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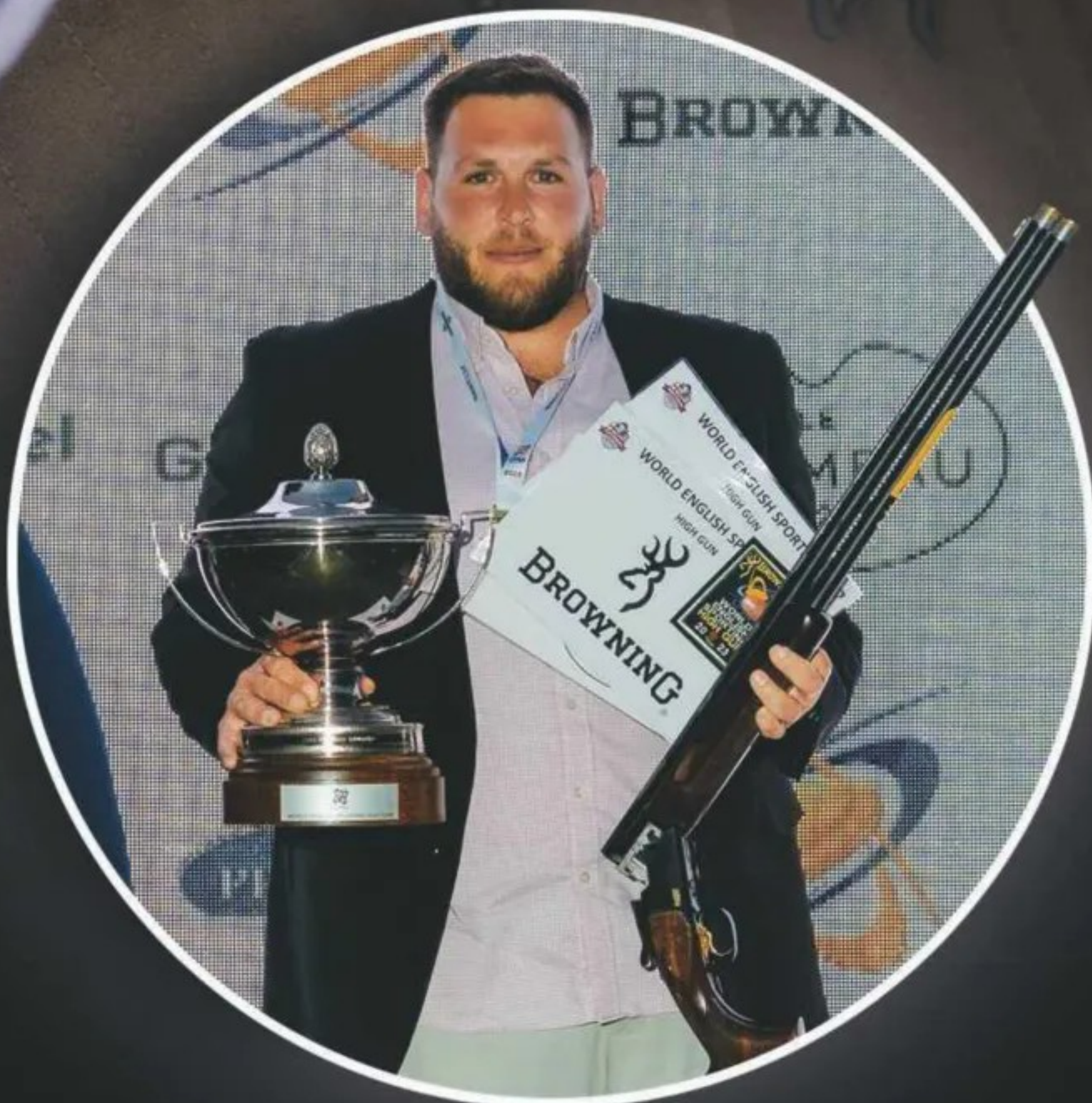
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EDITOR'S COMMENT

I can't quite believe it, but here we are with the October issue of Gun Mart! Inside, you will find a full report by Jules Whicker on The Game Fair 2023. It contains a significant selection of products from a wide array of retailers and distributors, including knives, shotguns, thermal imagers, airguns, ammo boxes, chillers/larders, and rifles. There is even a gas-ram, break-barrel 'survival rifle', with black or tan polymer furniture, that can be wrapped around its own polygonal accessories box and carried like a briefcase, ready to be deployed in seconds!

Firearms-wise, I have included a review by Chris Parkin on the brand-new Sako 90 Peak, and also a write-up that he has done on an exciting product from FX - the True Ballistic Chronograph. You will also find a piece that I have done on the Chiappa SAA 1873 .22LR Buntline Long Barrel Revolver, which was a lot of fun to shoot! Finally, Pete Moore has written up an affordable bolt-action from Mossberg; The Patriot Predator.

When it comes to airguns, Mark Camoccio has tested the Accumax S1, which is a budget springer, and the Weihrauch HW110K. He has also looked at the AirForceOne Nero Rosa SE Trophy MKII pistol, which, incidentally, you will also find a video of on our YouTube channel, Gun Mart TV. Last, but not least, Pete Wadeson has explored the capabilities of a high-end airgun from RAW; the HM1000x Chassis.

As well as a review of the Pulsar Krypton 2 FXG50 by Jules Whicker, you will also find a piece on the very affordable ATA SP Nickel shotgun by Bruce Potts.

Enjoy, and as always, safe shooting!

Ed Jackson

Managing Editor

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GUN MART

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John SP Micallef Centre
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Accuracy for

SHOW REPORT
THE GAME SHOW 2023
GAMMA REPORT

IT'S ALL GOOD
A brand-new rifle that's accurate, versatile and easy to use
THE SAND BO PEAK

ULTIMATE LONG-RANGE PRECISION
An Airgun all the way from the USA
THE RAW HMK000X CHASSIS RIFLE

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GUN MART news

All the latest news and views from the shooting world

LATEST ADDITION

➤ **Unquestionably the biggest news on the UK and European precision hunting-rifle front in 2023, Highland Outdoors is elated to announce its exclusive distribution partnership with industry leader, Gunwerks, throughout the UK, Ireland, and Europe.**

Founded in Wyoming in 2006, Gunwerks has pioneered and continued to drive industry innovation throughout the precision hunting rifle space. The most remote and challenging hunting destinations of our dreams are their boardroom. Gunwerks are not a giant corporation or a conglomeration of subsidiaries. They don't have conference rooms, budget meetings, or TPS reports. Their company is simple; They hunt hard,

shoot and train all year, and spend months, not days, with one shot between success and failure.

Steve Kelly, Highland Outdoors Group Commercial Director, said: "The team at Highland Outdoors are pinching ourselves with excitement to be working with Gunwerks throughout the UK, Ireland, and Europe. We pledge a substantial commitment to UK hunters and gunsmiths by stocking a comprehensive range of Gunwerks and Revic products. Precision rifles and shooting systems, actions and components, class-leading optics, and accessories – we're providing you access to the finest precision hunting rifle instruments on the planet.

"Furthermore, we're launching Gunwerks and



Highland Outdoors has secured an exclusive new partnership with Gunwerks

Revic UK-based websites, and in 2024 developing an extension of their Long-Range University education program for UK and European hunters. The Gunwerks agency births a new distribution model for both Highland Outdoors, and the UK and European Gun Trades. Watch this space and uncover why we believe Gunwerks are the true innovators and modern custodians of precision hunting rifle systems."

The future is bright for Gunwerks international

market expansion, and Highland Outdoors are very pleased to welcome Gunwerks and Revic products to their industry-leading portfolio. Actions, components, optics, and accessories will start arriving in the UK from next month. Rifles to follow from Q4 2023. Follow the Highland Outdoors social media platforms for further updates and developments regarding Gunwerks in Europe.

www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk

WINNER!

➤ **BRK team shooter, Fady Kiwan, has dominated the Benchrest Rimfire and Air Rifle World Championships held in Plzen, Czech Republic, winning two world titles and setting a record score with his BRK Ghost air rifle.**

The competition, which is sanctioned by the World Rimfire and Air Rifle Benchrest Federation (WRABF) and European Rimfire & Air Rifle Benchrest Shooting Federation (ERABS), saw 237 competitors from 23 countries take part in a range of events between July 26 and August 4.

Kiwan competed in the Light Varmint 25 metres, Heavy Varmint 25 metres and Unlimited at 50 metres categories. Unlike most other shooters,

who used highly specialised custom rifles, Kiwan used a standard BRK Ghost, only swapping between 17" and 28" barrels and .177 and .22 calibres – a process that takes just a few minutes.

A score of 725.21 points was not only good enough to win the 50m Unlimited World Title but set a new record of 247/250 in the process. In addition, he went on to be crowned World Champion in the Three Gun category, winning Light and Heavy Varmint categories, as well as the 50m Unlimited.

BRK's Tony Belas said: "Fady's achievement is the stuff of dreams. "To win two world titles and set a record score is one thing, but to



Fady Kiwan dominates World Championships using a BRK Ghost

be first among all the air rifle shooters in a world championship with a standard BRK Ghost – a rifle that is used by hunters and casual shooters around the world – is simply amazing." **www.brocock.co.uk**

WHO WANTS **SOME AMMO?**

➤ **Following the acquisition of Ammotec by the Beretta group, in a strategic partnership with GMK Ltd, Viking Arms is set to become the newly appointed distributor of Federal, CCI, and Speer ammunition to the UK gun trade.** The expanded portfolio positions Viking Arms as a leading force in the UK ammunition distribution sector.

Federal Ammunition, globally respected for its high-quality and varied product offerings, is a popular choice for UK shooters across disciplines. With a diverse range of ammunition suitable for hunting and shooting sports, Federal caters to a broad spectrum of firearm uses. Federal Ammunition is synonymous with consistent quality and performance, appealing to UK gun owners who value reliability. As environmental concerns rise, Federal has proactively developed lead-free primers and bullets, aligning with the eco-conscious ethos of an evolving market.

CCI, or Cascade Cartridges Inc., is an esteemed American ammunition manufacturer celebrated for its exceptional quality, innovative rimfire ammunition, and commitment to eco-conscious shooting solutions. As a specialist in rimfire ammunition, CCI provides a comprehensive

range of products that serve various applications, including target shooting, small game hunting, and pest control. Its unwavering commitment to quality control guarantees consistent performance, from reliable ignition to accuracy, making it a trusted choice for UK shooters. With offerings like lead-free bullets, CCI appeals to environmentally conscious shooters, demonstrating its forward-thinking approach to sustainable shooting practices.

Speer Ammunition, a world-renowned US-based manufacturer, brings to the UK market its innovative and high-quality ammunition offerings. Speer upholds stringent quality standards, ensuring every round offers consistent performance, whether for hunting or target practice. Speer ammunition provides UK shooters with innovative, diverse, and reliable options tailored to their specific needs, regardless of the shooting application.

The transition of Federal, CCI, and Speer ammunition supply from GMK Ltd to Viking Arms will commence from September 2023. Retailers and customers can anticipate the availability of these new additions through Viking Arms starting from October 2023.

www.vikingshoot.com



Viking Arms expands portfolio to become a leading UK ammunition distributor

NEW VIDEOS COMING TO



We have had some exciting new content appearing on **Gun Mart TV** this month. The latest uploads include:

FIERCE CT RAGE



CHIAPPA SAA 1873 .22LR BUNTLINE LBR



SAKO 90 PEAK



New videos are being added all the time so check out the channel:

youtube.com/GunMartTV

Scan Me

GUN MART

Kit Box

All the finest kit and caboodle for the seriously savvy shooter...

Get some support

› Vanguard has been designing and manufacturing award-winning support systems since 1986 and has used that experience to launch their most stable and precise gun rest to date in the Endeavor L Series.

The base is a 3-section tripod with 30mm diameter legs. These are designed to deliver a stable platform that is second to none, with a choice of rubber or spiked feet for use on any surface. The twist-leg locks are designed to be silent in operation and lock each joint tightly. They are also easy to clean to maximise the life of the tripod, no matter where they are used. With three

easy set leg angles, the Endeavor L can be set up anywhere between 220mm and 1,730mm, making it ideal for any style of shooting and even the tallest of users.

At the top of the tripod is a ½ bowl levelling system that has been CNC machined from a solid block of aluminium to deliver maximum quality and the smoothest of movements. This system allows you to adjust your aim up/down ±15° or pan 360° with ease, making it easy to get on target. When locked in place, it delivers a solid base with a maximum load capacity of up to 15kg. Alternatively, the lock can be partially tightened to allow some

movement, but it will still hold your rifle if you need to release it, to use your optics, for example.

Fixed to the top of the ½ bowl levelling system with a 3/8" thread is an Endeavor GM-70 rifle clamp. This can fit any rifle between 30mm and 70mm. The clamp is loosened and tightened using a textured and oversized locking wheel that is easy to grip in the toughest weather conditions, with or without gloves. The inner clamps have textured rubber linings that maximise the grip on your rifle and prevent damage to the forend.

The Endeavor GM-70 can be removed to allow you to fit an alternative

head for photography or a spotting scope, maximising the versatility of this gun rest system. It could also fit directly onto any standard tripod (smaller 1/4" threads will need to use an adaptor).

The Endeavor L Series is designed for stability and precision, but when you need to carry it, there is a removable shoulder strap that can be fitted.

So, if you're looking for the most stable and precise gun rest on the market, check out the Endeavor L Series. Available at launch from Optics Warehouse as the company opens up to other leading dealers, or from the Vanguard website.

www.vanguardworld.co.uk

PRICE:
£99.99
(GM-70 Rifle
Clamp Only)



All business

› Just like the symbolic representation it was named after, Swazi Apparel's Totem Merino t-shirt bares the company's clan logo as a stamp of quality on this wardrobe staple. It is available in sizes XS – 3XL and the colours Olive or Iron Sand.

Made from revolutionary NuYarn Merino wool, the Totem is ideal for the hugely energetic as it is thermal regulating, wicking away any clammy moisture. Odour neutralising at the same time, pack it for hunting trips when washing is limited, and energy output is high.

The highly sustainable NuYarn Merino will dry five times faster than conventional Merino, as well as offering 35% more thermal retention, so it keeps your core at a constant temperature, even when wet. With

35% more elasticity, the Totem regains its original shape.

Highly impervious to wind, this next-to-skin layer is ultra-soft and lightweight but resistant to pilling and holes. Vented side panels improve vapour permeability, while the extra-long length cut keeps vitals warm and protected, plus prevents the top from riding up during active movement.

Davey Hughes, founder and creative director of Swazi, commented: "Hard- yards doesn't even begin to describe our new Totem. No matter the weather, this top is all business and plenty of party at the same time. Engineered with the latest smart fabric technology, it is ideal for the adventurer who depends on quality kit to help keep him at the top of his game."

www.swazi.co.nz



PRICE:
£51.21

Swazi's Totem active T-shirt

Top-notch

› Carry your cartridges in classic style with John Rigby & Co's Kalahari cartridge bag. Designed to carry 100x 12-bore shells, it combines high-quality modern craftsmanship with traditional materials to give the shooter dependability for years to come.

