

# TESTED: BROWNING AB3 .308 AND MEOPTA MEOPRO 3-9X50

BY MATT STRACHAN



*The Browning AB3 .308 and Meopta 3-9x50 scope features reticles in the second focal plane, this means as you increase or decrease magnification, the apparent size of the reticle remains constant.*

*Matt was happy to be out hunting with his new rifle after the lockdown to get some exercise and hopefully fresh venison.*



*With my roar plans cancelled thanks to a world pandemic, the thought of not hunting for a while was getting me down and I needed something exciting to look forward too. I decided that a new rifle fitted the bill perfectly!*

**A** lot of my recent downtime had been put into training a new deer indicating dog and with duck shooting not looking likely for me this year, the focus was to put my time and money towards chasing a few deer. When

Level-3 came around, I was no sooner talking to the guys at my local hunting shop in the Hawkes Bay. A rifle was ordered and the following week it was ready to be picked up. I had decided on a Browning AB3 Cerekote in .308 calibre. These come standard as 16.5" with a threaded barrel. A Stealth suppressor was

added, which was necessary for recoil reduction and noise which is beneficial for both me and the dog.

Next were the optics and I was thinking I didn't need a lot of zoom from the scope, as it is mainly going to be used for close range bush hunting. The Meopta MeoPro 3-9x50 Z-Plex was a perfect fit. Its crystal-clear glass is excellent and gives more than enough light even in the darkest conditions, this topped the rifle off nicely.

I went straight to the range to break in the barrel and get it sighted in. I was shooting a cheap 150gr soft point for the

first box. I will have a play at a later date to find out what ammo is best suited to the rifle. I had it sighted in nicely within the first 10 shots and it was grouping well under an inch at 100 yards. I fired a couple shots at 200 and it was bang on.

The quality of the MeoPro scope was really showing as it was late in the afternoon and the light was low, but I had no issues putting the cross hair on the dot. What really impressed me about the rifle was the plastic hair trigger. It is exceptionally light and crisp, in fact the nicest trigger I have pulled so far.

## HUNTING Test fire

Tracking for around 500m, Kona took the writer straight in to where a spiker was bedded down.



### FIRST FIELD TRIP

Public land was still not an option, so I was lucky enough to source a private block. It was a perfect evening with a light but consistent wind. As we hunted down the ridge the wind kept in our face and the advantage was with the hunter. A young red spiker was soon spotted, and the stalk was on. We were so focused on the spiker that we nearly mucked it up completely by almost walking into a yearling. It stood side on at around 40 yards and a safe shot in the

