



Sue-Ann puts the Predator 4 to the test at long range.

# A Predator worth watching

New Steiner scope impressed Chris Redlich

Steiner aren't exactly new kids on the Australian riflescope block but have rightly earned their place in the upper echelon of high-quality optics manufacturers, though what's new in the Steiner line-up is their recently-launched Predator 4 riflescope series consisting of the 2.5-10x42, 4-16x50 and a 6-24x50. I accepted an invite from Australian distributor Beretta to review a rifle and scope package comprising a Predator 4 (4-16x50), an ideal 'optics mate' for the test Tikka T3x Varmint Hunter in .223 Rem and, according to Steiner, the all-new Predator 4 series (for 4x zoom) offers shooters a compact and lightweight design while providing military ruggedness and durability.

### Out of the box

As is standard with Steiner scopes the Predator 4 came supplied with slip-on lens covers, cleaning cloth and user manual but with overall length of 375mm I'm not so sure this one can be regarded as 'compact', though taking into consideration all the

inclusions I believe it's as compact as it can be. In the hand it feels rugged and strong and while Steiner aren't known for producing lightweight scopes, the 4-16x50 at a total of 672 grams is relatively light for a feature-packed unit built on a 30mm tube. The single piece main tube is made of aircraft-grade aluminium and coated in a durable, non-reflective satin black finish.

Starting at the southern end of the scope is its large ocular lens of 42mm offering a clear sight picture and generous eye relief of 90mm. The overall diameter of the ocular bell measures 48mm and like many other scopes of similar dimension, careful consideration is required when low mounting, particularly to rifles of 90-degree bolt throw (such as Remington 700, Howa 1500 and Mauser-style control round-feed rifles).

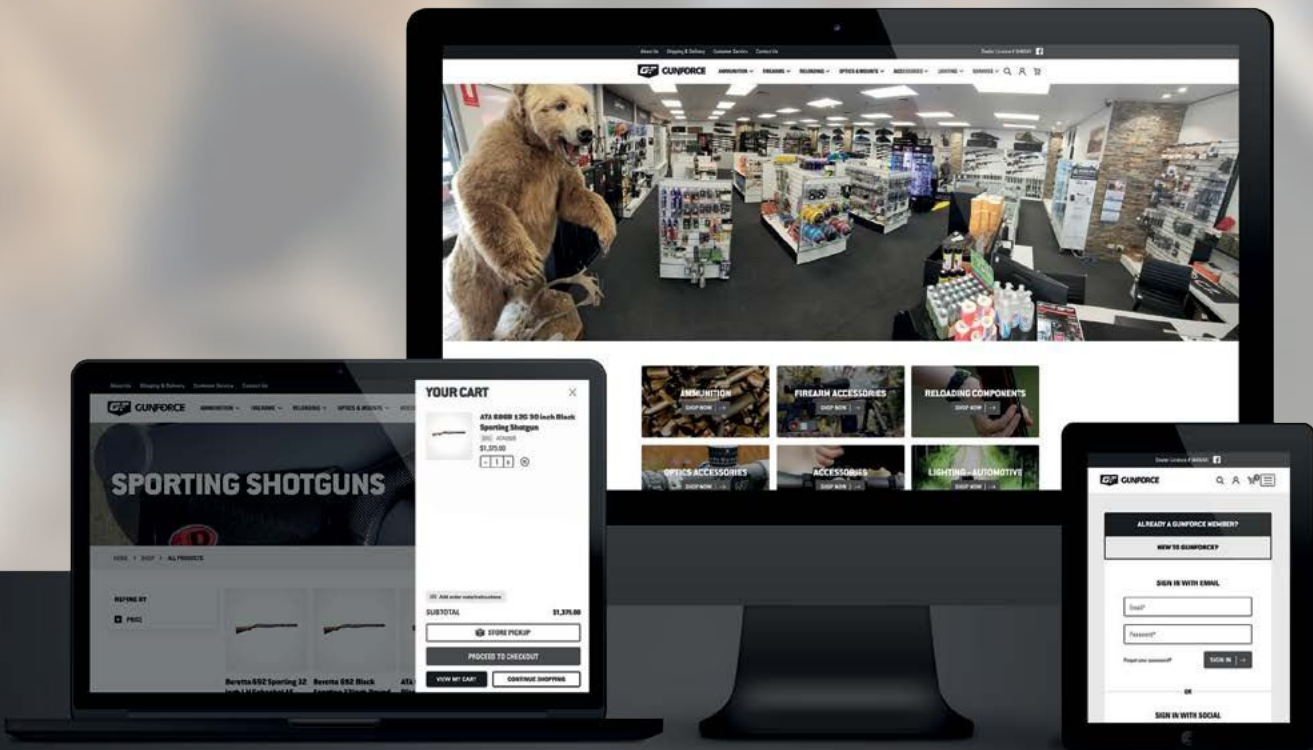
Mounting to the review Tikka with 70-degree bolt throw wasn't a problem and the bolt handle didn't foul with the ocular bell. The rubber dioptre ring is smooth but easily gripped for a clear image and reticle and like other Steiners I've tested the variable magnification dial is a ribbed rubber



Adjusting the illumination dial at night was a simple process.

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design that's firm and durable with good grip and easy rotation. From 4x to 16x zoom are clearly marked and the desired magnification is lined up with the small white arrow in the 12 o'clock position behind the variable dial.