Part of Rigby's 'Kalahari' range of field kit, the cartridge bag is handmade in London using a tough cotton canvas that has been specially selected to withstand the rigours of the field. With tan leather trim and brass fixings, plus a sturdy canvas shoulder strap, it also offers

quick and easy access to the cartridges inside, thanks to a fold-flat hinged lid. Rigby's Kalahari range also includes a coordinating rifle slip and canvas holdall.

"Everything we do has to be fit for purpose as well as be easy on the eye, and this cartridge bag is no different," commented Rigby MD Marc Newton. "It evokes early 20th-century hunting with its classic looks, and thanks to its



PRICE:
£375.00

Rigby's Kalahari cartridge bag

durable construction, it should still be going strong well into the 21st century." www.johnrigbyandco.com

Modern Field Jacket

› The Helikon-Tex Covert M-65 Jacket comes equipped with functional outer pockets, allowing the wearer to conveniently carry items, making it very practical. Thanks to the use of DuraCanvas fabric, it will also be an excellent choice for everyday use, especially in the autumn and winter periods, when it will protect the user from light rain and wind. A unique patent used in the M65 jacket is a pocket that can be detached and used as a separate

fanny pack for documents or a phone. Inside, symmetrically on the left and the right side, there are pockets for magazines. The two outer ones on the sides can serve as improvised dump pouches. The jacket has been additionally reinforced in places exposed to damage and equipped with a hood hidden in the collar. The front is fastened with strong Canadian buttons and a 'break-away' zipper, which allows immediate unfastening. www.helikon-tex.com

The M-65 Jacket is a great choice for everyday use



PRICE:
€134.10



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PRW2

Perma-Rings Weaver Style



Cross-Slot mounting systems feature Weaver-style rings that work with both Weaver or Picatinny rails. These are ideal for standard to magnum calibres.

Rings from **£81 RRP**

QRW2

Quick-Release-Rings & Bases Weaver Style



Cross-Slot mounting systems feature Weaver-style rings that work with both Weaver or Picatinny rails with 1-piece and 2-piece bases. Ideal for standard to magnum calibres.

Rings from **£100 RRP**
Bases from **£36 RRP**

RIFLEMAN

Rings



Made from aluminium Rifleman® rings are an economical alternative to steel mounts, yet these rings still provide the strength and accuracy you expect from Leupold.

Rings from **£27 RRP**

QR

Rings & Bases



Quick Release (QR™) rings and bases make it easy to remove your optic and replace it, all while maintaining zero (+/- ¼ MOA). Suitable for muzzle loaders and large calibre rifles.

Rings from **£42 RRP**
Bases from **£36 RRP**

STD

Standard Rings & Bases



Steel Standard (STD) rings and bases are the most versatile of any mounting system Leupold offer. They are the perfect choice for standard calibres less than .300 Win. Mag.

Rings from **£41 RRP**
Bases from **£41 RRP**

MARK 4

Rings



The steel Mark 4® cross-slot mount is designed to fit a Picatinny rail. These mounts are machined with precision tolerances to offer superior integrity based on the proven cross-slot design.

Rings from **£190 RRP**

MARK IMS

Leupold Integrated Mounting Systems



The Mark IMS™ eliminates the two most common issues when mounting riflescopes to AR-style rifles; scope height & eye relief. It's designed to fit a MIL-spec 1913/Picatinny rail and any scope with a 35mm maintube.

Rings from **£434 RRP**

BACKCOUNTRY

Rails



BackCountry cross-slot bases are made of 7075-T6 aluminium, making them some of Leupold's lightest and most rugged mounts yet. Accepts both Picatinny- and Weaver-style rings.

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VX-FREEDOM



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
1.5-4x20	1"	Pigplex	£410
2-7x33	1"	Hunt-Plex	£410
2-7x33 Rimfire	1"	Rimfire MOA	£410
3-9x33 Air Rifle	1"	Fine Duplex	£550
3-9x40	1"	Hunt-Plex	£410
3-9x40 Rimfire	1"	Rimfire MOA	£410
3-9x40 Rimfire	1"	Duplex	£410
3-9x50	30mm	Illum. Twilight Hunter	£820
3-9x50	1"	Duplex	£480
4-12x40	30mm	Tri-MOA	£685
6-18x40	30mm	Tri-MOA	£685

MARK 3 HD



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
8-24x50	30mm	TMR	£955

VX-3HD



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
1.5-5x20	30mm	Illum. Twilight Hunter	£955
2.5-8x36	1"	Duplex	£685
3.5-10x40	30mm	Illum. Twilight Hunter	£955
3.5-10x50	30mm	Illum. Twilight Hunter	£1,095
4.5-14x40	30mm	Wind-Plex	£1,025
4.5-14x50	30mm	Illum. Twilight Hunter	£1,2305
6.5-20x50	30mm	Fine Duplex	£1,105

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Leupold Gold
Ring Dealer
vikingshoot.com/
where-to-buy



VX-5HD



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
1-5x24	30mm	Illum. 4 Fine	£1,435
3-15x56	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£2,050
3-15x44	30mm	Impact-29 MOA	£1,915
1-5x24	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£1,640
3-15x44	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£1,640
3-15x56	30mm	Illum. 4 Fine	£2,050

VX-6HD



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
1-6x24	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£2,050
1-6x24	30mm	Green Illum. BDC	£1,670
1-6x24	30mm	Illum. 4 Fine	£2,040
2-12x42	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£2,320
3-18x44	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£2,460
3-18x50	30mm	Illum. Duplex	£2,595
3-18x50	30mm	Illum. TMOA	£2,870
3-18x50	30mm	Illum. 4 Fine	£2,050
4-24x52	34mm	Illum. TMOA	£2,870
4-24x52	34mm	Illum. Varmint Hunter	£3,140

MARK 5HD



Magnification	Tube	Reticle	RRP
3.6-18x44 FFP	35mm	Illum. TMR	£3,370
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	Illum. Tremor 3	£4,075
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	CCH	£3,235
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	Illum. TMR	£3,655
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	Tremor 3	£3,370
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	PMR-MIL	£2,950
5-25x56 FFP	35mm	TMR	£2,950
7-35x56 FFP	35mm	PR2-MIL	£3,225
7-35x56 FFP	35mm	PR2-MOA	£3,225
7-35x56 FFP	35mm	CCH	£3,510
7-35x56 FFP	35mm	Illum. TMR	£4,075

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8x42 & 10x42
From £315 RRP



BX-4 Pro Guide
8x42, 10x42 & 10x50
From £795 RRP



BX-5 Santiam
10x42 & 15x56
From £1,365 RRP



BX-T
8x42 MIL Reticle
From £710 RRP

RANGEFINDERS



Model	Magnification	RRP
RX-1400i TBR/W	5x	£275
RX-1600i TBR/W	6x	£660
RX-2800 TBR/W	7x	£820



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GUN MART

Best on Test

Our experts bring you reviews of the top shooting products and services

Umarex ReadyAir Compressor

➤ There's a lot to be said for sticking with spring-powered airguns, and a huge advantage is their total independence.

However, many of us consider pre-charged pneumatics worth the hassle, due to the stress and recoil-free shooting they deliver. The one big drawback with PCPs is their reliance on an external power source, and the fact that they need to be filled/charged up periodically is a source of irritation for sure.

Apparently, during the lockdown, spring-powered airgun sales dramatically increased, as a large number of PCP shooters suddenly found the local diving shop closed. With the air supply literally cut off, many felt vulnerable, and it made sense to switch to springers. However, the options for charging our PCPs are now greater than ever.

ReadyAir

On test here is a brand-new air compressor from Umarex, and first impressions are of a very smart and robust unit, built to last. Unpacking the compressor is the first task, and it pays to familiarise yourself with the instructions, and what all the items are in the box, as safe operation is a priority whenever high-pressure air is involved. Inside the box are various adaptors, several different cables, spare seals, and instructions. The main filling hose is pre-fitted with the main Foster adaptor, and three other adaptors are



PRICE:
£839.95

supplied – 1/8" UNF, M10, and M10x1. This is a good starting point, meaning many of the most popular PCP airguns on the market are catered for. The system is specified and designed to be oil and water free, which in theory keeps things simple, but large

onboard fans are designed to do the cooling when required.

Basic setup

Right, let's get the basics in place and then we can get started. First, take the main hose line and screw it onto the large thread on the

compressor. Gently nip it up with a spanner to get a good air seal. There are two power leads supplied – a UK and a European two-pin. Plug in the power lead into the power slot on the unit, and then plug it into the mains and switch on at the plug. At this point, you'll hear the fans start up.

Now we need to set the digital display. Hold the 'Set' button down for five seconds, and then the display will start to flash. At this point, use the down and up arrows to cycle through what you need to change. The display can be changed to be in English or Spanish, and the working temperature can be switched between centigrade and Celsius. The cut-off temperature can also be set.



Charging in progress. Note the carry handle on the top

Key settings

As for the key details, pressure can be digitally set to show as either bar or psi, and then the cut-off pressure can be input. On test, I selected my Impact Airguns GSX600 to charge, and this has a working pressure of 200 bar and a conventional air cylinder. It was sitting at 110 bar already, so I set the display to 200 bar. In normal use, this would be a classic top-up scenario.

The Impact has a Foster connector, so it was simple to connect the gun to the compressor, via the main Foster link on the hose. Otherwise, the other adaptor heads just snap into place on the hose. Press 'ON' on the display pad and the compressor fires into action. There's a loud chug...chug...chug from the unit, as it goes about its business, and you can see the pressure figure rising on the display. Once the entered pressure has been reached, the unit is designed to automatically shut off for safety, and this all worked fine. A timer shows how long it has been in operation, and the working temperature is also shown. This is all handy further down the line, when it may need a service, and comparisons can be made, i.e., charging starts to take longer, and the unit gets hotter.

With the gun charged, switch off the unit and then the brass bleed valve can be safely opened to vent the line. In use, the Readyair is noisy, but not excessively so.

Observations & results

The marketing for the Readyair states that there's an "easy-to-read pressure gauge and intuitive full-colour control panel for user-friendly operation". I've no issue with that other than I did find that, as with most digital devices, try and operate anywhere near bright light, or near sunlight, and the display becomes awkward to read. Inside, away from daylight, all was fine. Last-used settings are remembered on the display, which eliminates the need for repeated input, which is good to see.

On test, filling my rifle from its residual 110 bar up to 200 bar took just 1.5 minutes, which is very fast indeed, and other specification states a 200ml/200cc capacity vessel should take seven minutes to reach 200 bar from scratch. The maximum fill pressure is 300 bar or 4,500psi (approximately), and that makes the Readyair extremely versatile, just factor in a few more minutes at the top end.

All pretty impressive. As mentioned, Umarex includes red and black leads



Digital settings can show the pressure in psi

to connect up and run this compressor from a car battery, or another suitable 12v battery, which brings versatility, but I reckon most prospective shooters will opt for running from the mains.

Verdict

Simple to use, portable, and highly effective on test. Longevity and reliability will be interesting, but with a quality feel and impressive

build quality, there's no reason to question anything. As for periodic maintenance, the self-service kit of seals etc. is supplied, and a quick glance at the Umarex website reveals a guidance video on how to make use of them. All pretty comprehensive then, from a well-respected brand, bringing all-important independence to the PCP enthusiast.

REVIEWER: MARK CAMOCCIO

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Umarex ReadyAir Compressor

Working Voltage: AC 220V, 50Hz / DC 12V

Dimensions: 14.5" x 14" x 9"

Weight: 22 lbs

Max Working Pressure: 300bar

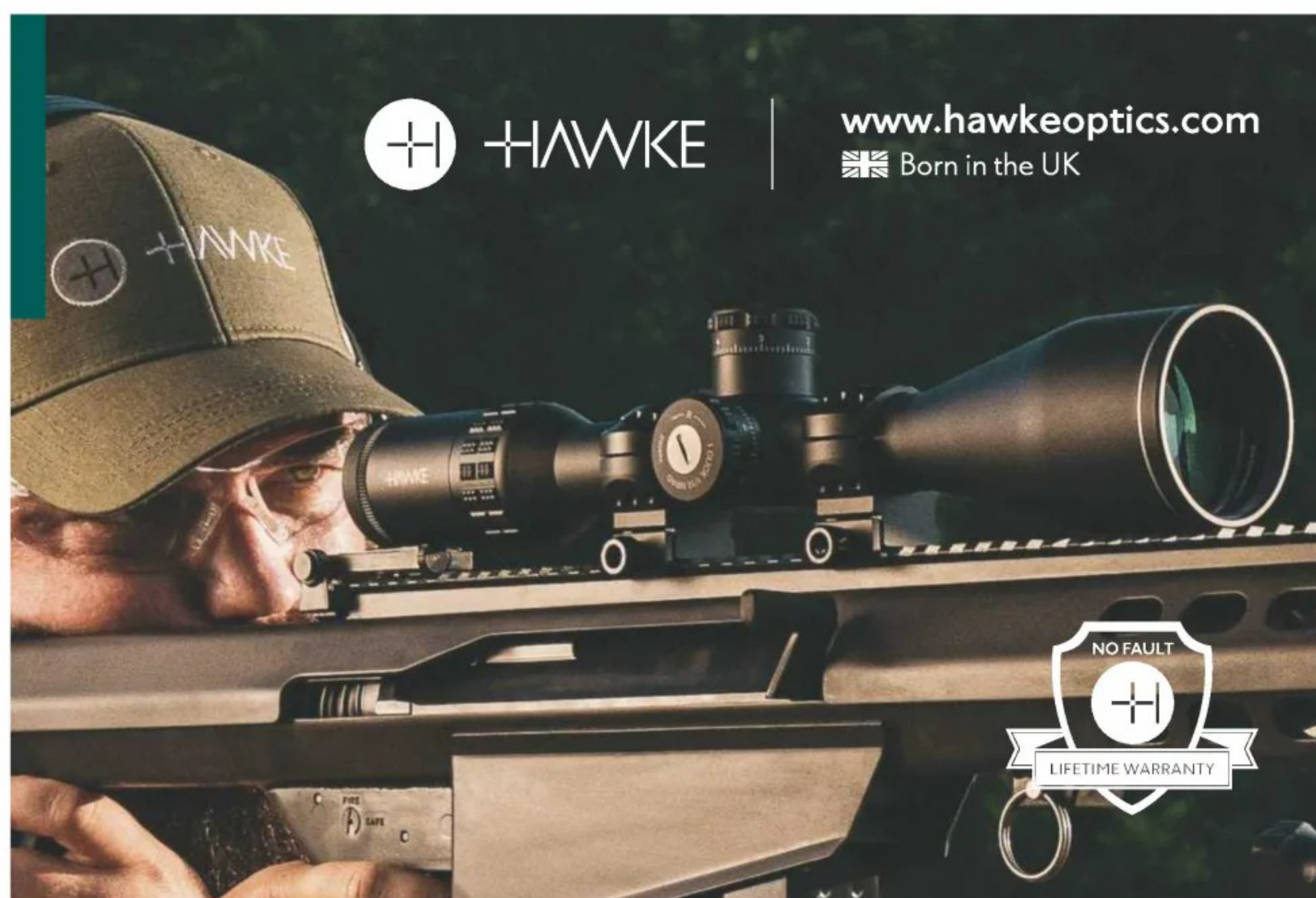
Power: 350w

Working Volume: 90db

Price: £839.95

Includes: Four Adaptors, Mains Cables, Filling Hose, Spare Seals, Car Battery Leads, and Instructions

Contact: John Rothery Wholesale - www.bisley-uk.com



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These are just some of the reasons to upgrade.

