



**“I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT IT PROVIDED AND I FELT MORE THAN COMFORTABLE MAKING THE SHOT RIGHT ON DARK IF NEED BE.”**

Hayden dropped three red deer with the Forge, all clean one-shot kills.



Hayden installed the Bushnell Forge on his 7mm SAUM (Short Action Ultra-Mag) – a light-weight, hard-hitting rig.

# BUSHNELL FORGE 2.5X15-50...

Hayden Sturgeon reviews new optics –

**THE BUSHNELL BRAND IS JAPANESE-BUILT WITH MORE THAN 65 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE OPTICS MARKET. EVERYONE KNOWS THE QUALITY OF THE GLASS COMING OUT OF JAPAN TODAY, AND BUSHNELL TAKES PRIDE IN DELIVERING THIS TO ITS CUSTOMERS. THE LATEST INCLUDE THREE NEW MODELS: PRIME, NITRO AND THE TOP OF THE LINE FORGE.**

repelled, taking the dust with it. All lenses are fully multi-coated for brightness and improved high-contrast images and the Forge sports a 30mm main tube with big, exposed elevation/windage turrets, along with full parallax adjustment from 25 metres to infinity.

Both turrets adjust 20 MOA in a single revolution and have an easy to apply zero-stop. Both turrets also have Bushnell's T-Lok system – the turrets are pulled upwards to turn, then pushed down to lock them in position. I found this easy to use – a nice feature.

A new device is the removable Throw Hammer or magnification lever. When I first saw it I

**“THE FORGE SPORTS A REAL TACTICAL FEEL WITH NICE CLEAN LINES ALONG WITH A MATTE BLACK FINISH. LENSES ARE TOP QUALITY JAPANESE GLASS WITH BUSHNELL'S NEWLY DEVELOPED COATING CALLED THE “EXO BARRIER””**

thought it was a bit gimmicky, but after using it multiple times, both at the range and in the hills, I came to like it – it makes it easy to go through the magnification range quickly. The large 50mm objective allows

**O**n offer for review (from the NZ agents, Ampro Sales Ltd) was a Forge 2.5x15-50 SFP, a great scope for either up close hunting or pushing that mid to long-range shot when one is needed. It's a magnification range that will appeal to the New Zealand market.

On first inspection the Forge sports a real tactical feel with nice clean lines along with a Matte Black finish. Lenses are top quality Japanese glass with Bushnell's newly developed coating called the “EXO Barrier”, which bonds to the lens at the molecular level and fills the microscopic pores in the glass. This

leaves a slick coating that repels unwanted moisture and grime, helping deliver clean lenses in almost all hunting situations. During my field test I found that while dust from the muzzle brake still got stuck to the lens, when I wet the lens down for cleaning the water beaded and



**"THE FORGE TRACKED BEAUTIFULLY, WHICH ALLOWED ME TO MOVE BACK TO 550 YARDS AND THEN 650 YARDS WHERE IT SHOT VERY WELL, ADJUSTING SMOOTHLY THROUGH ITS .25" MOA DIAL INCREMENTS."**

maximum light transmission which comes in handy in the low light conditions of dusk and dawn, especially if you're using 15x magnification.

Two reticle styles are offered: MOA, available in either first or second focal plane, and MIL in first focal plane only. The MOA hash tags are positioned on both the vertical and horizontal stadia lines. There is quite a lot going on with the Deploy reticle and at times I found it a bit distracting, but with the right calibrations (taken from Bushnell's spec sheet) it should be useful for extended range shots.

All Forge scopes are nitrogen filled

⚙️ Exposed, lockable turrets have a tactical feel. A full 20 MOA of adjustment is available with just one revolution.

⚙️ It took Hayden less than two minutes to figure out and set the zero-stop (see text).

and O-ring sealed for water tightness and antifogging. The weight comes in at 819 grams which is on the heavy side for a scope of this magnification in today's market, but in fairness Bushnell has packed the Forge with features. Other items supplied are 2.5" sun-shade attachment, a scope



cover, plastic flip-up caps for both ends, along with a little tool clip and a cleaning cloth.

#### ON THE RANGE

The rifle I selected for this test was my 7mm SAUM that runs a Weaver rail with low, ultra-light rings. These have already been lapped so I was ready to mount the scope

⚙️ The removable "Throw Hammer" allows magnification to be adjusted quickly, even with a gloved hand. Hayden thought it was gimmick at first, but ended up liking it!

straight away. Even with the low rings the Forge sat down nicely, still leaving plenty of room up front for the big 50mm lens housing. The rear height was fine too, so no cheek adjustments were needed for me to shoot it well.

My first step was to zero the scope, along with resetting its zero stop, which didn't take long – this rifle is very accurate and the Forge was nice to shoot with. Re-zeroing the turrets is easy, Bushnell has supplied a little clip that holds the tools for the job. For zeroing, place the turret caps in the locked position, then use the allen key to loosen 3x grub screws,

then turn the turret to zero. To reset the zero stop, remove the turret cap completely, which exposes the Z-Lok disc.

