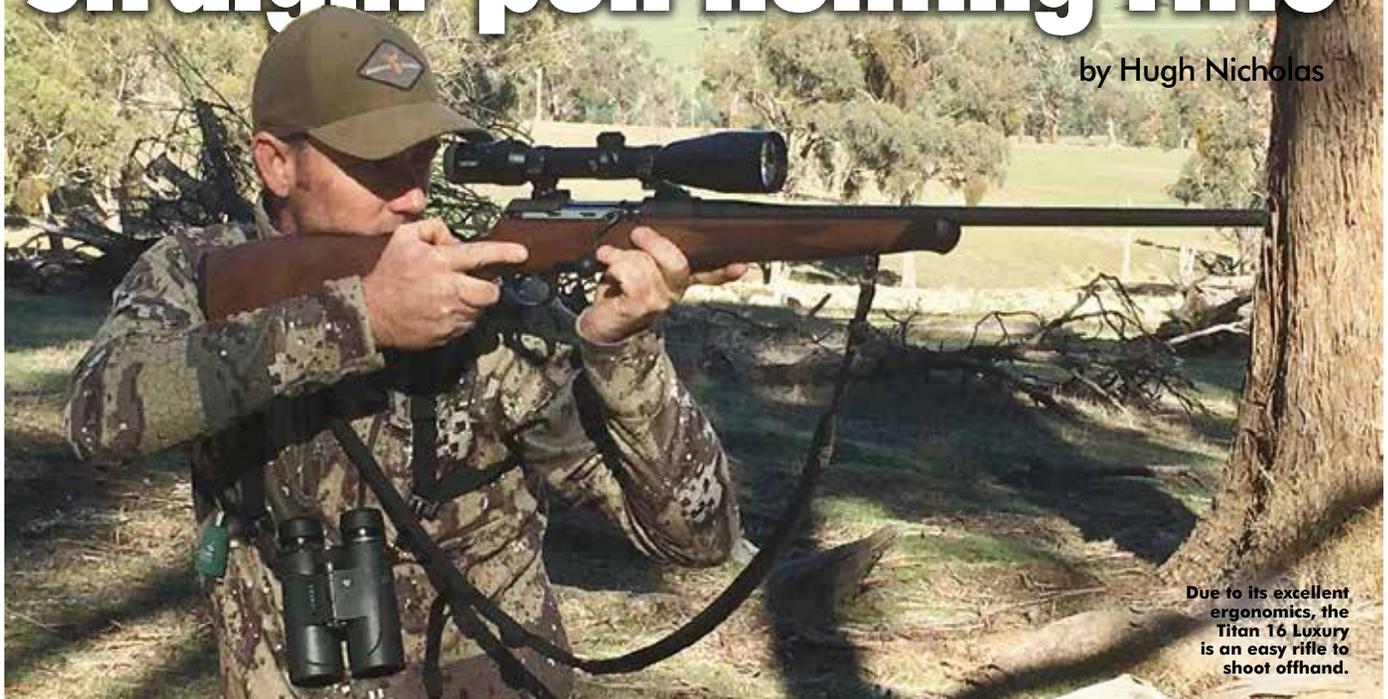


The Roessler Titan 16 Luxury straight-pull hunting rifle

by Hugh Nicholas



Due to its excellent ergonomics, the Titan 16 Luxury is an easy rifle to shoot offhand.

Rapid action hunting rifles are hot items in Australia at the moment and the trend towards pump- and lever-actions for quick follow-up shots when hunting is very strong. I applaud this on the grounds that all hunters should despatch their game as quickly and humanely as possible.

Pump- and lever-actions have their place, but in my opinion they are not always as good as a front-locking bolt-action rifle, and their lack of a strong camming extraction system that can make the removal of fired cases from the chamber slow. Straight-pull rifles are firmly established in Europe where they are used to great advantage on game like driven boar, when the hunter has only seconds to deliver killing shots at the fast moving animal. In Australia, straight-pull rifles have been fairly rare on the ground but after testing the Roessler Titan 16 Luxury rifle, my guess is that is going to change.

First impressions

Franc, from Hermann's Sporting Guns, sent me this rifle to test and I must

admit, straight out of its case, I was mightily impressed. It is built in Austria by Roessler (a subsidiary of Rowa), a company famous for its quality hunting rifles. This example was the Titan 16 Luxury, with a superb oil-finished walnut stock in the classic European style and sporting a nice illuminated reticle Docter 2.5-10x50 scope in EAW swing-off mounts.