GM10/23/54

Maxpedition Duality Convertible Backpack

➤ **The Maxpedition Duality Convertible Backpack is one of the manufacturer's smaller packs, with a capacity of just 16 litres, but it is still packed with clever and useful features.**

As its name suggests, the pack can provide two different modes of use. Two separate shoulder straps mean it can be carried as a normal backpack. However, they can also both be zipped together to form a single strap, so it can be worn over either shoulder as a sling pack. With the capacity of the pack being relatively small, the straps and the back are only lightly padded, but they are still comfortable in both the single and the double configuration. The zipped sides of the straps do not snag or rub against clothing, because they are designed in a way that keeps them away from it, and in use did not prove a problem at all.

Two in one

With the duality function, you can haul your gear more comfortably over a distance using the backpack mode (employing two straps), and then switch to a sling-carry, with the one strap, freeing up your chosen shoulder so you can shoot unrestricted. Switching between the functions takes just a few seconds and can be done quietly, making this a great pack if you are stalking.

The large main compartment is accessible via a double-zippered opening at the top that extends halfway down each side to give good access to the contents. Inside there's a slip pocket on the back, but other than that, it is a clear space for large items.



All compartments are equipped with high-quality zippers that have extended pulls



The design of the admin pockets, with a drawbridge feature, ensures everything stays secure



Double-strap backpack mode

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Maxpedition Duality Convertible Backpack

Price: £178.95

Contact: Military 1st - www.military1st.co.uk

Easy access

The second mid-sized compartment has similar access, with the zipper extending two-thirds of the way down each side, and a full Velcro interior lining for attaching items to. In the centre of the opening, on the front flap, there is a loop that you can pull to open the compartment fully very quickly. This is really useful and it means you can instantly get to a first aid kit stored in this compartment, one-handed, just in case.

The smallest front pocket has an admin-style layout, with various elasticated loops and slip pockets, plus a fold-down front for full access. The 'drawbridge' design of the front flap has an adjustable cord on either side, which controls how far down it opens. This very clever feature allows you to set the flap to give full access to the inside, without items spilling out onto the ground.

Fixtures and fittings

All of the high-quality YKK zippers have cord pulls and operate very smoothly, plus the buckles are all quick-release. The bag is made from 100 Denier water and abrasion-resistant ballistic nylon, with a Teflon coating, and water will bead and then run off the surface, protecting the contents completely. The material can also be wiped clean very easily.

Measuring 11 x 62 x 14" and weighing only 715-grams, this is a great lightweight carry that is very well made and built to last.

REVIEWER:

MARK UNDERWOOD

Pentagon 'Hippokrates' First Aid Kit, Red

➤ It really makes sense to make sure you have a compact yet versatile first aid kit handy, whether for small cuts and sprains, or more serious injuries that need stabilising whilst further medical attention is sought out. It's amazing how helpless you are with nothing, yet even the smallest amount of kit can inspire the greatest levels of improvisation to aid the injured.

I am not accident-prone, but I have used a kit twice in the last year that is stored in my vehicle and carried in my rucksack when travelling on foot. It measures just 13 x 10 x 7cm, weighs 310-grams, and includes two elastic 7.5 x 4.5cm PBT bandages, one 10 x 4.5cm elastic crepe bandage, 10 adhesive plasters, adhesive tape, scissors, a 5 x 5cm non-adherent wound pad, assorted safety pins, handwash, cleaning wipes, latex gloves, and two mouth-to-mouth resuscitation pieces in separate pouches.



PRICE:
£19.95

Many of the essential items you need to cater for immediate first aid needs



Everything fits in a zippered polyester pouch that's available in bright red (my preference), black or green. If you want to carry it visibly in plain sight, with the first aid insignia on show, it can be worn vertically or horizontally, and the two-way zipper gives immediate access to the internal storage segregated by four elasticated loops and a zipped mesh pocket.

The kit is durable, with double stitching on stress points, and the Velcro-type loops on the rear will also attach to a belt or other webbing.

REVIEWER: CHRIS PARKIN

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Pentagon 'Hippokrates' First Aid Kit, Red

Price: £19.95

Contact: Military 1st - www.military1st.co.uk

Jack Pyke Thermal Bottle

➤ Whether hunting, hiking, or walking, a hot or cold drink can be a necessity. Some flasks can be cumbersome, but it's usually the top-end brands that take the trouble to supply a more specific design, with flasks that are easily stored and don't require special carrying cases.

I say this because this ergonomically designed flask measures 10.5" in height and is largely 2¾" in diameter, tapering up to the sensibly sized end cap. This allows the flask not only to be easily stored but carried if running in hot weather or jogging when cold. Alternatively, for the hunter or hiker, it means

it will slip into a larger pocket and can certainly be kept in the mesh-style side pockets found on small backpacks.

On inspection, it shows a good build quality, with the small screw-on cap having a generous inner synthetic seal, while the outer upper edge has ridging enabling it to be easily gripped by cold or gloved hands.

Constructed from stainless steel, with an outer anti-glare green

finish, this robust 500ml thermal bottle will easily keep your beverage as cool or hot as when you put the liquid in, for up to approximately eight hours, although this depends on how many times you open and close it to pour out a drink. It's worth noting that Jack Pyke can supply thermal mugs should you wish to match up your drinks-ware.

REVIEWER: PETE WADESON

PRICE:
£10.50



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Jack Pyke Thermal Bottle

Price: £10.50

Contact: Thatchreed Ltd - www.jackpyke.co.uk

Hawke Vantage 3-9x40 AO Mil-Dot Riflescope

It still amazes me that in a market where you can easily pay several thousand pounds for optics at the top end of the range, such amazing bargains exist slightly lower down the scale. Like so many other areas of life though, it all comes down to priorities and specific applications. Scopes are available right across the price spectrum, and at a time when many are feeling strapped for cash and squeezed financially, it's comforting to know that your latest acquisition doesn't have to empty the bank account.

Bargain hunt

Hawke Optics now offers a large selection of models across several price sectors, and many of these are aimed at shooters who want value for money, as well as a host of modern features. On test here then is the Hawke Vantage 3-9x40 AO Mil-Dot, which falls squarely into the latter category, and when you consider that it currently retails for just £99, it is, on the face of it, amazing value for money.

Open the box and take it out of the packaging, and one's first impressions are of a smart, well-finished product, that certainly looks the part, and definitely belies its low asking price! That matte black non-reflective finish to the 1" body tube keeps things practical for any hunting scenario, and the low-profile turrets with screw caps are again highly practical and make a refreshing change from overly bulky target turrets.

Familiar spec

This Vantage offers one of the most popular scope specifications of 3-9x40, and



The clicks are positive. Note the low-profile turrets



Elasticated lens caps protect the glass

the AO in the name denotes an 'Adjustable Objective'. The trend for side-wheel focusing is all very well, but it doesn't always make sense. The primary use is arguably Field Target shooting, and in this scenario, being able to (parallax) range find by dialling the side turret (all whilst in the aim) is now a pre-requisite. FT shooters use ultra-high magnification, and the shallow depth of field accentuates the difference in target distances. In addition, the side wheel makes the process more accurate by increasing the gap between marked distances on the wheel. With the lower magnification on offer here with the Vantage (9x max), parallax range finding is irrelevant, so side-wheel mounting is therefore unnecessary. Okay, we've cleared that one up.

Getting started

Hawke tends to deliver its new scopes with the fast-focus dioptre at the rear



(Left) AO denotes 'Adjustable Objective' lens. Note the markings

(Below) The Mil-Dot reticle



Note the knurled magnification collar



The fast focus at the rear

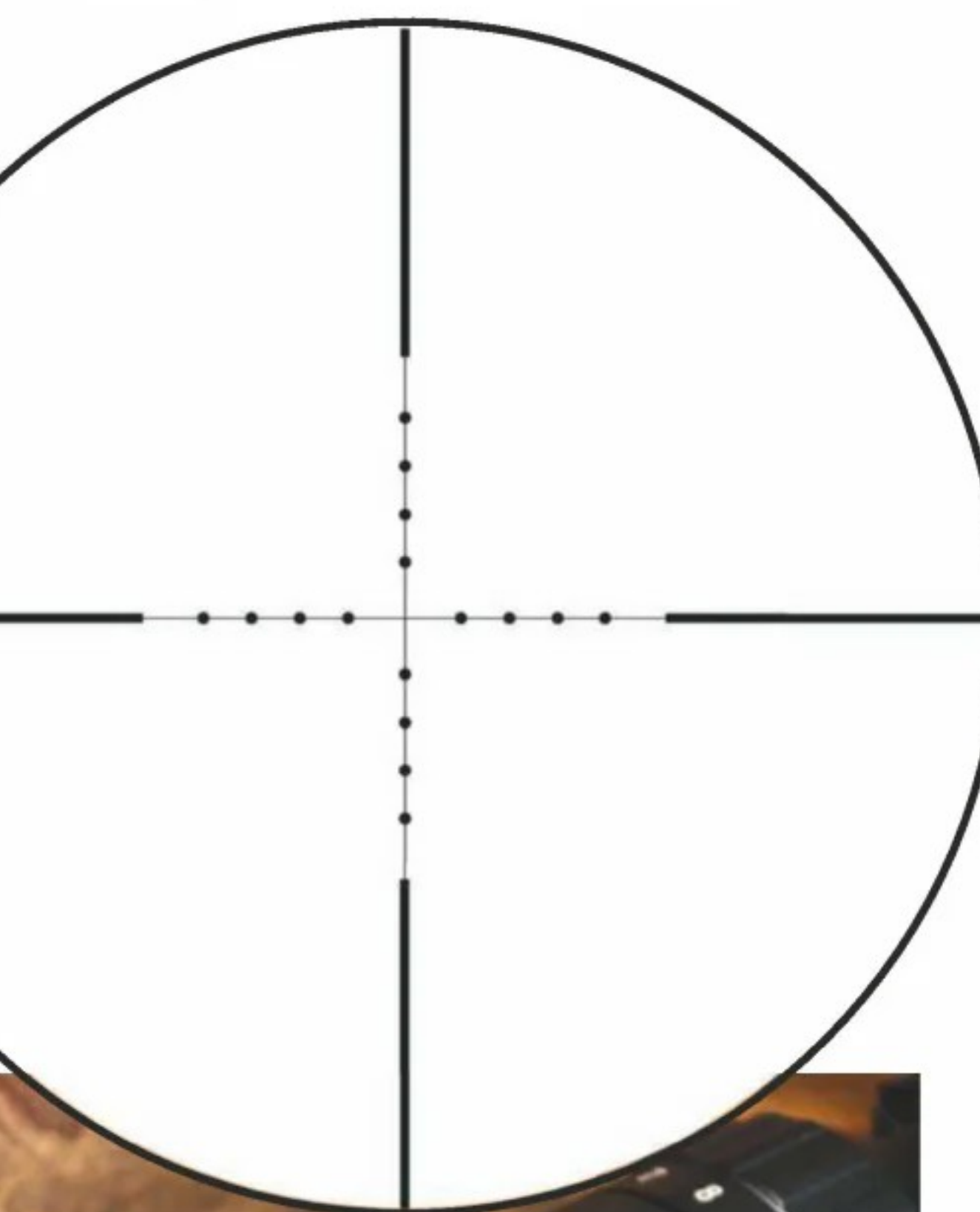
wound right in, and the magnification wound round to minimum. I tend to do most of my shooting on 9x, so this scope's spec suits me perfectly, but being able to quickly dial down to 3x, where you see everything, is handy of course. Winding up the magnification to maximum using the ridged, high torque zoom ring proved smooth in operation, yet still with plenty of resistance. From here, as usual, the next task is to get the reticle sharply in focus, by gently twisting the ocular dioptre. With this all set, it's time to hit the range.

Twisting the front parallax collar is another smooth operation, again with just the right amount of resistance. In other words, it won't easily move out of its setting. The minimum marked-up distance on the dial is 30ft, then 50ft, 25 yards, 50, 75, 100, 200, 300, and infinity. All Vantage models feature Hawke's H2 class glass lenses, and these are 11-layer, fully multi-coated.

That's the sales blurb over, but in the real world, all I can say is that the image quality, edge-to-edge clarity, sharpness, and vibrancy are genuinely damn good.

Zeroing in

Setting the objective bell for parallax correction on the test, showed that personal eyesight may well play a part in this. I started at my initial test range of 25 yards, and when I had adjusted the Vantage for pin-sharp clarity, the dial read 50ft. So, some way out, but not uncommon. If you do want to use the dial as a reference, it may well pay to add some tape and a personal scale of distances. That said, real-world use will probably see the user simply adjust the dial for middle-range clarity, and then leave it well alone. This isn't an FT scope after all, and with a maximum mag of 9x, there's a usable level of blur when viewing targets from 8 to 45 yards, when the AO parallax dial is set to 25 yards (actual distance).



ignored. Zeroing and then checking and re-tracking movement proved the turret mechanism was all in order.

Mil-Dot reticle

The Mil-Dot reticle shows four Mil-Dots in each quadrant, equidistant, so there are plenty of reference points for both windage and elevation. The proportions are highly usable too, with each gap bracketing a 20mm kill zone at 25 yards, when viewed on 9x, measured between the crosshair and just under the dot above. As for the diagram overall, this is a slightly thicker, bolder design than Hawke's AMX designs, and as such, is less prone to being lost in dark foliage, when viewing up into trees. There's no illumination, but for those who insist on that, there's a corresponding model, roughly £35 more, in the Vantage IR range.

Verdict

Overall, this scope is a great little performer, and with all the usual assurances – fog-proof, waterproof, shockproof, 'all calibre rated' – and Hawke's No-Fault Lifetime Warranty, it's hard to fault as a starter optic or all-round budget option.

REVIEWER: MARK CAMOCCIO

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Hawke Vantage 3-9x40 AO Mil-Dot Rifle Scope
Reticle: Mil-Dot
Weight: 17 oz
Eye Relief: 3.5"
Click Values: ¼ MOA
Field of View: 39-12.7ft @100yds
Body Tube: 1"
Minimum Focus: 10 yards
Length: 12.7"
Clicks Per Rotation: 60
Number of Rotations: 7.5 Windage, 7 Elevation
Price: £99
Contact: Hawke Sport Optics - www.hawkeoptics.com



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Jack Pyke Sherpa Fleece Gilet, Sherpa Junior Fleece Gilet, and Countryman Chunky Fleece Gilet

➤ Last year, Jack Pyke brought us the Sherpa Fleece Jacket and Sherpa Fleece Hoodie. Such was their success, they've now complemented the range with three Gilets and even a Sherpa Fleece Dog Coat! However, it's the Gilets I'm detailing here and although the trio have a similar design, they're made for specific purposes and age groups.