Housed within the ocular bell is the Predator 4's E3 reticle positioned in the second focal plane and as I've stated previously I'm generally a 'Plain Jane' reticle man courtesy of my hunting background. I've never seen a reticle like the Predator's E3 before and have to admit that while it's a little busy it's also practical. Sharing similarities with a No.4-style reticle the 12 o'clock posts remains fine while the 3, 6 and 9 o'clock posts start thick at the outers and taper continuously inwards where they break from the reticle centre cross.

This design is brilliant for drawing your eye to the target rapidly and the addition of subtle but practical elevation and windage sub-tensions around the centre cross greatly benefit the long-range hunter, while enhancing the reticle further is its capability of an illuminated centre cross. Importantly, the user manual includes all E3 reticle sub-tension values in MOA relevant at maximum magnification.

Evenly located in the centre of the scope are the elevation and windage turrets occupying 12 and 3 o'clock positions, both hand-click adjustable for 1/4 MOA with a modest total of +/- 25 MOA at 100m. Interestingly the 2.5-10x42 model has a generous total of +/- 50 MOA at 100m. Sitting at the 9 o'clock position is the feature-packed turret with the inner dial enabling parallax free adjustment from 20 yards to infinity.

The outer part of the turret is a dial for



Illuminated centre cross showing clear target acquisition on a fox after last light on night setting five.

the illuminated centre cross reticle which allows you to adjust brightness levels of 0-6 for night and 7-11 for daytime, the dial firm to rotate (as it should be) and every click adjustment distinct and precise. A convenient battery-saving 'off' mode between each brightness level is a welcome design inclusion with the battery compartment containing a CR2032 button battery located within the illumination dial and replaced by simply unscrewing the watertight cap.

The business end of the Predator 4 is its 50mm-high contrast objective lens and like most European scopes they're renowned for crystal-clear images and lowlight performance, the Predator 4 fitting the criteria nicely and I'd have been surprised if it

hadn't. An impressive field of view of 10m on 4x and 2.5m at 100m on 16x magnification rounds out the lens capability.

The scope is nitrogen purged and Steiner claim the Predator 4 is waterproof to a depth of 1m, not so deep but then again I've never gone swimming with a riflescope! An operating temperature of -25C/+63C ensures this unit is more than capable of handling the Alpine regions of New Zealand or sweltering heat of the Australian Outback so with the hard stuff behind me I was keen to put it to the test.

### Range and field

With our hunter class charity shoot weekend fast approaching we'd little time



Daytime setting of nine on the illuminated centre cross has a rabbit lined up.



Some hares cleanly taken during a brief night spotlighting.



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Sighting the Predator 4 to the Tikka T3x Varmint Hunter.

to waste when it came to sighting-in the Predator 4 but coupled with the review Tikka T3x Varmint Hunter fixed in Steiner two-piece mounts, it only took a breezy three shots to zero the scope to the rifle. My wife Sue-Ann would be using the Tikka for the charity shoot and she proceeded to familiarise herself by managing a follow-up group.

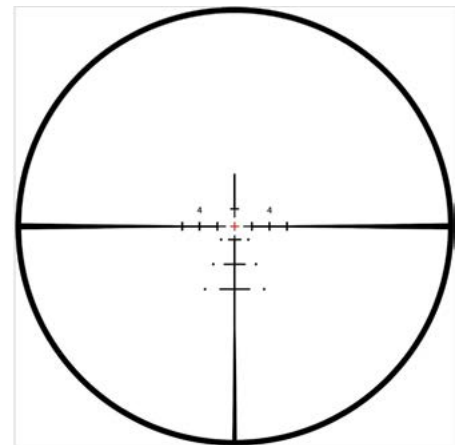
After a handful of rounds her practice confirmed the scope's zero and we were good to go. She remarked on the clarity of the lens to reinforce my own thoughts and we both had confidence in the scope's long-range capabilities at the Muckadilla Charity Pink Shoot. As mentioned the elevation and windage adjustments have +/- 25 MOA of travel so this is by no means a long-range target-style scope, but the combination of the E3's practical reticle sub-tensions on 16x zoom enabled Sue-Ann to score numerous 'V bulls' at 500 and 600 yards while aiming off. The complete package of the Predator 4 and Tikka T3x in .223 was impressive to say the least and the overall long-range target performance gave plenty of confidence for upcoming varminting.

Managing to jag a window of opportunity while working away on a property allowed me to take the Tikka and Steiner combo for a spotlighting test drive. Although I managed to shoot three hares in reasonably quick time I found the E3 reticle on its own (compared to a No.4 or fine plex-style option) wasn't as practical as anticipated on small game in the dark. Yet using the Predator 4's illumination feature the bright centre cross of the reticle worked perfectly and with six night-time adjustments at my disposal gave plenty of options to suit the conditions, which underlined the versatility

of the scope and its E3 reticle in an array of shooting situations.

### Conclusion

I wasn't surprised the Predator 4 (4-16x50) lived up to the expectations I have of a Steiner-built scope. I'm in the fortunate position of having tested numerous quality optics and the Steiner Predator 4 series is up there with the best of them. Brimming with features in a streamlined unit, Predator 4 riflescopes retail for \$1289 (2.5-10x42); \$1348.99 (4-16x50) and \$1399 (6-24x50) at time of writing and, backed by Steiner Australia's lifetime warranty, are worthy of consideration for mounting to a varminting or long-range hunting rifle. More at [berettaaustralia.com.au](http://berettaaustralia.com.au) ●



Steiner E3 reticle, note the inclusion of 4 MOA both left and right for ease of sub-tension calculation.



Predator 4 scope boxed with lens covers and cleaning cloth.