The rifle is available in a multitude of calibres including .243 Win, .25-06 Rem, 6.5x55mm SE, 6.5x57mm, 6.5-.284 Norma, .270 Win, 7mm-08 Rem, 7x64mm, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg, 7x57mm, 8.5x63mm Reb, 9.3x62mm, .358 Win, 6.5x65mm RWS, .270WSM, .300WSM, 7mm Rem Mag, .300 Win Mag, .338 Win Mag, 7x64mm and .375 Ruger. The calibre under review was the ever-popular .270 Winchester, one of my favourites.

I was pleased to see Franc also included some ammunition from Geco and RWS along with some of his own reloads using RWS 150-grain cone-point projectiles. All of this ammunition used premium hunting bullets, which set my mind to working about how the testing should take place.

The rifle

Although a traditional-looking hunting rifle, it was immediately obvious that the action was way different to what most of us are used to. The straight-pull bolt has an ergonomic round-headed operating lever, which when pulled, easily turns the 16 lugs on the rotary bolt head and so opens the strong action. The 16 locking lugs fasten directly into the barrel, which offers you maximum safety and strength. Operation of the action is incredibly smooth and during testing, both feeding and extraction were flawless. The Austrian designers certainly had things right with the Titan 16 Luxury.

The removable magazine holds three cartridges in line and with one more in the breech, making it a four-shot. The receiver is nitro-carbonised and oxidised and the 22" barrel is carbon-nitrided so hunting in wet conditions, as we often do in the Victorian high country, is never going to be a problem. I found the low-sheen finish to be of an excellent quality. The elegant walnut stock has a good rubber butt pad, Bavarian cheekpiece and ebony fore-end tip. Chequering was outstanding, offering

Titan 16 Calibres:

Medium:
.243 Win.; .25-06 Rem.; 6,5-284; 6,5x47 Lapua;
6,5x55 Se; 6,5x57; 6,5x65 RWS; 7x57; 7x64; 7 x 67.;
.270 Win.; 7mm-08 Rem.; 7,62x39; .308 Win.; .30-06 Sprg.; .358 Win.; 8x57 IS; 9,3x62;
Magnum:
8x68 S; 7mm Rem. Mag.; .270 WSM; .300 WSM;
.300 Win. Mag.; .338 Win. Mag.; .375 Ruger;

TITAN 16

Titan 16 bolt head

The TITAN 16 is a straight pull bolt action rifle with a classic rotary bolt action system proven to be reliable by the straight pull Mauser M96. Its sixteen locking lugs lock directly into the barrel, which offers the shooter maximum strength and security. The Titan 16 is one of the finest rifles to come out of Europe, and offers great value for money.

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Accuracy



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(All prices, images and information are subject to change without prior notice)

The Roessler Titan 16 Luxury

a non-slip surface in all conditions. Sling swivels are standard. The stock suited me perfectly and I really liked the way the cheekpiece supported my face using the fairly high set 50mm objective scope. I did love the tang safety, which was smooth, almost silent and when on 'safe' locked the bolt handle down securely. This is invaluable in a hunting rifle.

The weight of the bare rifle is just more than 3kg (about 6½lb), ideal for a working mountain rifle. All up weight with the big German Docter scope was close to 3.8kg, which is not a lightweight but the balance was so good this was not noticed when actually hunting. It also made testing off the bench comfortable, although I am sure the excellent design of the stock was largely responsible for the apparent lack of recoil. If I was using it strictly for a hunting rifle or over hounds, I would install one of the new breed of lightweight red dot reflex sights with their illuminated aiming points (like the Docter Sight III) and I would have one of the fastest handling hunting rifles you could desire. The test rifle came without open sights but they are an option.