(Left) The Jack Pyke Sherpa Fleece Gilet (Middle) The Countryman Chunky Fleece Gilet (Right) The Junior Sherpa Fleece Gilet

Attributes & usage

Sherpa is made from a stretch polyester fabric that has a textured look and at times is superior to other fleece types, being warmer and soft to the touch. The outer of the garment is a deep pile fleece and all garments in this range are manufactured from 300g polyester fleece. However, they're still quite lightweight, don't restrict movement and are very comfortable to wear, aided by the soft fleece-like nylon lining that offers extra comfort.

Build similarities

All have full-length double zippers with pull assist for easy access and temperature control. They have extra high necks, plus an elasticated

internal cord hemline with toggle adjusters for a snug fit to ensure no draughts can enter.

Sherpa fleece also lines the inner necks and storage is catered for by 2x lined lower-side zipped pockets with pull assists. Internal lower-side contrast panels give added strength and durability in these key areas, plus extra breathability.

Man size

The Jack Pyke Sherpa Fleece Gilet has contrasting flat-face polyester material sensibly proportioned over the shoulders for durability, making it a very stylish and versatile garment. It is available in sizes S-3XL.

but is manufactured from the same material, so deserves its place in this round-up. It's a much more substantial garment due to the deeper, thickset pile fleece used in the build, which results in the pile trapping more warm air and giving added protection, resulting in the best thermal properties of the trio. So much so that it can be worn

as an outer layer on even the coldest of days, and when undertaking cold-weather jobs that require unrestricted freedom of movement. Like the Junior, it also features Nubuck piping on either side of the zip, around the arms, and the top of the neck. It's available in sizes S-3XL.

Conclusions

Gilets are one of the most useful items of outdoor wear for those out and about when the weather turns colder. The three here are high in quality, very comfortable to wear, and very versatile.

REVIEWER: PETE WADESON

The Junior Sherpa Fleece Gilet boasts the same features but is obviously designed for young outdoor enthusiasts. It omits the contrasting shoulder panels but features Nubuck piping at the front, around the arm holes, and the neck, making it ideal for any young outdoor adventurer. It's available in sizes 3XS-XL.

Substantially yours

The Jack Pyke Countryman Chunky Fleece Gilet doesn't bear the 'Sherpa' denotation

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Jack Pyke Sherpa Fleece Gilet, Junior Sherpa Fleece Gilet, and Countryman Chunky Fleece Gilet

Price: £36.95, £23.95 & £34.95, respectively

Contact: Thatchreed Ltd - www.jackpyke.co.uk

Pentagon Achilles XTR 6" Tactical Boots

➤ **Recently, I was privileged to test several garments from the Pentagon range of outdoor wear, a highly acclaimed company established in 1991, and now a well-known manufacturer of top-quality outdoor and military clothing and equipment.**

Renowned for the use of technologically advanced fabrics and accessories, it offers a wide spectrum of products, including a comprehensive range of outdoor wear designed for urban use, undercover operators, and everyone who pursues an active lifestyle. An impressive pedigree, so let's check out what the Pentagon Achilles XTR 6" Tactical Boots have to offer.

Impressive build

The Achilles GTX are all-purpose tactical footwear suitable for rapid response situations, as well as various outdoor activities such as hiking, airsoft, paintballing, and hunting. A very fitting description due to the build, with the upper made of high-density Nubuck leather, with 1200D nylon mesh fabric for extra breathability.

These very well-designed mid-height (6" high) boots sit above the ankle and have a Hydroguard membrane to ensure they're 100%

waterproof. They also boast nylon pull loops on the back and tongue, and the padded collar, tongue, and ankle give optimum support and added comfort. The build leading up to the lower rand consists of a strong, rubberised, and strengthened black toe cap and heel support.

Shock-proofing and traction

The boots utilise an EVA midsole. This innovative energy-absorbing material stiffens on impact but flexes when protection is not required, therefore providing the wearer with safety and comfort. Interestingly, the rand is strong but surprisingly forgiving and allows a high level of flex as you walk.

The high-traction rubber outsole uses multi-directional lugs to provide maximum grip and excellent traction on a variety of terrain. They also feature a 'Toe-off zone' for added grip when pushing off during the gait cycle, plus a 'Brake zone' at the heel for added downhill grip. These are situated on what is commonly referred to respectively as the toe and heel rise.

Safe and secure

The lacing system consists of hooks, four pairs of nylon webbing loops, one pair of metal hasps, and at the very

PRICE:
£118.75



top, a pair of metal eyelets. When drawn together, they pull the boot snug to the foot and the design is such that it also uses a centrally located tongue loop to prevent slouching or drifting. Another important feature of any boot in this area are the laces. Good to say the Achilles uses very strong and durable 6mm oval laces.

Conclusions

The Achilles XTR 6" Nubuck Boots from Pentagon are incredibly sturdy and

comfortable. The extremely durable and lightweight military-style boots have a very modern and stylish design, which coupled with the long-lasting construction, enables them to cope with virtually any weather condition or hunting situation. The rubber outsole has a very well-configured lug system that is easy to clean and equally effective for when you've got boots on the ground.

REVIEWER: PETE WADESON

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Pentagon Achilles XTR 6" Tactical Boots

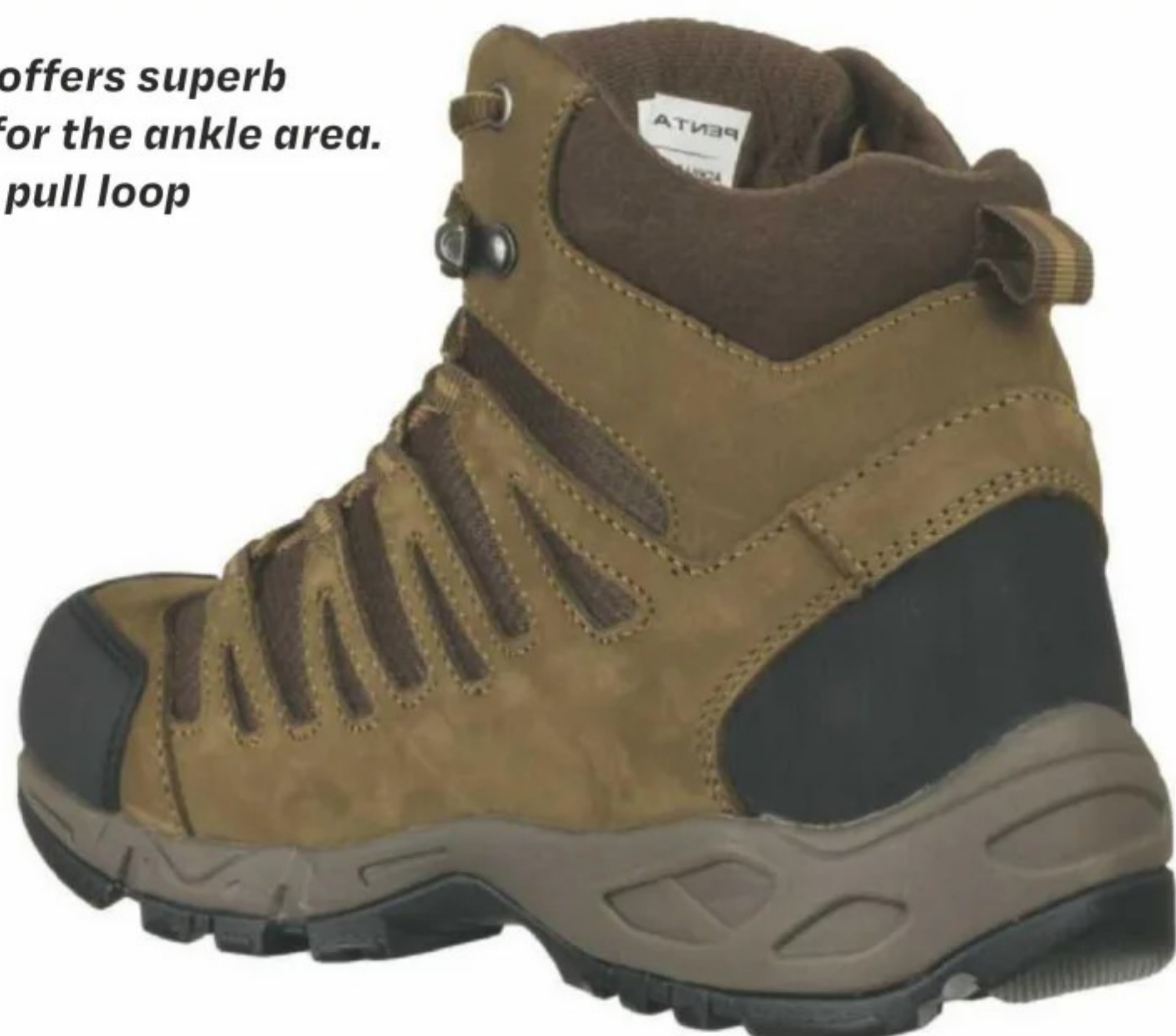
Sizes: 6-13 UK

Colour: Terra Brown

Price: £118.75

Contact: Military 1st – www.Military1st.co.uk

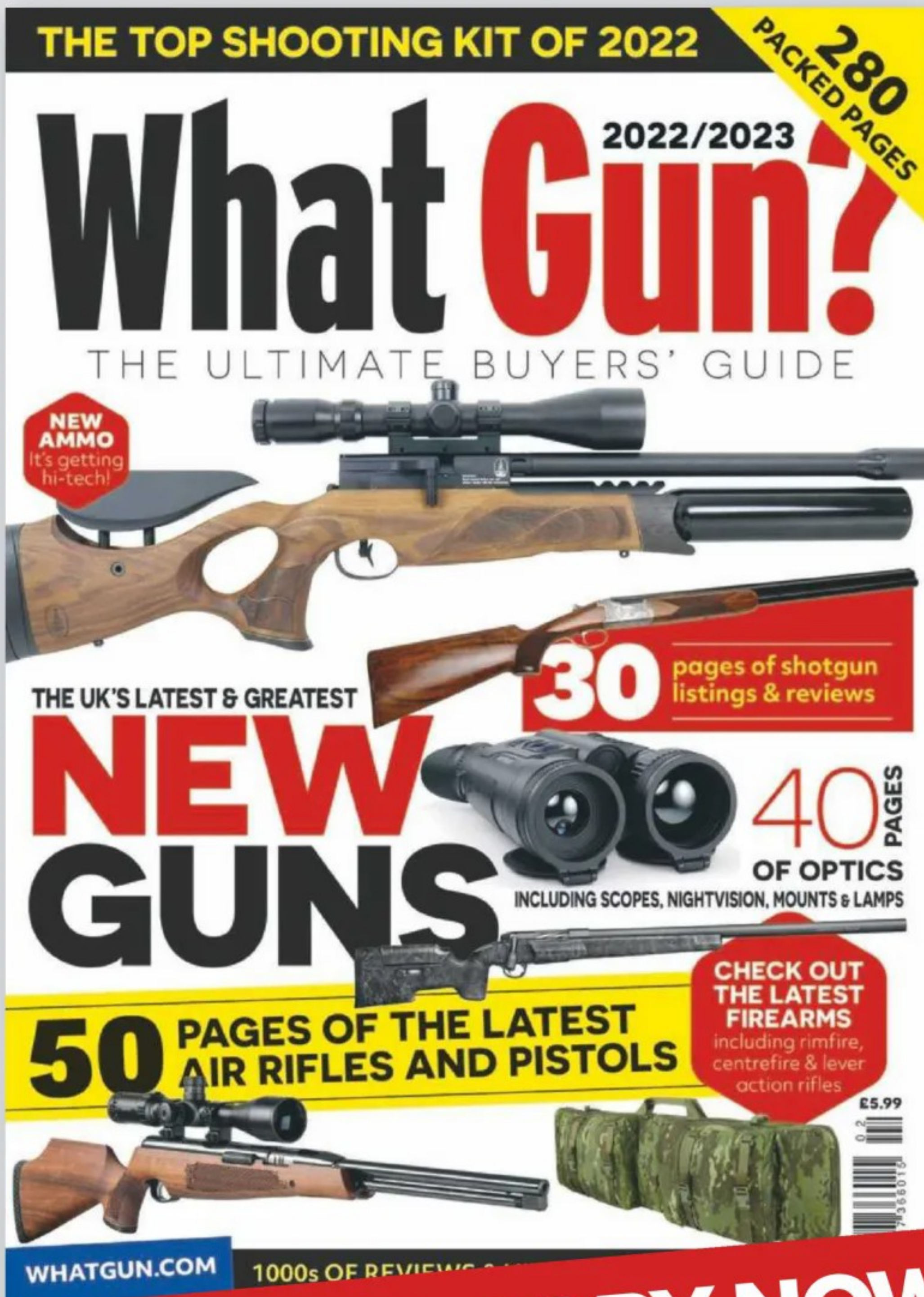
The rear offers superb support for the ankle area. Note the pull loop



The high-traction rubber outsole uses multi-directional lugs to provide maximum grip and excellent traction on a variety of terrain



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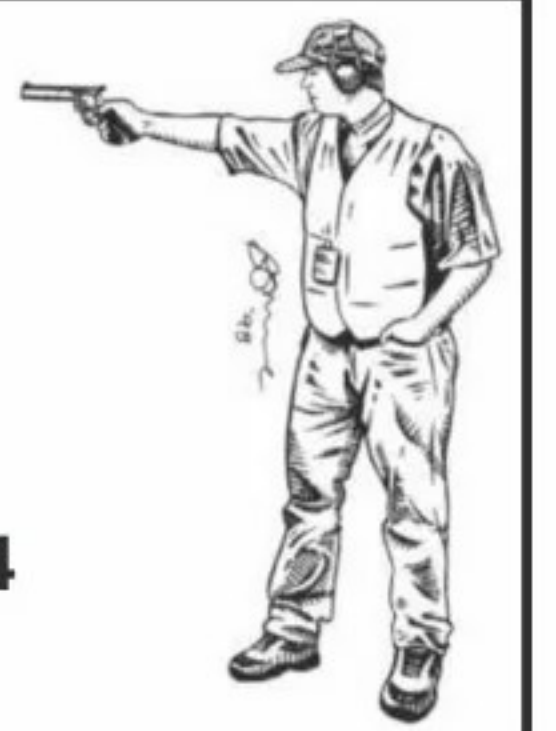


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Jules Whicker gives us his favourite finds from the 2023 Game Fair at Ragley Hall

CHESHIRE GUN ROOM - cheshiregunroom.com

A must-visit for anyone who loves guns. No one has a greater diversity of types to suit all budgets, and there's always something I've never seen 'in the flesh' before. This time it was a neat little magazine-fed Turkish .410, available in semi-auto or pump-action variants, and styled after the Benelli Argo centrefire rifle. Section 1, admittedly, but neat, nonetheless. They also showed me some amazing vintage German three-barrelled Drillings. I resisted these, but still left cradling an enchanting Tolley back-action sidelock, made as a double rifle in the 1870s, and converted post-war into a 20-gauge shotgun. CGR doesn't list its stock on Gun Trader, so check out its website for new arrivals!

