

Bistoli's

Storm Shield gun cover

by Brad Allen



Brad Allen with the Storm Shield on a Steyr .30-06 with 24" barrel, slung and ready to go hunting.

While attending the SSAA SHOT Expo in Brisbane in 2015, I became aware of the Bistoli brand of gun-related accessories and purchased one of its excellent camo neoprene rifle slings for my son Morgan's Steyr Mannlicher .30-06.

Recently, I had the opportunity to review the Bistoli Storm Shield, a one-size-fits-all gun cover, distributed by Teznic Pty Ltd, of Sydney. The covers are made to Teznic's specifications by Bistoli, and after talking to Nick from Teznic, who described how it worked, I was very keen to get my hands on one for an appraisal.

The difference between most other gun covers and the Bistoli version, is that the Storm Shield is designed to be used on a 'slung rifle' while you are out hunting. Its unique design will keep your favourite rifle or gun protected from any scratching to the stock and scope, and ensure it is clean and dry during inclement weather. It is also extremely easy and quick to remove, to facilitate a fast shot.

The Storm Shield is made from a hard-wearing Ripstop material with padding around the barrel and the butt end of the cover. An internal coating on the material also assists with waterproofing and there is an elasticised cord that circles the opening on its underside to adjust the cover to fit the size of your rifle.

The Storm Shield gun cover is designed to fit a large range of rifle sizes from 39 to 56" in length, accommodating even very large scopes. It comes in three colors: digital camo (which I was sent for the evaluation), basic black and a light brown sand.

I only wish that I had one of these

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covers years ago, before stainless steel/synthetic rifles, as the bane of my existence back then was always trying to keep my wooden-stocked, blue steel rifles dry when hunting in wet conditions. As hunters know, drizzly rainy days can be some of the most productive times to hunt. In those days, the Vaseline was given regular use, smearing large amounts of it around the barrel channel and action in an attempt to stop the rain from seeping in and swelling the stock, then hiding the rifle under the flap of my rain jacket. It was a less-than-ideal situation, being greasy, messy and only moderately successful.

I remember one five-day deer hunt many years ago where it rained the whole time, swelling the stock on my old Parker-Hale .243 to the point where it was difficult to remove the bolt and it took more than 12 months for the stock to dry out and shrink back to normal! If only I had a gun cover on that trip.

Stainless/synthetic hunting rifles are extremely common these days and consequently the wet weather is not the problem that it once was. However, not everyone has embraced stainless steel/synthetic-stocked rifles. Many traditionalists shun them completely, preferring to hunt only with walnut and blue steel rifles. If this sounds like you, or you just occasionally like to use that beautiful expensive old heirloom, the Storm Shield may be just the thing for you. You still might not want to take the Rigby or Holland & Holland out on a rainy day, but whenever you hunt with that traditional rifle, the Storm Shield will not only keep it dry, but will completely

protect the stock finish and the scope lenses, without compromising your ability to quickly put that shot away.

With a minimum of practice, I was able to unslung the rifle and easily remove the cover to shoot. As far as I'm aware, there is virtually no other gun cover on the market that does what the Storm Shield can do. Just pull back on the large loop at the butt end of the cover, even while wearing gloves, and lift it clear of the rifle butt. Then, using gravity to assist, point the barrel down and push the cover forward and let it fall away, giving complete access to your rifle for the shot. The cover can then be easily and quickly replaced to maintain rifle protection.

We used the cover on several different size rifles ranging from my small modified Brno Model 2 with a 20" barrel, which measures 38.5" in length, right up to a Remington Long Range .300 Win Mag, with its heavy stock and 26" barrel and large Vortex scope which measures 47" in length. In all cases, the cover was easily adjusted to fit and more importantly, easily and quickly removed when necessary.

The Storm Shield gun cover is a well-designed, quality piece of equipment, that affords your expensive and cherished firearms a level of protection not previously available while out hunting in thick cover or bad weather, and I believe it is great value for the money.

The Bistoli Storm Shield one-size-fits-all gun cover is distributed in Australia by Teznic and retails for around \$55. For more information, ask at your local gunshop or visit www.teznic.com.au ●