And now the interesting part - the Titan 16 Luxury is a switch-barrel rifle. In just two minutes and using only the supplied Allen key, you can convert it to a different calibre of your choice, from .243 Win to .375 Ruger and many more in between. Barrel lengths vary from 510 to 700mm, depending on calibre. For the travelling hunter, a cased Titan 16 Luxury with three barrels and three different scopes in the wonderful EAW swing-out mounts would give the ultimate versatility. Say a .243 for small game and varmints, a .270 or .30-06 for medium game like boars and deer, with a .338 Win Mag or .375 Ruger for the

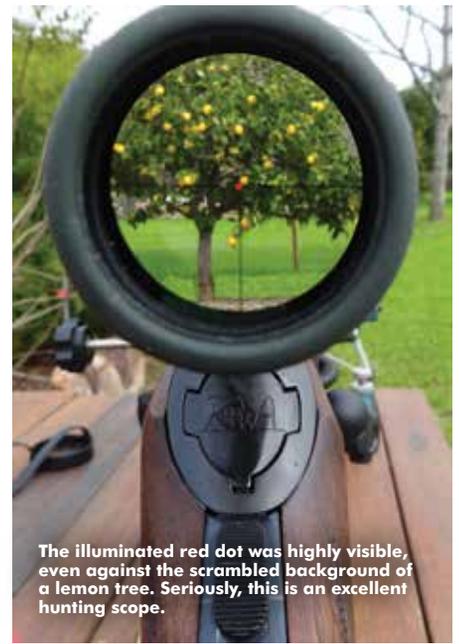
dangerous stuff. And you are not going to break the bank doing it.

One last point I must make is the trigger on this rifle. Having hunted with more triggers than I would care to mention over the years, I have become a bit of a trigger diva. How many rifles (and shotguns) do you pick up that have the most awful heavy, gritty inconsistent trigger pull? The most important factor in delivering a well-aimed shot is a good, reliable trigger pull. Most of us have sent rifles to gunsmiths for trigger work or gone to the trouble of having an aftermarket trigger installed to obtain it.

Well, the good people at Rowa must feel the same as me as the trigger on the Titan 16 Luxury is simply wonderful. Light, but not too light at 550g, no creep, little over travel and absolutely consistent shot to shot. The Titan 16 Luxury trigger is advertised as being adjustable - I did not touch it - and is also said to operate as a set trigger (when pushed forward), a function I did not bother with because the standard trigger was just so good. If you want to change a set trigger, be my guest, but my old trigger finger works best with a standard trigger. Of all the strong facets of this straight-pull European hunting rifle, the trigger was



The three-shot detachable magazine fed without a hitch every time.



The illuminated red dot was highly visible, even against the scrambled background of a lemon tree. Seriously, this is an excellent hunting scope.



The .270 Winchester ammo tested including Geco 150-grain soft-points, left, RWS 160-grain power-bonded and a reload with 150-grain RWS cone-point. All excellent hunting fodder.



Chronographing and bench work was a pleasure with the well-designed stock.

the high point for me. In fact, the trigger alone would influence me to buy a Titan 16 Luxury for hunting.

The scope

This is not a test on the German Docter scope - that has been performed many times and the brand's superb quality is well-known. Nor is it to review the excellent (and so expensive) EAW swing-out mounts. Their quality and repeatability is acknowledged as the highest. But I wanted to make mention of the excellent hunting scope it is, for the conditions we experience in the Victorian high country. The optics are extremely clear, as you would expect when putting down that much cash (\$1499 at time of writing) and the adjustments were simple and slick to use.

The Roessler Titan 16 Luxury

But it was the reticle that grabbed my attention. When hunting for sambar in Victoria, by necessity we are often in dense, wooded country with low light levels - throw in some fog, a little snow and a scattering of dogwood debris on the scope lens and it is not surprising that a standard cross or plex reticle disappears when that stag of a lifetime materialises out of the mist.

The big Docter scope sports a standard German reticle with two sidebars and post with a floating illuminated red dot as the aiming point. Cranked up to its brightest - how I used it when hunting - the red dot showed up bright and clear and was never lost in the background foliage. I loved it. The illumination level is quickly adjusted with a left-hand turret, even with gloves on. I found for zeroing and working up loads at the range in good light the illumination could be turned off altogether. I also think the scope would be ideal for

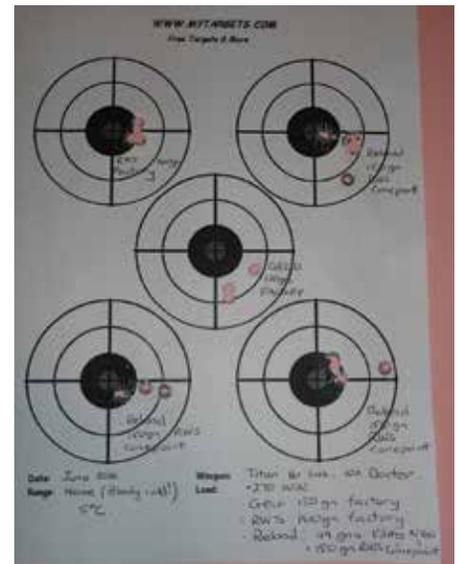
spotlighting feral pests. I would have loved one years ago when shooting foxes under the light for their pelts.