JONATHAN MCGEE - [KEMEN SHOTGUNS - kemenguns.com](http://kemenguns.com)

It has been a decade-and-a-half since Kemen's fine O/U game guns were last available here, but now they have a new UK agent in Jonathan McGee: arguably the country's foremost shooting photographer, and a man who clearly knows quality when he sees it. Spain's top gunmakers are best known for their side-by-sides, so Kemen is the exception. And what an exception! These are exquisite, distinctive guns that are exciting to handle and impeccably made. Their construction represents an impressive fusion of advanced technology – as epitomised by the option of titanium actions – and classic craftsmanship. With prices running from £11.5K to £34K, a Kemen gun isn't cheap, but for a bespoke gun of this quality, it is staggeringly good value.

GMK/SAKO - gmk.co.uk

Every 10 years or so, Sako upgrades its core rifle. And whenever they do, I ask "Why?", since I've never found anything not to like. But design and manufacturing technologies forge ever forward, and Sako clearly has no intention of falling behind! Most notably, the new 90 series leverages advanced materials and coatings to create three lightweight models designed for the rigours of expeditionary hunting – Peak, Quest and Quest Ultra – whilst the Adventure, Bavarian, Hunter, and Varmint offer more traditional good looks. Less obviously, the receiver is contoured to minimise flexing, broach-cut to ensure silkily concentric bolt movement, and offered in multiple sizes to minimise weight and bolt travel. Also enhanced are the locking lugs, ejectors, trigger settings... you get the picture!

BLASER - blaser.de

Blaser's F3 O/U shotguns are smart from the get-go, but the bespoke wood and engraving options available take them to another level. At the NEC, Blaser wowed everyone with some amazing feather engraving. At Ragley, however, they took a more satirical route, showcasing a Brexit-themed design of interlocking jigsaw pieces representing each member state. With the gun closed, the UK's piece (located in the underside of the action) aligns seamlessly with the others, but as the gun is opened, it tilts away! Other decoration includes a lorry tailback at Dover, a bus with an unfulfilled NHS promise on the side, and a crossed-

Sako's successor to the 75 and 85 is the 90, an understated masterclass in advanced design, manufacturing, and material technology

out 2019 leaving date, but – for some reason known only to the 48% – no sunlit uplands of prosperity.

RAY WARD GUN MAKER - sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

Ray Ward's website suggests a regular gun shop, but it is also a maker of bespoke guns of the very first-rate, completely made by the best English craftsmen. Few people have the funds to commission and own such guns, but the Game Fair provides a unique opportunity for anyone to admire them and dream. For once, this didn't require stepping through one of those force fields of exclusivity that can encase the poshest pavilions. Instead, all it took was a visit to the Sportsman Gun Centre's thoroughly inclusive stand. There I had the special experience of extending my right arm and (almost) touching one of Ward's handmade £90K marvels, whilst brushing the fingertips of my left hand against a little Kofs Spectre that was going for a song at just £535!

ASI - ACCUMAX, BLACK BUNKER AND SKOUT - a-s-i.co.uk

Best known as longstanding importers of AYA and Rizzini shotguns, ASI has also shown a keen eye for remarkable airguns over the years, and its three latest brands all have something very special to offer. First is the Accumax. The product of a collaboration with a leading Turkish manufacturer, it's a sub-12, break-barrel springer that combines striking modern looks with great ergonomics, an impressively fast and smooth firing cycle, and keen pricing: £150 in black synthetic, and a bit extra for wood-effect and camo finishes. Then there's the extraordinary Black Bunker BM8 (£299), a gas-ram, break-barrel 'survival rifle', with black or tan polymer furniture, that can be wrapped around its own polygonal accessories box and carried like a briefcase, ready to be deployed in seconds. The secret is a clever latch for the cocking linkage, and bags of original thinking! The final brand is Skout, whose Epoch rifle takes airguns to new heights on price alone, pipping Daystate's Alpha Wolf with its £2.7K MSRP. Though, if perspective helps here, Holts recently auctioned



Hate Brexit? You'll love the satirical engraving on this custom F3 from Blaser. Satire on a shotgun. Whatever next!



This 'Snipe' by Ray Ward shows why English-made 'best' guns remain the global byword for quality



This Kofs Spectre SXE O/U from The Sportsman Gun Centre has elegant decoration, ejectors, multi-chokes, and a selective trigger... all for £535!



The Skout Epoch. Like the lost lovechild of Daystate and FX, but weaned on steroids, and distributed by ASI

(Right) The futuristic BM8 'survival' airgun folds in three and wraps around its own accessory case. Genius/bonkers!



a "good" 1925 Westley Richards air pistol for a cool £2.6K! Skout gives you rather more for your money. Namely, the most advanced PCP ever made, complete with electronic activation, trigger, and safety; staggering air efficiency; multiple barrel and calibre configurations; power up to 67 ft/lbs in .22 and 175 ft/lbs in .35; a bombproof high-capacity magazine; a fully adjustable stock; and a quality of machining, finish and design integration that leaves a much-loved Swedish brand looking like a Meccano set. Admittedly, the Epoch is somewhat heavy in the hands, but its awesomeness is undeniable.

FX AIRGUNS - sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

No manufacturer is better at catching and holding the attention of the airgunning world than FX. Every year brings multiple developments, as the company continually innovates and iterates, maximising the potential of each new design. The latest example of this is the Dynamic, a PCP rifle that takes its regulated action, concentric barrel-stiffening plenum, and low-profile ethos from the competition-oriented Pantera, while boosting shot capacity with a Verminator-style detachable buddy-bottle stock. Add a short 300mm

The modularity of FX Airgun's designs lets them create exciting guns like this Dynamic Compact Takedown



PARD thermal rifle scope - PARD's TD32-70 LRF combines thermal, daylight, and night-vision cameras with a laser rangefinder, IR illuminator, and an integral programmable ballistic compensator!

(12") barrel up front, and you have the Dynamic Compact Takedown. Pest-control perfection for £1,410.99.

PARD - sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

Pard's new TD32-70 LRF multispectral rifle scope (£3.4K) looks like the electro-optical equivalent of those extraordinary quadruple-barrelled German hunting guns. Except, it's actually useful, not to mention transformative. Two big, focusable objective lenses feed a 12µm/384x288 thermal sensor and a supersensitive 0.0001 lux, 2k (2560 x 1440px) colour/monochrome day/night CCD; whilst



Infiray's Gemini binoculars combine high-quality thermal and day/night digital imaging with excellent ergonomics

a smaller pair supports a 1,200m laser rangefinder and a zeroable, focusable 850nm IR illuminator: all working together with customisable on-board ballistic profiles and multiple picture-in-picture combinations to give you the most instant and comprehensive set of targeting information ever, within a familiar circular display with a centred reticle. To the rear, a conventional 30mm main tube enables limitless mounting solutions, and there's a recoil-friendly amount of eye relief, too. You also get on-board recording, including automated on-shot activation. The 21st century has well and truly arrived!

INFIRAY - infirayoutdoor.com

A tip-off from Paul at Scott Country had me hot-footing it to the InfiRay Outdoor stand to get hands-on with its all-new Gemini fusion thermal/day/night LRF binocular (£4K), which was making its global debut at the show. A direct challenger to Pulsar's Merger and Hikmicro's Raptor, the Gemini has controls that proved admirably intuitive and easy to reach, while delivering impressively detailed thermal and daylight (colour) images of the clay line opposite the stand. Particularly nice were the thumb tabs under each eyepiece that let you focus each channel without changing your grip, as well as the sleek looks and tactile comfort of the unit as a whole.

HIKMICRO - eliteoptical.co.uk

Two new products from Hikmicro caught my eye. The M15 networked trail camera (£150 in a special show bargain from Scott Country) takes high-quality images (10mp stills/1080p video) and can be configured/monitored via a smartphone app. However, its real appeal comes from its preinstalled multi-network SIM, and a free monthly image allowance that's upgradable whenever you want. Sypoint has provided a similar service for years, and I love it. Item two is the new Thunder 2.0 TE19 thermal rifle scope. The modest £999.99 price tag and small 12µm/256x192 sensor set low expectations, but its performance demolished them. A genuinely capable scope, especially for rattling and rabbiting, it also features a removable Li-ion battery and recoil-activated recording in case you forget to press that button!



Can a £1,000 thermal rifle scope be any good? First impressions of the new Hikmicro Thunder TE19 2.0 suggest the answer is "yes!"



Clear, programmable sounds, an upgraded controller with a massive 300m range and great pricing put Bestfoxcall's new ICOTec callers ahead of the pack

ICOTEC - bestfoxcall.co.uk

Bestfoxcall's motto is: "If we don't use it, we don't sell it!" and they've been using, selling, and helping develop ICOTec's electronic game callers since 2016. New for 2023 are the Hellion+ (£240) and Nomad+ (£285) models. These '+' series callers are fully programmable, linking to an online library of hi-fi sounds from ICOTec's Animal Audio app via an SD-card reader or multi-function adapter you can plug into your phone. Both models also feature an upgraded remote control (bigger keypad and screen, customisable menus), while the Nomad+ adds a synchronised electronic decoy.

REVENANT KNIVES - (Facebook & TikTok)

Lying in a glass case beside all the useful imports on Bestfoxcall's stand were some home-grown treasures: an amazing display of beautiful bespoke knives by Dal Keary. Staffordshire-based Dal is a true craftsman who has developed his skills over decades. He's also a stalker, so he understands the need for impermeability and durability. His knives have a distinctive style – handles that flare to fit your hand, blades with just the right angles for each stage of the gralloch, jewel-like mosaic pins – but no formula. Instead, every knife is the result of creative conversations with his clients. That's why you can't just go to a website and buy a Revenant knife. Understand the process, and you'll understand the price!

ASTOR DEFENCE - astordefence.com

Most of us have an old mil-surp ammo box or two that's a bit tatty, hard to open, and with the odd sharp edge! But, as I discovered when visiting Astor Defence's stand, it doesn't have to be that way. Astor began making ammo boxes in 1942, but today's offerings are built to the exacting standards of 21st-century militaries, not those of wartime austerity. Director, Henry Turnbull, talked me through the truly impressive multi-stage manufacturing and independent testing process. Great background info, but the quality of their boxes is immediately apparent. They're 100% air and water-tight, stackable, and come in multiple sizes, a choice of powder-coated colours, and with either Astor's logo, no logo, or company logos to order. Priced between £26 and £30, they're great value, too.

GEARMATE - gearmate.co.uk

It turns out there is an alternative to chucking everything (gear, dogs, guns, deer, tools) haphazardly into the back of your 4x4. Well, of course there is, but Gearmate produces one of the most rugged, practical, and comprehensive sets of solutions I've seen, with products for all the leading vehicle makes and models, and a 'build your own' configurator. There are secure dog boxes, lockable custom-fitted drawers for firearms and ammunition, the 'Gearslide'



Sooner or later, every stalker should treat themselves to a hand-made gralloching knife. Dal Keary (Revenant Knives) makes some of the very best



Astor Defence makes classic ammo boxes to the highest modern standards, and you can get them in pink and powder blue!



If only the back of my pickup looked like this! Gearmate has everything you need to keep all your gear organised, secure, and accessible



(a sliding half or full-width shelf), sliding load beds, and tilt-up tonneau covers for pickups with built-in tool storage that are sturdy enough to support a 500kg load. Rugged and smart, they'll help you keep everything safe and in its proper place.

**CHILLERS/LARDERS -
coldroomdirect.co.uk,
fisheruk.co.uk,
gamecooler.co.uk**

Every stalker knows the importance of 'thinking beyond the shot'. More than an extraction plan, it means ensuring the quality of the carcass all the way to the AGHE or end-user. The goal is to get it to 7oC or below and keep it there. In most weathers, this requires easy access to a dedicated chiller. Fortunately, several firms provide bespoke solutions for hunters. A substantial investment, certainly, but very much viable for estates or syndicates, and once purchased, they'll give long service with minimal maintenance. Key features include plumbing and drainage, temperature monitoring, electric hoists, and external canopies that provide well-lit spaces for inspecting and preparing a carcass. I looked at offerings from Coldroom Direct (Portable Game Larders), Fisher (Compact), and Game Cooling System UK (Daro Mini), all of which offer great products developed for hunters, by hunters. And one thing they all said? Don't let a shortage of chiller space stop you from shooting that deer!



Every deer hunter's dream. Fisher UK makes top-quality bespoke chillers and larders to suit all needs



A Daro mini chiller from Game Cooling Systems provides all the essentials in a fork-liftable format and at an accessible price



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THE TOTAL PACKAGE

Mark Camoccio puts together an AirForceOne Nero Rosa SE Trophy MKII pistol



The Trophy MKII comes as a kit that includes two mags, a silencer, a single-shot tray, and a shoulder stock

CO2 airguns are all about self-contained power, and the system allows manufacturers to make lighter models with none of the intrinsic weight of a spring-powered system, for example. The AirForceOne Trophy pistol, available via The Shooting Party, proved very popular, and the latest upgraded MKII version on test here, looks set to be another hit.

Lairy for sure

When I saw this model advertised, I was taken by the more unusual of the stock options, so my test gun has been supplied in the limited-edition, Nero Rosa livery, as opposed to the more standard, 'Black'. OK, maybe it's an acquired taste, but it adds a fun look, and I can't help liking it! So, what we have here is a recoilless, CO2-powered pistol that comes complete with a host of features that give it plenty of appeal to the casual airgun shooter who wants value for money as part of the deal.

Everything comes neatly stowed in a padded box, and inside, you'll find the pistol itself, skeleton stock, silencer, two magazines, and a single-shot tray. This Trophy MKII is limited to pistol power, so sub 6 ft/lbs, but is designed to produce energy levels close to the limit. It can be shot as a pistol, but then with the quick addition of the skeleton stock, it can be transformed into a super-compact rifle. Features include a bolt-action, the Get Shorty Silencer, micro-adjustable open sights, an adjustable trigger with a metal blade, dovetail scope rails, and even a Picatinny

accessory rail. The distributors also sent me one of their hand grip/bipod devices, but it should be pointed out this is actually available as an optional extra.

Getting started

OK, the first thing is to get the power sorted. One 12-gram capsule powers the Trophy MKII and this is loaded onboard by unscrewing the valve cap at the front of the cylinder. I have to say this isn't the most user-friendly system, and tightening the small cap is best done by inserting an Allen key into the hole at the front and using it as a bar, just to nip up or loosen the cap. Drop a capsule neck first into the chamber, then screw back the cap as quickly as possible. Nip-up as mentioned, just tight enough to prevent any hiss of a leak, and then the system is primed.

The muzzle is threaded and screwing the silencer into place takes seconds. This is worth doing as it helps balance and kills any report at the same time. Filling the magazine is easy and is done by winding the clear casing anti-clockwise. Next, drop the first

pellet in skirt first, in from the back. Fill the remaining chambers from the front. It all feels precise, and as mentioned, there is also a single-shot tray to snap into place, should you so wish.

