

## Cartridges and Projectiles

**Below:** Sambar are revered for their explosive power and ruggedness, qualities graphically depicted in this outstanding image of a stag ploughing across the Snowy River somewhere in the Cobberas Tingaringy National Park. Photo: Ken Slee.

*Since it is the bullet that actually kills, it is vital to understand how bullet design and construction determines the effectiveness of any cartridge on game. Next to shot placement, bullet performance is the most important factor – far more so than bullet energy.*

Gregor Woods 2002 - Professional Hunter

Sambar are the third largest member of the deer family, surpassed only by moose and elk. They are big and strong and their toughness is legendary. Once alarmed their nervous system seems to be impervious to shock and they have a reputation for being hard to put down with anything less than precise bullet placement, adequate cartridge and appropriate bullet performance for the angle and distance of the shot. Whilst precise bullet placement is vital, it is not easy to achieve when the target is ploughing through understorey and weaving between giant eucalypts like a runaway goods train.

Sambar are incredibly fast speed over the first 100m or so. Built like an Australian stock horse they are renowned for their ability to explode away and maintain a sizzling speed over the first few hundred metres. Like the stock horse, sambar are compact and stocky with extremely well muscled haunches that propel them from zero to high speed in seconds. My memory of the many explosive escapes by hinds and stags I have witnessed, are just blurs, for they moved so fast they were swallowed up by forest and vanished within seconds. This explosive escape makes it difficult to get in a shot, let alone a well placed one. The few times I have, my shots have been less than perfect, even when the deer was running directly away, which are the easiest of all running shots. In these instances the follow up was considerable and I was lucky to recover the deer, even though they were shot with a .375 H & H.