In use

First time out, I was a little unsure how I would adapt to the rifle's straight-pull mechanism as I have used standard bolt-action all my life. I need not have worried as this action is so slick it becomes second nature in no time. Shots could be taken as fast, or faster than any other repeater I have ever used. I know the magazine could be emptied in quick time. Operating the action was a quick pull, push and then shoot again. On the multiple shots I fired during hunting, I was faster than I could believe. I had seen videos of the Titan 16 in action and yes, it really is that easy.

Accuracy

Roessler guarantees accuracy of these rifles to be half MOA for five shots



Representative three-shot groups from this lightweight rifle were excellent - one even nudging half MOA.

- something I consider very brave. Franc sent some groups he had shot with factory and reloaded ammunition which were mighty impressive, hovering around the MOA mark and better. Considering the Titan 16 Luxury is a light-barrelled, dedicated hunting rifle, I figured MOA very good indeed and didn't think any deer shot would tell the difference, but just for fun decided to do a little work off the bench myself.

Not wanting to heat the barrel up too much, I stuck to three-shot groups - this is the real world after all. I had ideal, windless conditions (though it was only 5C) and at 100 yards my groups were as good as Franc's. In fact, one group with RWS 160-grain factory ammo clocking 2770fps was better, with the three bullet holes almost touching. I did not measure it but it looks less than half MOA to me. The Geco 150-grain factory ammo, averaging 2960fps, shot almost as well and to the same point of impact - something I like in hunting rifles.

Franc reloaded, using VihtaVuori N160 and RWS 150gn Cone-point projectiles, and showed promise but tended to string horizontally for me. Perhaps trying Vihta N165 or N560 could improve that. If reloading, please consult a powder manufacturer's guide and work up loads slowly, carefully watching for signs of excessive pressure.

Interestingly, even with the RWS factory ammo, which seemed fairly warm, extraction was easy. This indicated that the Titan 16 Luxury bolt's camming action is good. The big Docter scope, set on 10x, was



The Roessler Titan 16 Luxury

perfect for bench work and allowed us to tap every bit of accuracy available from the rifle.

Hunting

As mentioned, the Titan 16 Luxury just begged to be tested in the field. Work commitments prevented me to hunt much in the timeframe we had, but a young



Daniel used the Titan 16 Luxury to good effect on this lamb killer.

friend, being a self-employed builder, offered to help. Daniel carried the rifle through the fallow rut and though he did not catch up with the big buck he has been chasing since last year, still grassed two respectable cull animals and some incidental feral game.

Fast follow-up shots were not needed as Daniel put the RWS 150-grain cone-points in the right place first time. Daniel mentioned that the Titan 16 Luxury was excellent to shoot offhand and perceived recoil was very low. He also accounted for a yearling sambar when hunting over hounds and again, this time using RWS 160-grain factory Power Bonded ammo, put the animal down with a spectacular one-shot kill.

Summary

If you are looking for a high-quality, fast-action, highly accurate hunting rifle with the versatility of switch barrels and at a realistic price, then take a look at the Roessler Titan 16 range. You will be glad you did. Daniel provided some excellent feedback on his thoughts about the Titan, but perhaps I can summarise this best by telling you it took me three months to prise the rifle back from him. Enough said.

For more information about the Roessler

Titan range, contact the distributor, Hermann's Sporting Guns in Mirboo North, Victoria, on 03 5668 1940 or visit www.sportingguns.com.au ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Roessler

Model: Titan 16 Luxury

Barrel Length: 560mm

Calibres: Various available, .270 Win (tested)

Breech: Cylinder breechblock with 16 bolt lugs

Action: Straight pull, bolt locking mechanism in barrel

Recoil Bed: Embedded in the stock

Safety: Slide safety at tang

Magazine: Detachable magazine, three-shots

Weight: 3.15kg

Sights: Action casing prepared for standard commercial scanning electron microscope, swing or fixed scope sight mounting

Distributor: Hermann's Sporting Guns

RRP: \$2349

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