Ergonomics

The ergonomics of that ambi pistol grip work for me, and in the aim, the contours and palm shelf all combine well. The open sights are easily adjusted, but a screwdriver is needed. Shooting with open sights initially, I managed easy 5p-sized groups over 10 yards, but with that shoulder stock nagging at me, I couldn't resist fitting a super-compact pistol scope to maximize accuracy down range. So, time to fit the stock!

As the pistol comes, there are two plastic blanking plugs - one at the top of the grip and one at the bottom. These first need to be removed to allow the skeleton stock to be connected. With my test model, there were no instructions referring to this area, but I could work out that a screwdriver was probably the best bet, to lever



Fitting the stock is a simple task



One 12-gram CO2 capsule powers the system



The contoured grip feels great



Detail of the side-mounted cocking handle



Two cassette-style mags are included

RESULTS TABLE

Ammo	Average Velocity (fps)	High (fps)	Low (fps)	Extreme Spread (fps)
BSA Goldstar Pellets	380	426	301	125

the plugs off. The top cap proved reasonably easy, as it just needs the screwdriver in the slot and then twisted to force the cap off. However, the bottom plug incorporates a large tang that proved very stubborn, making it hard not to mark the stock in the process. Blinking irritating, I don't deny, but once the plugs are off, just don't put them back on. Fitting the skeleton stock just needs it to be pushed into position, and removal is almost as easy, just needing the large spring-loaded catch to be pressed.

Incidentally, the optional mono-grip bipod is a great design, as the bipod legs can be contained and hidden within the grip. Just clamp it to the Picatinny rail, and a whole new dimension opens up.

Feel, handling & stats

Anyhow, with the composite skeleton stock in position, and the soft pad in the shoulder,

handling is suddenly stabilized, and I was keen to see what sort of groups were possible. I reckon penny-sized groups over 25 yards are pretty damn good, and with fast handling and an all-up weight (silencer and skeleton stock) of just 3 lbs, you get the idea!

As for the CO2 figures, I clocked 48 shots from the 12-gram capsule, with a total spread of 125 fps. Energy started off close to the 6 ft/lbs limit and averaged around 4.7 ft/lbs, so fairly poky for this style of pistol. If you're after the most consistent part of the charge, then the first 30 shots were within 21 fps on test, which is very usable. The caveat I would always throw in with CO2 is that a cleaning rod set is a must, to have close by, as the odd shot stuck in the barrel is inevitable when the power suddenly drops at the end of the charge. Experimentation and testing can avoid this, but it's best to be prepared.

Verdict

Negatives? Well, the side bolt is a bit small, and maybe a little too near the mag, and it does require a fair bit of effort to operate. The magazine on test was also a bit over snug in its slot. But hey, that's better than sloppy, and it should wear slightly in play. Add in a fairly light trigger and great handling Sabata style, and this AirForceOne Nero Rosa SE Trophy MKII has to get the thumbs up. It's super versatile, and a whole lot of fun in a box for sure. Opt for the Nero Rosa, and it's something a bit different too. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- Name:** AirForceOne Nero Rosa SE Trophy MKII
- Calibre:** .22 (on test), .177 available
- Barrel Length:** 8"
- Overall Length:** 14.3" Pistol Only / 29.3" Including Silencer & Stock
- Weight:** 1.9 lbs Pistol Only / 3 lbs Including Silencer & Stock
- Energy:** 4.7 ft/lbs average
- Price:** £220 (on test), £190 with Black Stock
- Contact:** The Shooting Party - www.shootingparty.uk



TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

AirForceOne™ TROPHY MKII

The Second Coming!

The original 'Trophy' was an instant success, with every shipment virtually selling-out before arriving in the UK and garnering ecstatic reviews from shooters, retailers and the airgun press alike, culminating in it being voted 'Best CO2 Pistol 2014'



Limited Edition Model

Limited Edition Nero Rosa SE Ultimate Combo Pistol

Black Trophy Ultimate Combo Pistol

Spare Magazines

All models include a 'Get Shorty!' modertor and detachable stock

Black Trophy Pistol Silencer, Shoulder Stock in .177 or .22



Limited Edition Nero Rosa SE Trophy Pistol Silencer, Shoulder Stock in .177 or .22



The new MK II models (which are a UK Registered Design), being introduced following customer demand, offer a host of new features, including:-

- 1 All models are available in a 9-shot (.177) Target and 7-shot (.22) Vermin versions featuring a self-indexing rotary magazine.
- 2 45-55 full-power (up to 5.5ft/lbs) shots from a single 12gr CO2 capsule.
- 3 All models feature free-floating barrels for excellent barrel harmonics which aid accuracy.
- 4 A high-quality, low-maintenance, black ballistic polymer competition-style stock with a palm shelf that improves grip and control.
- 5 They also feature an under fore-grip weaver rail for the addition of a bipod.
- 6 There is also a special limited edition Nero Rosa SE model with a stunning black/red Cerakote finish.
- 7 A classic bolt action with a wide breech makes magazine loading simple and un-fussy.
- 8 The pistols are fitted with micro-adjustable rear sights and a steel blade foresight but also feature 9/11mm dovetailing designed to make fitting a PAO® pistol scope, a swift and straightforward task.
- 9 Metal triggers (adjustable for pull pressure between approximately ½ and 4lbs) and metal trigger guards further enhance the quality construction of **what we believe to be a leading challenger for the best new pistol of-2023!**



The Shooting Party recommends QYS pellets for Trophy MKII air pistols.

*Collect in person from our shop or Nationwide delivery to an RFD only

The Shooting Party

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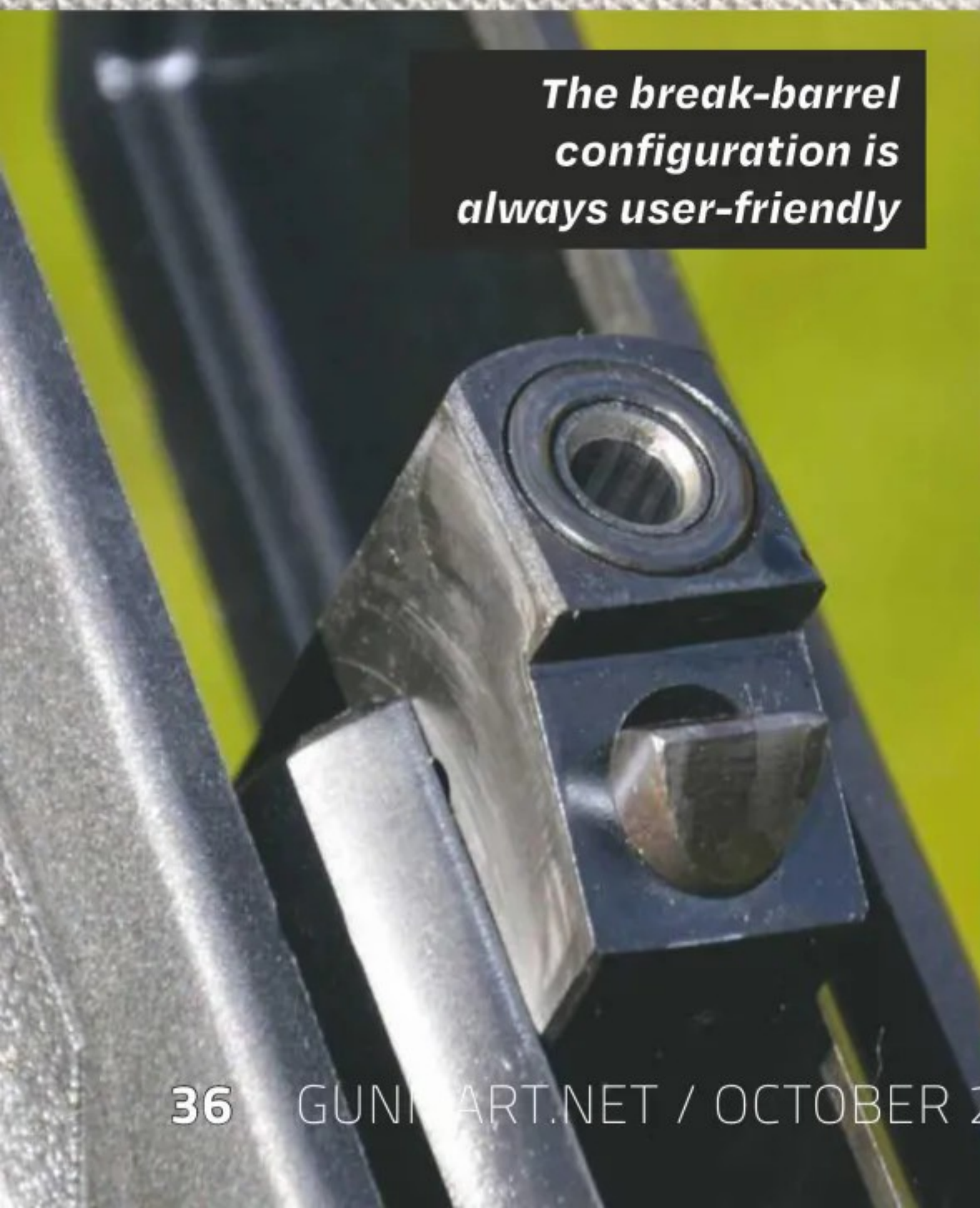
Mark Camoccio shoots a new budget airgun from Accumax; the S1



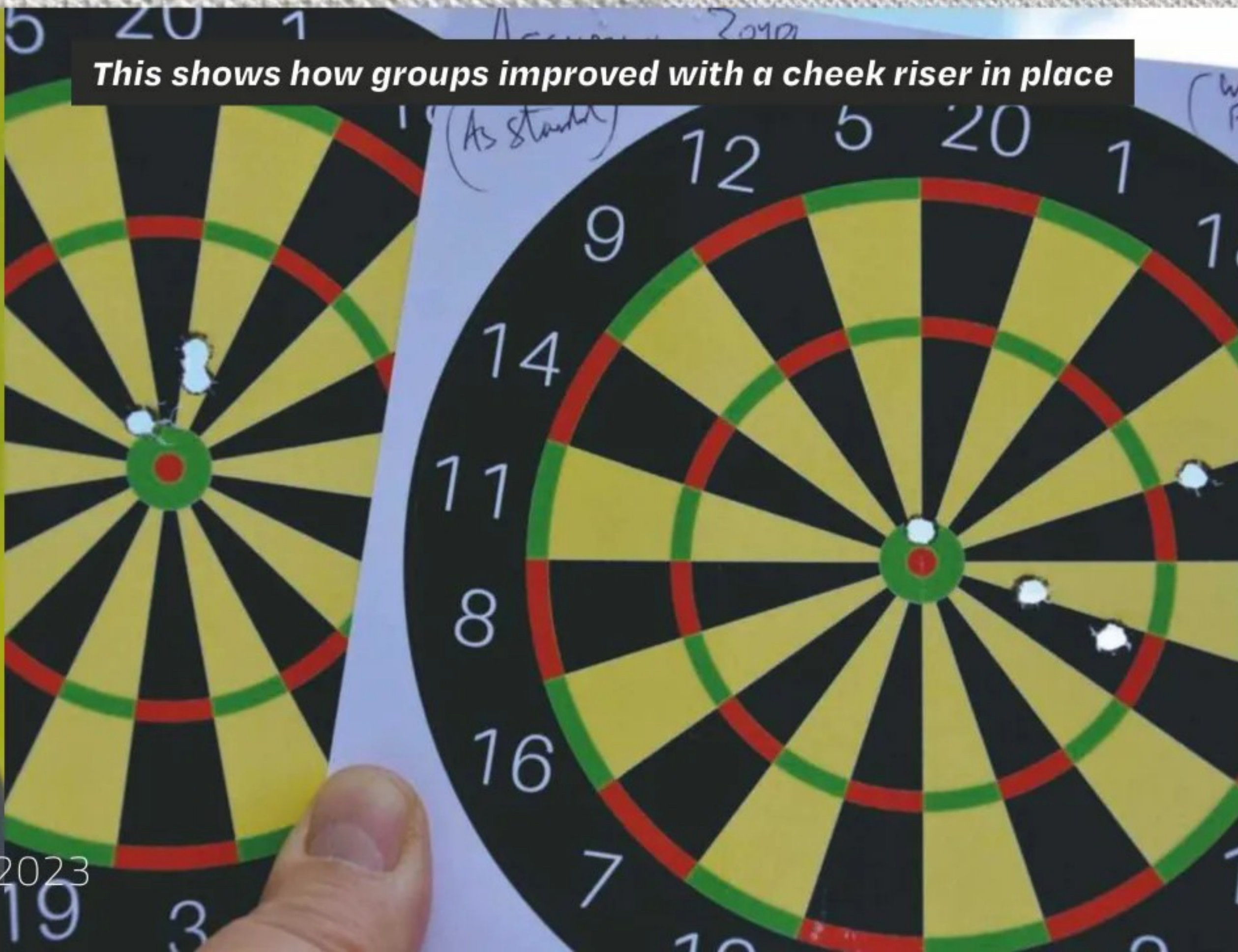
The contours around the grip are a big help. Note the trigger blade



That cheek is just a bit low for scope use. Note the butt pad



The break-barrel configuration is always user-friendly



This shows how groups improved with a cheek riser in place



The rear sight assembly needs to be fixed into place

I think it's fair to say I was hooked on shooting shows from a very early age, and when I tell you I spent nine hours just on Gunmakers Row when visiting the Game Fair with my dad, back in the late '80s, you'll get some idea! We lost all track of time, couldn't quite believe it, and saw very little of the rest of the fair as a result.

The Great British Shooting Show, now well established at the NEC, Birmingham, is another classic event to be drooled over, and in my professional capacity, I've often been packed off to peruse all the latest airgun content, with a view to reporting the highlights. This year was no exception, and after arriving at the Anglo Spanish Imports stand (ASI), I was met by quite the most enthusiastic sales chap you could hope to meet. ASI's Regional Sales chap, Trevor Dolmann, to be precise, and the sight of him holding court had me intrigued as to the cause of the hubbub. To be honest, the sight of the rack of humble break-barrel sporters just behind him seemed a bit of a letdown. However, talk of an ultra-smooth action and great accuracy soon had me booking a test rifle for delivery.

Accumax is the 'own brand' label owned by ASI, and the new S1 models are traditional spring-powered airguns made in Turkey. There are three models in the line-up, all featuring the same action but offering different stocks. My test model, the S1, gets black synthetic, there's the W1 with a wood finish, and finally the C1, with a camo effect.

Budget sporter

At £150 retail, the Accumax S1 certainly fits the budget spec., but any of the three options stays very affordable. A synthetic stock keeps weight down, and the configuration is stylish too, with a contoured grip, sleek angular forend, and soft recoil pad. Negatives to report concern the sloping, ultra-low cheekpiece (fine for open sights, but not so great for scope use), and the metal-to-stock-fit, which was poor. I suspect this was just my test gun, but it does mean quality control is a bit iffy.