Loosening the three grub screws allows you to bottom out the disc; you then turn it clockwise until the lock pins come into contact. Tighten up the screws and refit the turret and you're ready to go. Not as complicated as it sounds – it took me only a couple of minutes. I also set the fast focus eye-piece which worked nicely with the 100mm of eye relief available.

With the above completed I shot a couple of 100 yard groups measuring a consistent 1/2" inch. Next came a trackability test of the elevation and windage. I set the rifle up, again on the 100 yard range, and dialled up 10 MOA of elevation, watching it track up to the premeasured dot. I then did the same with windage until I had completed a full cycle back to zero. The Forge tracked beautifully, which allowed me to



move back to 550 yards and then 650 yards where it shot very well, adjusting smoothly through its 1/4" MOA dial increments. Glass-wise the Forge provided excellent viewing and the smooth parallax adjustment from 25 yards to infinity made for a very clear picture with a flat, undistorted image.

#### FIELD TEST

After the range testing it was time to hit the hills. With the total rifle/scope package weighing in at 7.5lb it was nice to carry around. The stags were

stripping their velvet and colouring up, an ideal time to get one on the deck before the roar.

I hunted for a good week on the East Coast hoping to turn up a 300DS stag, but with super-hot conditions it turned out to be a real challenge. I did get onto a good 12-point red on the first night but waited for something better to turn up, and unbeknown to me this was the only mature stag I would see on the trip.

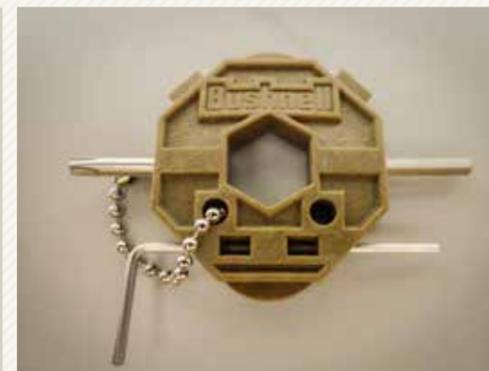
On the last day however, we snuck in on a group of deer and with the Forge ready

⚙️ The 7mm SAUM, introduced by Remington in 2002, packs a lot of punch into a short package. The cartridge typically launches a 140 grain bullet at over 3100fps.

for action at 250 yards I took two fat spikers for the freezer with no trouble at all.

Next on the agenda was to chase some fallow bucks, following a report from a mate that he'd seen a big boy stripped out. This was enough to have me leaving home before 4am to reach the likely spot just on daylight. I bumped into the buck just before first light, but with no chance for a shot it was a long day waiting him out until last light. He finally appeared with 10 minutes of light left, and making a run for it, I closed the distance to 300 yards as he moved through cover.

Setting up the Forge for the shot I was impressed with the amount of light it provided and I felt more than comfortable making the shot right on



**"DURING THE TIME I HAD THIS SCOPE ON TEST I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO TAKE THREE RED DEER WITH IT, PLUS HALF A DOZEN GOATS FROM 250 YARDS TO 476 YARDS WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS."**

⚙️ This handy clip holds the simple tools needed to adjust the Forge. The scope also comes with a sun-shade attachment, a cover, plastic flip-up caps and a cleaning cloth.

this a nice unit.

Bushnell (and Ampro Sales Ltd) have made this scope affordable – it comes in the mid-price range at NZ\$1400. You would have to spend a lot more cash to find a better scope.

At 762 grams it is slightly on the heavy side, but I guess this is a compromise you have to accept for a tactical style mid to long-range scope with big, exposed turrets, a throw lever on the ocular ring, and a 50mm diameter lens up front. A fine duplex reticle option would be a bonus.

Overall, I enjoyed using the Forge – it fitted well on my 7mm SAUM, making a nice rig for either hunting or target shooting. If you're in the market for a scope of this spec be sure to check out the Bushnell range – there's a few different options for the target shooter, or the keen hunter who wants to stretch the barrel when he's out in the hills!

**Hayden**

#### CONCLUSION

Bushnell has put together a tidy package with the Forge. Features like the 30mm tube, top quality glass with the EXO Barrier that helps repel water and dirt, 20 MOA of adjustment in one revolution, and a clear tactical feel, make

BUSHNELL FORGE 2.5X15-50	
Magnification x Obj. Lens	2.5-15x50mm
Parallax Adjustment	Side, 25 yd to Infinity
Eye Relief	3.9in/99.1mm
Length	13.8in/350.5mm
Weight	26.9oz/762g
Tube Diameter	30mm
Field of View (ft @100 yd)	41ft @ 2.5X to 7ft @ 15X
Elevation Adjustment Range	70 MOA / 20 MIL
Windage Adjustment Range	70 MOA / 20 MIL
Elevation Locking	Yes
Wind Locking	Yes
Zero Stop	Yes
Coatings	Fully Multi-coated
Illuminated	No
EXO Barrier	Yes
Waterproof	Yes, IPX7
Ultrawide Band	Yes
Price	SFP \$1429, FFP \$1609
NZ Importer	Ampro Sales Ltd, Petone