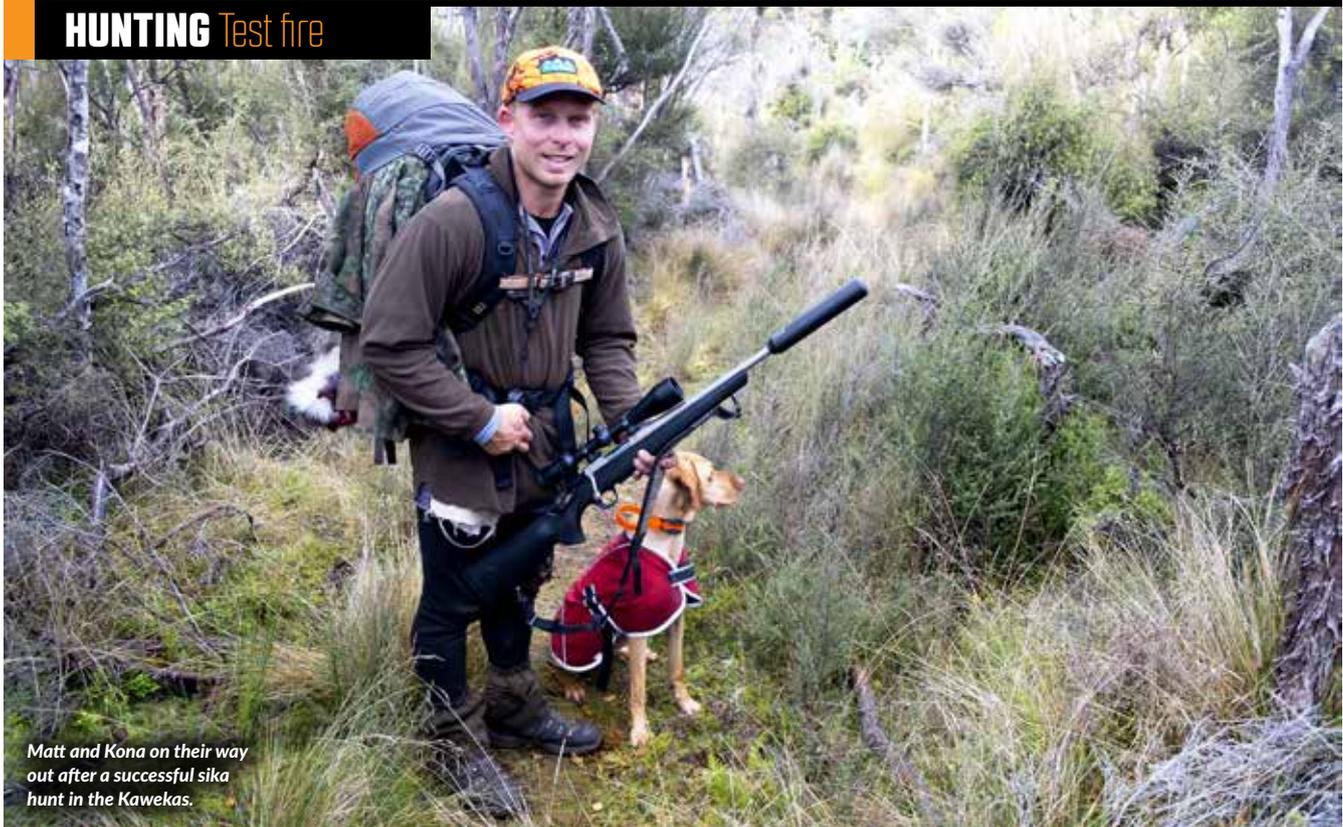
engine room secured some fresh meat and a good start on building confidence in the rifle. A perfect meat animal and success with the new toy.

My next goal was to see if all my hard work with the dog was going to pay off. A week later and I set off with Kona. Even though the weather was average, it was a great day to put the dog's skills to test. After an hour or so of hunting, she managed to get onto a ground scent and started working her way in. The wind was spot on and

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the stalk was all go. She kept her range well and stayed very composed which was extremely encouraging for such a young dog.

After 500m of tracking, Kona then used the wind to her advantage and took me straight in to where a spiker was bedded down. She locked on point and I snuck forward and placed the shot at the base of the head and the deer rolled over without hesitation. The new rifle and dog combination created the perfect hunt!



*Matt and Kona on their way out after a successful sika hunt in the Kawekas.*

The Meopta scope was soaked and covered in debris but I had no issue putting the shot where needed. The short barrel was very forgiving in the tight bush, making it easy to manoeuvre. So, it was proving to be an ideal bush rifle and scope package.

Over the following two weekends and I managed to

secure another three deer. The most recent with an old mate from Wellington and we missioned in late on the Friday. We headed to a well-known hut in the Kawekas to chase sika. It was a cold walk in and the last hour was under head torches. We got the fire going to dry some clothing out and had a well needed sleep. We

woke to a cold but cracker morning. A quick brew and we were out the door.

We went our separate ways and stayed in radio contact for safety. Kona got onto a fresh scent and we crawled through some very tight bush tracking an animal that had moved through not long ago. We finally popped out in some

more open beech forest and Kona led me in on a wind scent straight to a young sika hind. I closed the bolt and the new rifle claimed its fourth deer in a month. She had tracked this deer for 600m, and I was impressed. What an exceptional start for the young dog and my new rifle and scope, long may it continue. **FIGZ**



*Another animal taken by the writer's new bush rifle and scope, which was proving to be a great buy.*

## Key Specs

### BROWNING AB3 CERAKOTE .308

- + Barrel length: 22"
- + Overall length: 42"
- + Weight: 6lbs 9oz
- + Magazine: 5
- + Stock: Composite/Recoil Pad Polymer
- + RRP \$1,499\*

(\*includes: Stealth 4-12X42 Scope, Browning Bases and Stealth Steel Weaver Style 1" Low Rings plus Stealth Suppressor)

### MEOPTA MEOPRO 3-9X50 Z-PLEX

- + Magnification: 3-9
- + Objective lens: 50mm
- + Overall length: 356mm
- + Weight: 545g
- + RRP: \$949