All the metal is chemically blued, and cost savings at the finishing stage mean it does look a bit lacklustre. Nit-picking apart though, let's remember this is a budget gun delivering the time-honoured break-

barrel springer configuration, which is a byword for fun and ease of use.

Open sights

This model includes fibre optic open sights, and that's very welcome on this grade of rifle. Look at that foresight assembly, and there's a bright green element for the post. The rear sight, however, comes supplied loose inside the box. Some shooters may just slap a scope into place, but if you do decide to experience the 'irons', then the rear sight base first needs to be opened up slightly by using a screwdriver. This sounds a bit basic, and I suppose it is, but once the base is widened, the sight should snap into place on the dovetail rails. Tighten the two bolts, and you now have a good sight picture and dual finger wheels to make easy adjustments.

In use

And so, to the action. Breaking the barrel and cocking the action is both smooth and easy. An auto-safety sets itself at the rear of the action, and there's also an internal anti-bear trap system, to prevent the barrel flying up accidentally. A minor irritation is that this means the action cannot be de-cocked at any time. Another slight negative is the chamfer in the lip of the barrel, and this means all pellets are a loose fit and drop straight in. The upside is it's easy to chamber a pellet, whilst the downside is the way pellets will drop straight out of the breech unless the gun is pointed down as the barrel locks up. Not a major problem, just bear it in mind.

Unsurprisingly, we get a basic, non-adjustable, pseudo-2-stage trigger, but whilst this is creepy, if you squeeze gently through the initial sear movement, then the final let-off is reasonable and par for the course.

Stat attack

OK, so just how does the Accumax S1 shape up on the range? Well, let me start by stating that there is significant recoil, yet undoubtedly, there are recoil-calming devices at work inside, to tame any excesses. Consistency was pretty good, with an initial 10-shot string using Weihrauch FT Exact Jumbo pellets showing a total spread of 24 fps. Switching to SMK Black Pointed pellets

made a big difference though, trimming any variation to a superb 10 fps overall.

Evaluating accuracy proved a little more demanding, and that sloping cheekpiece needs discussion. As mentioned, it's fine when shooting with the open sights, but fit a scope up top, and you may find you need just a bit of padding. On test, when I'm evaluating spring-powered guns, I always adopt my proven, over-the-arm Field Target sitting position, since it's not only stable, but it allows the gun to recoil and move as necessary. However, in the case of the Accumax S1, that drop-away cheekpiece just didn't seem to be making enough contact with my face for support. Initial groups of around 1.25" over 25 yards, weren't a disaster for this grade of gun, yet I knew I wasn't giving the gun a fair crack.

Now, I'm aware that dedicated cheek pads can be bought cheaply for £20-£30, and I've had one (I think from a company called Tourbon), in my cupboard for some time. It just requires a neoprene cover to be pulled on over the butt, and then a simple foam piece to be inserted underneath to suit. With the padding set in position, the S1 felt different again, and those groups instantly closed to just 0.5"! Blimey, that's impressive. To be fair, shooting the gun as standard, contact was better from the standing or kneeling position, but an extremely valid point was made, nonetheless.

Verdict

OK, maybe ASI did slightly overegg the Accumax S1's performance, but there's no doubting it's solidly put together, super-stylish, and carries plenty of potential. A great first gun or budget rifle, and there's even ASI's lifetime warranty to consider!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name:	Accumax S1
Calibre:	.22 on test, .177 available
Barrel Length:	17"
Overall Length:	44"
Weight:	5.75 lbs
Energy:	11.5 ft/lbs
Price:	£150
Contact:	Anglo Spanish Imports - www.a-s-i.co.uk



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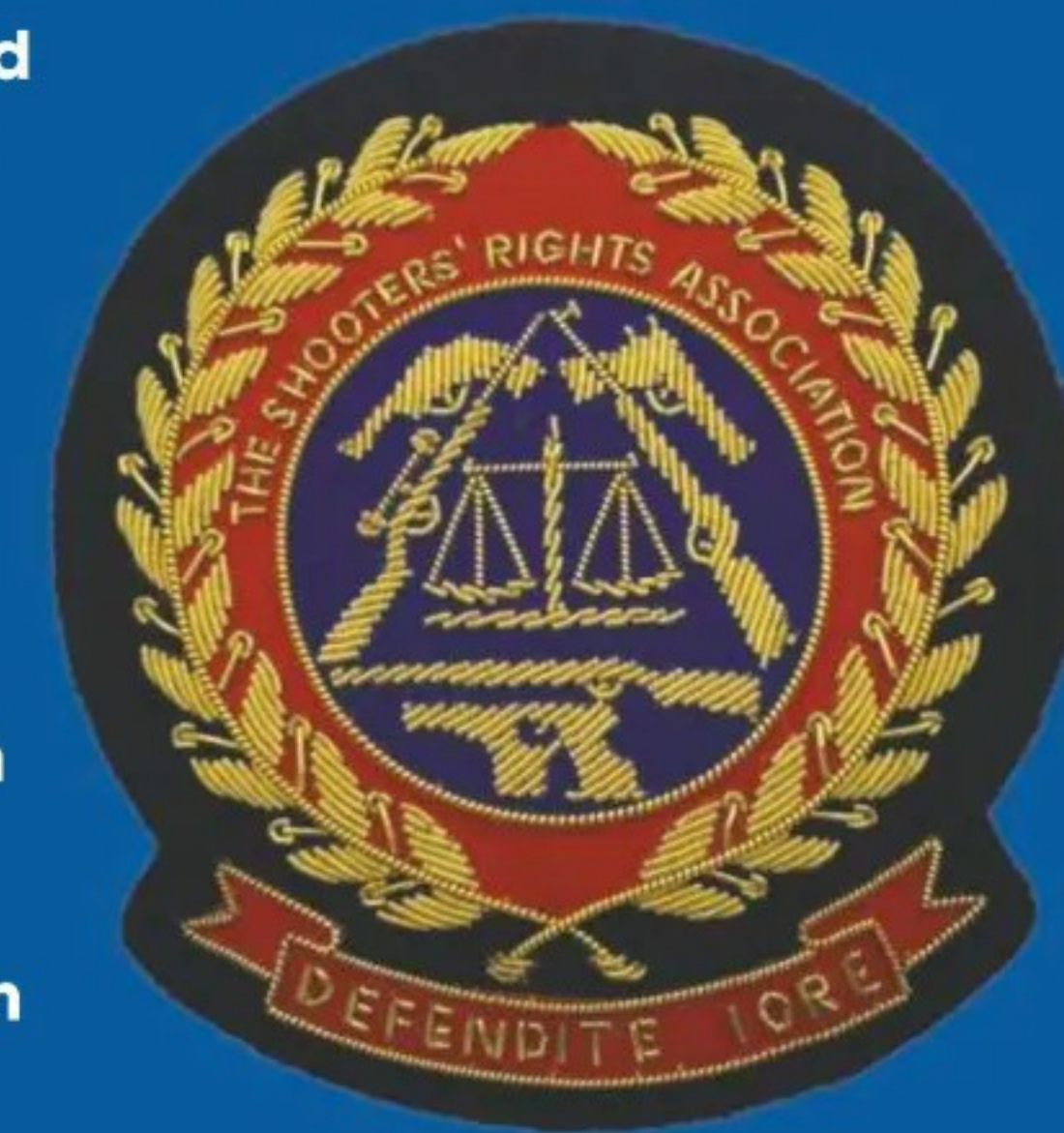
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Pint-Sized Performer!

The HW110 in its standard form is by all accounts, a very tidy rifle, although I must admit that before this test, I hadn't properly tested one. I was, however, well aware of the concept and the thinking behind the design, as I was lucky enough to be invited to visit the Weihrauch factory in Germany, back in 2017, along with my old friends Terry Doe and Graham Allen, plus some other journalists. It was a totally absorbing trip, meeting Hans Weihrauch and his team, and seeing for ourselves the level of commitment and design work that goes into this company's products.

Production of the HW110 was, of course, covered and witnessed, and with the action built around a main block constructed from ballistic polymer instead of traditional metals, it's a massive departure for Weihrauch, and a seemingly risky strategy, given their standing and perception as an ultra-traditional manufacturer.

Moving with the times

Times are rapidly changing though (look at 3D Printing!), and modern space-age materials are creeping into areas where simple metal constructs have always held sway. So, the HW110 project suddenly looks rather prescient. The factory visit in Germany coincided with Weihrauch's release of their first PCP pistol, the HW44, and this radical design builds upon much the same polymer breech block base. As Hans Weihrauch explained to us, ballistic polymers are widely used in the firearms world, and these modern production methods represent the future for the company.

As it turns out, project HW110 has been extremely well received, as customers loyal to the brand realise the new approach doesn't represent a threat to all they hold dear! On test here is the HW110K, which is a super-compact version that offers shooters a serious alternative specification.

Compact

Up close, this Karbine model (denoted by the 'K'), really does look super-compact, with that ultra-short cylinder, and correspondingly short forend. Weihrauch's own silencer comes as standard, and with a host of other features aimed at the serious shooter, this model gets a good start in life. A 2-stage trigger, 10-shot magazine system (two supplied), side-lever cocking, manual safety catch, and Picatinny scope rail, all make the spec sheet.

The ambidextrous sporter stock grabs the attention, and the black is actually rubber-coated wood, which feels very nice to the touch. Laser cut chequering features on the forend and pistol grip, and a solid rubber pad caps off the butt nicely. Weihrauch manufactures and fits their own barrels, and this model gets a fairly short 12.5" tube (16" on the standard model)

The HW110K from Weihrauch has caused quite a stir. **Mark Camoccio** takes a closer look to see what the fuss is about



running through a plastic support. I didn't encounter any problems on test, but for peace of mind, if this was my own rifle, I would probably remove that support, just so I could see full clearance around the barrel. Allowing for the perfectly normal expansion of the cylinder, throughout the charge, is the accepted wisdom these days, and I lose sleep about such matters. No, really!

Finish-wise, the barrel gets proper chemical bluing, whilst the cylinder, as per the HW100 series, gets a different matte-black coating. As for the silver mag release catch and safety on the original model, these are now supplied in black, apparently as a response to customer feedback.

One-piece

If you had to criticize Weihrauch's HW100 model, it would be a fair observation to point out the fact that the receiver is a two-piece

construction, and a potential source of weakness, in theory at least. The HW110 sees the new polymer receiver as a one-piece design, with the magazine housing enclosed within. Extra rigidity is therefore afforded, and with that Picatinny rail running the entire length, in one continuous strip, mounting a scope is a reassuring process, once you have the correct type of mounts that is. I can't help thinking the trend for Picatinny/Weaver rails on airguns is overkill, but there's no doubting the advantage of the positive relocating of a scope if it has been temporarily removed.

With glassware all bolted down, the final piece of preparation is to charge the main air cylinder. Weihrauch employs the same probe style of charging as their HW100 series, and it's quick and efficient. Just pull out the small nylon plug in the inlet valve at the front of the cylinder, then fully insert the airline,

complete with the charging adaptor probe supplied, and charge to 200 bar.

At this juncture, it's worth pointing out that Weihrauch designed these models with removable air cylinders. They are meant to be charged in situ on the gun, yet are removable for testing further down the line. An unofficial testing regime of inspecting the gun's cylinder after ten years has been adopted by the company, and this is what they recommend to their customers. It would seem good practice for the industry, given the age of some rifles now in circulation.

Filling the 10-shot magazine just needs a pellet to be pushed into each chamber, nice and flush. Then, to get the mag on board, pull the side-lever all the way back, and insert the magazine into its slot within the receiver, from the right side, whilst pulling up the mag retaining catch. This can prove a little fiddly if I'm honest, with the inserted mag occasionally needing a



Ultra-compact - the HW110K is quite superb. Note the underside Picatinny accessory rail



The 10-shot mag worked faultlessly on test

jostle to the side before the lever can be closed. Once the mag is in place though, cocking and cycling the ten shots, thereafter, is a slick operation.

Handling

In the aim, this pint-sized sporter feels amazingly versatile, but whilst I appreciate the 'Karbine' remit, I would still prefer a few extra inches on the forend. This would make no difference to the overall length, but would just accommodate the larger framed amongst us when at full stretch. As it stands, that front Picatinny accessory rail is a great feature, allowing lamping kit, lasers, or even weights to be attached. Weihrauch's silencer, fitted as standard on this model, is well respected as one of the most effective on the market, and on test, the tiny report just added to the civilized experience overall. Clever things those hair curlers! Add in the fact that the multi-shot magazine system cannot be made to double load pellets, and the plus points of this premium product begin to seriously stack up!

As for the 2-stage trigger, despite the blade itself being plastic, it feels

spot-on, and trips with a crisp, subtle release. A contributory factor for sure, in performance overall. The silky cycling of the side-lever is a massive confidence boost, and I had no blockages or misfires whatsoever on test, which speaks volumes for the integrity of the design.

As with the HW100 series, Weihrauch specifies the action as self-regulating, and states a guide of 60 shots in .177 and around 75 in .22. My test model came in the smaller calibre, and from a 200 bar fill pressure, I managed 78 shots over the chronograph, all within 19 fps, which is pretty impressive consistency. I used JSB-made Air Arms Diabolo Field pellets straight from the tin.

I decided to adopt the prone position for the main grouping, and then see how things shaped up from the kneeling and standing positions. Superb, ragged holes, around 9mm across at 40 yards from a rest was a great start. Plus, when I adopted the kneeling stance over my 25 yard range, I drilled groups easily within a 5p piece, showing the inherent accuracy of this pellet launching machine. OK, standing was always going to be tough, especially given my penchant for plenty of front weight, yet groups of around 1.25" weren't a disgrace.

Conclusion

That silky, predictable trigger, and astonishingly muted muzzle report (especially given the short barrel) all add to the immensely satisfying experience. Also, given how those down-range groups were so easy to come by, I was genuinely sorry to see this one go!

