338-06 | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| 9,3x62mm | 3 | 22" / 560mm | 3,1-3,2 kg |
| Magnum | | | |
| 7mm Rem Mag | 2 | 23.6" / 600mm | 3,2-3,3 kg |
| .300 Win Mag | 2 | 23.6" / 600mm | 3,2-3,3 kg |

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STRASSER
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Vervolg van bladsy 6

Op 4 April 2001 is die huidige wet, die Wet op die Beheer van Vuurwapens, Wet 60 van 2000, deur die parlement aanvaar en in sy geheel in werking gestel, ten spyte van geweldige teenstand.

Alle gelisensieerde vuurwapeneienaars was onder meer verplig om oor 'n vyf jaar periode bevoegdheidsertifikate te bekom en hul bestaande vuurwapens ooreenkomstig die nuwe bepalinge te lisensieer. Nuwe kategorieë is geskep en die maksimum aantal vuurwapens wat 'n gewone persoon (sonder toegewyde-status) mag besit, is drasties van twaalf na vier verminder. Verskeie positiewe veranderinge is egter ingestel, maar die administrasie van die wet was aanvanklik heeltemal ontoereikend en het tot baie frustrasie, konflik en kopseer gelei.

Kort voor die finale afsnydatum van 30 Junie 2009 waarop alle hernuwingsaansoeke ingedien moes wees, het dit geblyk dat baie vuurwapeneienaars nie aan die vereistes gaan voldoen nie en is die grondwetlikheid van die herlisensieringsvereiste in die wet in die Hooggeregshof van Suid-Afrika aangeveg.

Na behoorlike oorweging het regter Prinsloo beveel dat die vuurwapenlisensies wat ingevolge Wet 75 van 1969 uitgereik is, geldig sou bly tot tyd en wyl die hoof-aansoek bereg is.

Sedert 30 Junie 2009 was daar geen noemenswaardige vordering in hierdie litigasie nie en het die staat tot op hede (meer as vyf jaar later) nog nie eens hul opponerende verklaringe afgelewer nie. Volgens alle aanduidings gaan daar ook nie in die volgende vyf jaar 'n finale bevel in hierdie verband gemaak word nie.

Verskeie wysigingswette is sedert 2006 in die Staatskoerant gepubliseer, maar bitter min van die wysigings het in werking getree omdat die regulasies wat daarmee saamgaan, nog nie afgekondig is nie.

Aanvanklik moes applikante 'n uiters onaangename, tydrowende en frustrerende proses volg om hul bestaande vuurwapenlisensies te hernu en vir nuwe lisensies aansoek te doen. Klagtes dat aansoeke letterlik jare geneem het, was nie vreemd nie.

Ten spyte van verskeie tekortkominge het die administrasie van die nuwe wet mettertyd tot so 'n mate verbeter dat lisensie-aansoeke deesdae binne agt tot tien weke verwerk en uitgereik word.

Die belangrikste positiewe gevolg van die probleme rondom die implementering en administrasie van Wet 60 van 2000 en die suksesvolle litigasie in 2009, was die legio geakkrediteerde jag-, sport- en versamelerverenigings wat sedertdien as gevolg daarvan ontstaan het, 'n beduidende toename in aktiewe en nuwe vuurwapeneienaars en die feit dat die vuurwapenpubliek baie beter georganiseer is as ooit voorheen in Suid-Afrika se geskiedenis.

Ek voorsien dat hierdie verenigde front van geakkrediteerde verenigings en vuurwapenentoesiaste met verloop van tyd net sterker gaan raak en nog beter na ons vuurwapenliefhebbers se belange sal omsien. Heelwat water sal nog in die see moet loop voordat ons ons gewere moet ophang...

Wat, waar & wanneer

What, where & when

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Kontak Shayne op 082 570 1560 vir meer inligting, of stuur 'n e-pos aan shayne@sadetrade.co.za.



"Pop-up blind"



"Umbrella blind"

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