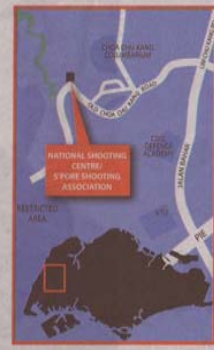


Handle it right: Instructor Dave Tan pointing out the correct way of handling and aiming a .22 rifle at the target to Ms Gan (centre) and Ms Yo (in yellow top and below, using a 9mm firearm.)



Lethal: Check out these 9mm semi-automatic firearms (near right, a Glock and, far right, an STI Eagle).



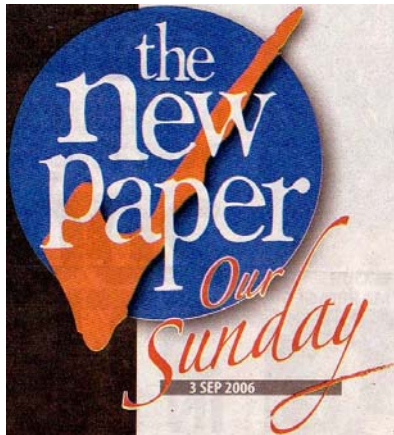
Ready, aim...: Ms Gan taking aim with a shotgun as Ms Yo and instructor Lee Yee look on.



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Want to fire a gun or semi-automatic weapon?

Now you can in S'pore. Find out where



SHE had never seen a real gun in her life. But when Ms Gan Sok Hong (in maroon, above) learnt about a new programme at the National Shooting Centre, she decided to try it out.

Said the 24-year-old assistant marketing executive: "At first, I was scared. I had never dreamed of holding a gun. But once I did that, it was like 'wow, this is a real gun I'm holding'."

She went on to try four types of firearms: The .22 rifle, .22 pistol, 9mm semi-automatic weapon and the shotgun.

"I liked the 9mm best because it was light and easy to handle," said Ms Gan, who is keen on learning more.

Ms Gan was not the only woman at the shooting range on Old Choa Chu Kang Road.

Ms Kris Ye, a 23-year-old marketing co-ordinator, was another.

They were taking part in the centre's 'try-before-you-buy' pitch to garner new memberships.

To draw people to the sport, the Singapore Shooting Association (SSA) has designed a special sampler programme which will let participants learn how to wield and fire the four types of firearms.

The sampler programme started earlier last month and is held on the last

LADIES, HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO

SHOOT AND SHOP

Now, you can realise your dream of being a marksman with try-before-you-buy day memberships at the National Shooting Centre



Report and pictures
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weekend of every month.

Said the shooting centre's general manager Daniel Yeo: "We're offering the programme at a subsidised rate of \$100 per shooter, and this includes the usage of the range, rental of weapons, bullets and targets."

Each session involving all four types of weapons will take three to four hours to complete. Each group can accommodate up to 15 shooters.

If you really want to get into the sport, you can even buy and own firearms of your choice.

But you first have to meet the strict criteria from the Arms and Explosive Licensing Division of the Singapore Police Force. For starters, you need to be at least 18 years old and a member of a registered gun club.

Once you get the clearance, prepare to fork out anywhere from \$1,500 to \$10,000 for a firearm.

And you can forget about showing off the weapon. It has to be deposited in the club's armoury.

Existing club members produced the sampler programme, and they will be taking on the roles of instructors and

safety officers.

One veteran instructor is Mr Dave Tan, a 34-year-old ex-commando who has been shooting competitively for almost 10 years and has represented the SAF in overseas meets.

Now a businessman, Mr Tan joined the club over a year ago.

He said: "I started off with the air weapons in the army, taking part in competitions and learning various type of weapons. Guns are still my passion."

FIRED UP

Now he hopes that others will be as fired up as him.

Ms Ye said the experience was initially nerve-wracking. But after the instructors calmed her, she began to enjoy it.

She said: "Compared to the other firearms, I liked the shotgun because the range was not enclosed and the targets were flying clay.

"It was a great experience, especially since we girls do not get to serve NS."