



Setting up for field testing.

# Range time with The Rock

Mark van den Boogaart

So first things first. I've been sighting in rifles, practising, experimenting and generally having a lot of fun at the SSAA Belmont range in Queensland for about 35 years, during which time I've bought all manner of gear - with the exception of a shooting rest. You've never owned a rest? Nope, never needed one. They hire them at the range and when I've checked a rifle in the field I've just made do with a backpack or something similar.

Now normally my approach doesn't lend itself well to a product review, that is until COVID-19 came to town. COVID changed the rules - you can't rent a rest. I better start researching then and what I found was a great deal of choice and styles. After checking out a number of different models and seeking some wise counsel, I bought The Rock Deluxe Shooting Rest by Caldwell from the friendly team at On Target Sporting Arms in Brisbane, which just happens to be my local gunshop.

Caldwell have three offerings in The Rock range including The Rock Jr, Rock BR Competition Rest and Rock Deluxe. For me it was obvious as I wasn't intending to shoot competition and wanted something bigger than the Junior, so I bought The Deluxe. Out of the box The Rock Deluxe appears well constructed and finished, with assembly straightforward. Once together what you have is a three-point, cast iron

rest weighing roughly 3.9kg with a 330mm triangular footprint. Each point of the rest uses a lockable, independently adjustable, pointed levelling screw so you can level it up on just about any surface.

Your rifle rests on a cradle supported by a filled, front varmint-style bag. The bag also has two Velcro straps to keep it in place, while the cradle has two adjustable ears which allow you to secure different



Six-point elevation wheel and locking mechanism.



One of the independently adjustable levelling screws with locking ring.

style bags within the Caldwell arena to better suit your needs. The Deluxe has a vertical adjustment scale of 115 to 185mm, controlled via a 22mm threaded steel post (or ram as they call it) and six-point elevation wheel. I really like the elevation adjustment - it's quick and precise.

Now there's one feature I did need to refer to the instructions for. The Rock Deluxe has a fore-end stop, which is a threaded L-shaped rod with a rubber tip that's attached to the front of the cradle. The idea of the fore-end stop is it stops your rifle from moving too far forward, ensuring you reposition it in the same place after each shot. As the fore-end stop wasn't something I'd used in the past, I was keen to see how it performed along with the rest of The Deluxe set-up.

It was February and the red deer would soon be roaring so I took the Rock along with my other range gear on an afternoon scout. Arriving at the property I first caught up with the owner then went to work setting up my bench, establishing a clear and safe firing lane then ranging in a target. Adjusting the rest to my height and shooting style was easy, though I did struggle with the fore-end stop which just didn't seem to suit the shorter fore-end of the Scout rifle. To be honest, the Scout isn't a great rifle to shoot from the bench and can be a little unforgiving, which consequently makes it a great rifle to test equipment.

After firing a series of shots at the target I wondered why I hadn't bought a rest previously. Checking the zero was a breeze and as a part of my shooting kit, The Rock Deluxe proved its worth in making the whole process so much easier. It was really



The Rock Deluxe assembled and ready to go.

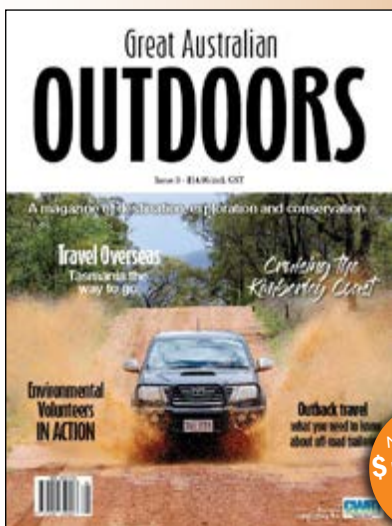
convenient to have a good quality rest on hand and I expect it'll be travelling with me to Belmont from now on. So it would seem an old dog can at least try a new trick or two and the Caldwell Rock Deluxe shooting rest gave me everything I was looking for - a quality build using solid componentry, stability on the bench, a level of fine adjustability to help me move on target and it even fitted in my range box.

If, like me, you're in the market for a shooting rest, check out the Rock series by Caldwell - they'll have one to suit your particular needs. As to the hunt, well that afternoon on my deer scout I managed to take a brute of a wild pig. Admittedly it wasn't a deer and while you could say my species identification might need some

work, there was no doubting my rifle was bang on target. The Caldwell Rock Deluxe is available at your local gunshop and retails for around \$269. ●



The proof is in the pig.



# It's here!

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