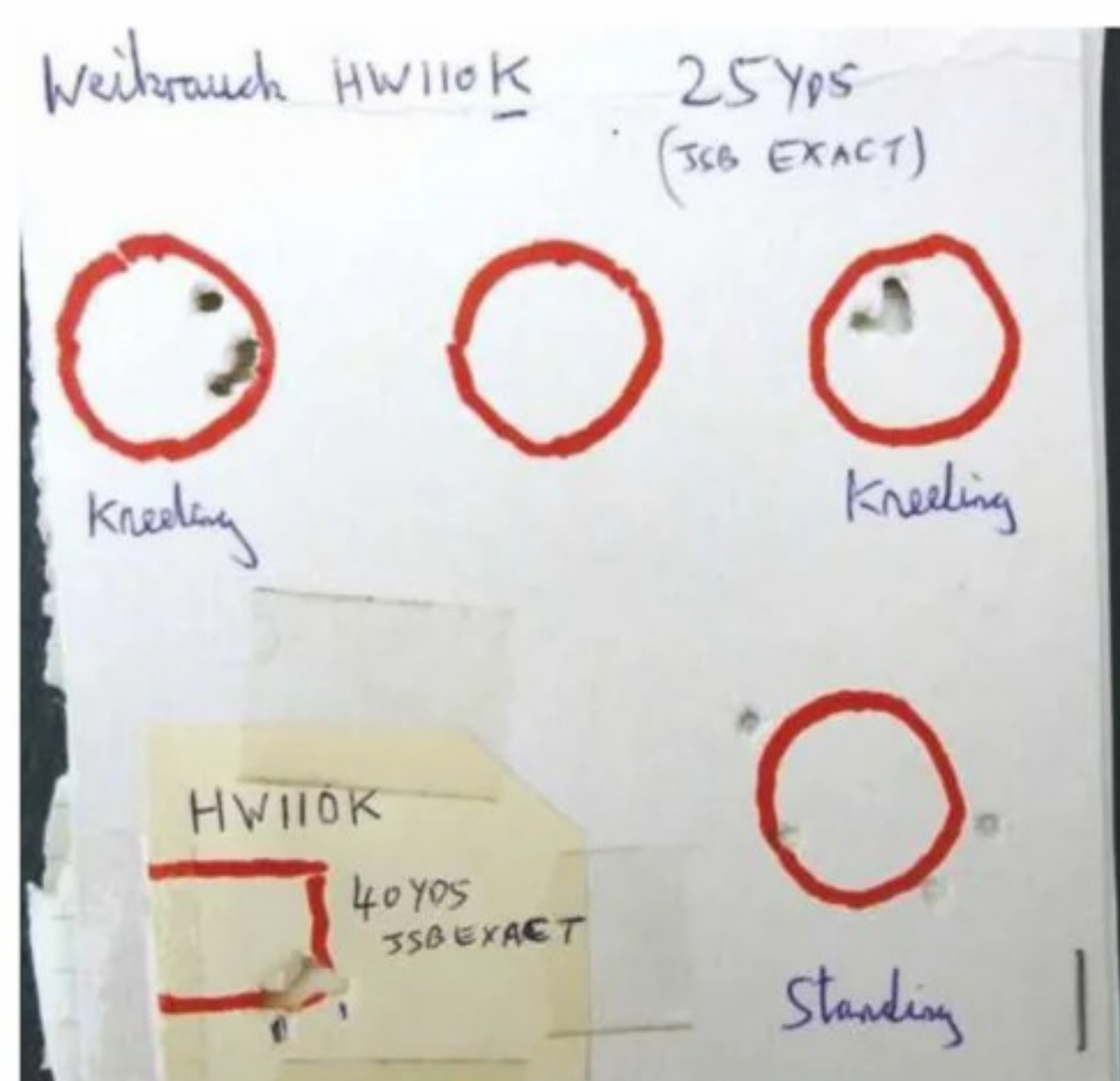
Let's face it, Weihrauch rarely disappoints, but the HW110K really is a superb airgun that's cleverly designed, and brilliantly executed. How that tasty stock finish will survive snags and nicks in the field is my only real concern, for you simply can't fault the performance on offer.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- Name:** Weihrauch HW110K
- Calibre:** .177 on test, .22 available
- Barrel Length:** 12.5"
- Overall Length:** 34.5", including silencer
- Weight:** 6 lbs 8 oz
- Energy:** 11 ft/lbs (Average)
- Price:** £835 (guide)
- Contact:** Hull Cartridge Company – www.weihrauch.co.uk



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Detail of the magazine in position, the Picatinny mounting rail, and the ambidextrous safety catch



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In the RAW



Pete Wadeson tasks himself with testing the tactical RAW HM1000x Chassis

In the past, I've only taken a passing interest in RAW air rifles, as I've never had the chance to try one.

However, at long last, thanks to my local gun shop, T & J. J McAvoy's, I've been able to test the latest version of the HM1000x. A rifle that may well be hand-built, tested, and tuned in the USA, but thanks to Elite Optical Distribution, they're now available here in the UK.

It was ex-Theoben co-director, Martin Rutterford, who set up the company in the US to continue the Theoben heritage, but any RAW rifle is now far more technologically advanced than anything Theoben ever produced. However, you could say what Martin learned and helped develop with Theoben, certainly gave him the foundations to

build rifles that are quite exemplary pieces of kit.

Fully regulated

The rifle has a carbon fibre 480cc buddy bottle that takes a recommended 250 bar fill. The rifle is charged via a covered foster-type fill port on the right of the action, next to the neck of the bottle. There's also an air gauge on the opposite side to

indicate air status. The fully regulated design ensures that shot strings are consistent, and the large buddy bottle ensures that you will have enough air onboard for extended visits to the range or in the field. The company stats give an approximate shot count of 450 from a single charge, which is enough for any 12 ft/lbs airgun shooting discipline.



The height of the cheekpiece and the length of pull can be adjusted



Detail of the controls used to make adjustments on the stock. Note the Picatinny rail

Chassis by name, chassis by nature

It's an undeniably tactical-styled ambidextrous rifle, with most of the stock being manufactured from synthetic materials, with an action of black-anodised, top-grade aluminium. This robust AR-style chassis allows the user to adjust the height of the cheekpiece and the length of pull. The latter can be altered by pushing the large button on the rear/right of the stock, which releases the butt pad and allows it to extend. It locks automatically in three separate increments, but when I measured it, it only affected the overall length of the rifle by ½".

The way the cheekpiece is raised is quite simple, yet ingenious. On the right-hand side is an inbuilt riser mechanism, which consists of a threaded synthetic post, to which the side of the cheekpiece is attached to. This has an integral, knobby-edged finger wheel. Turning this adjuster then simply lifts or lowers the cheekpiece to the desired level you require. This means both adjustments need no tools and can be done in the field should you need to fine-tune gun fit. However, the cheekpiece can also be moved slightly laterally, but you will need to loosen 2x crosshead screws under the cheekpiece itself.



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PETE WADESON

Gripping

The AR-style pistol grip shows a rubberised outer with forward finger ridging. Plus, on both sides, there are raised oval dots to further aid grip. It feels very comfortable in the hold and will suit most shooters. Incidentally, all these parts are interchangeable with any other AR-style components.

The action is quite blocky and deep, plus sits on top of most of the relatively short forend, which is covered in M-LOK mounting points that run from the pistol grip to almost the neck of the buddy bottle. These allow the easy attachment of accessories like lamps, lasers, bipods etc.

Laminate stock options

As a matter of interest, the American-made laminated stocks come in five colours, are ambidextrous, and feature an adjustable cheekpiece and butt pad. There are also M-LOK attachment points running along the underside of these stocks as well, giving users the same ability to add suitable attachments.

This shows just how much this system is becoming popular with airgun shooters, especially across the pond.

Action & magazine

The receiver shows a generously sized side-lever, which in turn runs a very familiar, tried and tested, Perspex-fronted self-actuating magazine. This holds 17 pellets in .177 (on test) and 12 in .22 calibre.

The lever operates very smoothly and precisely, plus is ergonomically designed for ease of pickup, before continuing on its rearward travel. As well as cocking the rifle, it also retracts the probe from the magazine, so you have direct in-line operation. Another factor of note is that the side-lever has a short arc of travel. So, for those who prefer this design, it's a real speed machine.

The magazine is Theoben through and through. Just one look at the unit indicates where the initial design originated from, so why not use it here? Now upgraded, its function is simple yet highly efficient. To load, you

must first turn the clear faceplate anti-clockwise in the direction of the arrow until it comes to a natural stop. Then, fill all chambers as you let the magazine faceplate return to its original closed position. Next, you simply slip it back into the right-hand side of the housing, where it sits neatly in place. Though it sits proud on the top of the action, it doesn't overly stand proud on the Picatinny rails that sit on either side of the housing. The rail also has a 20 MOA relief, so whatever scope you fit probably won't run out of adjustment. For the test, I used a Hawke Airmax 4-12x40 AO in Sportsmatch mounts, and the AMX reticle's multiple aim points once again proved highly useful.

Trigger & safety

The unit follows the same design that Theoben used for many a moon, but here we have a much more developed mechanism. The trigger blade is very well-sized, as is the trigger safety blade that sits inside the guard, in front of the main blade itself. Even



The 2-stage trigger is well-sized, and the safety blade is also situated within the trigger guard



Air is stored in a 480cc carbon fibre bottle. Note the covered fill point and the free-floating, carbon fibre-shrouded Lothar Walther barrel

The RAW HM1000x Chassis follows the blueprint of many tactical AR-style air rifles



The air gauge sits neatly on the left of the rifle



The generously sized side-lever operates very smoothly and precisely



The time-tested Theoben design of the magazine has now been upgraded

those with the largest of forefingers will easily find a comfortable trigger feel, such as the curved ergonomics of the blade. It's classed as a set-back, match-grade unit, and I for one can't argue with that, as it let off shots precisely and predictably time after time. If anything, it's another indication of how much more advanced RAW airguns have become in terms of performance.

Performance

Every HM1000x features a Lothar Walther barrel that, after being fitted to the receiver, is tested to ensure accuracy, along with the trigger and power output, which are all hand-tested and tuned before your gun leaves the factory. It noticeably has a carbon fibre shroud, which is more of a cosmetic outer, as this rifle needs a silencer

for hunting use. Thankfully, and as expected, the barrel is screwcut $\frac{1}{2}$ " UNF to accept most off-the-shelf cans. With the silencers I used on test, a compact can is enough to bring down the report to an acceptable level. However, the Weihrauch HE Silencer made it whisper quiet, and if I owned this rifle, that'd be its permanent partner.

As for accuracy, using quality ammo, this rifle can make tight clover-leaf-sized groups out to 30 yards with ease. Shooting from a rested position, these opened out to ragged $\frac{1}{2}$ " c-t-c groups at 50 yards, making this a rifle that'll impress the long-range shooting fraternity.

Conclusions

I found it interesting to see the company worded as 'Rapid Air Worx', which can be seen etched boldly in white

on the side of the receiver. Also, the word 'Theoben' is etched in white, so there's no doubt that the company is now officially stating its roots, which is only right, seeing as they're clearly integrating the heritage that was Theoben into the new brand name, which was previously only designated 'RAW'. But that's by the by when you consider the HM1000x is the flagship model in the company range,

and as they state themselves, it offers the ultimate in long-range precision.

The rifle handles and balances perfectly and will surprise many with how light it is for such a tactical-looking rifle. Also, accuracy is highly impressive, as is the consistency and high shot count.

The rifle is available in .177, .20, .22, and .25. It also comes in high-power .30 and .357 calibres.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: RAW HM1000x Chassis
Calibre: .177 on test, .20 .22 & .25 available
Barrel Length: 16"
Overall Length: 31.5 – 32"
Weight: 7.6 lbs (un-scoped)
Price: £1,949
Contact: Elite Optical - www.eliteoptical.co.uk





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GUN MART

Field Cutlery

Our team offers advice on all the latest knives and tools

Buck Alpha Hunter

➤ Buck makes an extensive range of knives, from tiny pocket knives, to big heavy hunting knives, and the Alpha Hunter sits pretty much in the middle, at just over 8" long. The handle and blade each account for about 50% of the total length, and knives with these proportions have a great balance and feel in your hand. Supplied in Buck's new presentation-style box, the knife looks great and feels like a proper tool for the outdoors.

The blade

The 3⁵/₈" long drop-point blade is made of S35VN steel, a very tough metal with excellent edge retention qualities that make it ideal for knife making. The very high-ground blade shape means that it moves through material extremely efficiently, without any bunching, and at 3.5mm thick on the spine, it is extremely strong and rigid. The drop point shape means that you can do detailed work and the knife makes a really good wood carving tool.

The grip

The handle is Walnut Dymalux, a combination of natural wood veneers laminated together and infused with resin, and



PRICE:
£299.95

The knife is supplied with a good quality leather sheath



Generous jimping in key locations on the spine

the scales are a very good fit on the full tang of the knife, with no gaps or open joints. Dymalux is an ideal material for knife handles because it has the look and feel of wood, but the resilience and durability of resin. It is a strong material used in a variety of applications, including pistol grips, and the gentle curve on the handle combined with the generous length make it

a nice fit in the hand. The deep front finger groove provides an effective front quillon and the handle shape and texture ensure a comfortable fit with great grip.

Deep and wide-cut jimping on two areas of the spine, one above the front portion of the handle and one above the middle of the blade, allow you to put a lot of pressure through the knife when using different holds, without your grip slipping.

At the back of the knife is a good-sized lanyard hole, and it also comes with a quality brown leather sheath with a press-stud fastening strap to hold the knife securely in place. The leather is decent, the

seams are double-stitched and, although basic, the sheath does its job and keeps the knife safe.

Conclusion

This is a really nice mid-sized knife and its chunky proportions and full-tang construction make for a very strong and practical tool. The materials have been selected for the best combination of durability and sharpness, and the blade certainly stands up to some hard use without needing any attention. Weighing approximately 4.5 oz, it comes razor sharp and ready to use straight out of the box. A word of warning – when I say sharp, it is 'handle with care' sharp! Buck Knives are not cheap, but they're well made, very well presented, and will last a lifetime, representing a good-value long-term investment.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Buck Alpha Hunter

Price: £299.95

Contact: Whitby & Co. Ltd - www.whitbyandco.co.uk

REVIEWER: MARK UNDERWOOD

KA-BAR Folding Hunter

PRICE:
£31.95



➤ **KA-BAR is undoubtedly best known for its fixed-blade combat knives, as originally adopted by the US Marine Corps in 1942.** However, the company also makes some very impressive folders, too.

Oh yes

The KA-BAR Folding Hunter is a good-sized tool that is big enough to be effective, but small enough to be convenient to carry. The 3.88" 420 stainless steel blade is a clip-point design, and at 2.5mm thick on the spine, it is very strong and rigid. A nice section of jimping on the spine ensures your finger doesn't slip when putting pressure through the blade.

For ease of opening, the blade shows an ambidextrous thumb stud and a long nail nick. The former allows very convenient one-handed opening, all the way to

the locking position. The matte-grey finish on the blade makes it totally non-reflective.

The scales on the handle are very durable G10 and they sit between the steel bolster and the butt, protecting them from impact, plus they are textured for improved grip. The handle is slightly curved to further enhance grip and the knife sits in the hand really well. The handle is 5" long and the knife opens out to an overall length of 8.88".

Nice and solid

The Folding Hunter is a locking knife that utilises a lockback mechanism, and when fully opened, the blade is fixed and held very securely. The lock is released by pressing the exposed section of the rocker bar in the cut-out on the back of the knife and is large enough so you can easily operate it even when wearing

gloves. There is absolutely no movement when the blade is in the fully open position and you can put as much pressure through the blade as you like, and even use the blade to twist and pry material, without the mechanism failing. When a folding knife locks open this securely, you can almost forget that it is not actually a fixed-blade knife. Obviously, as this is a locking knife, and the blade exceeds the legal limit, this is not an everyday carry knife here in the UK and you need to consider where and when you carry it.

The KA-BAR weighs in at just 150-grams, so it is not a burden to carry, plus the pocket clip is the perfect size for secure

holding and doesn't interfere with knife use.

Conclusion

The Folding Hunter rekindles some of the features of KA-BAR's old model 1189 folder (a straightforward locking knife with a clip-point blade and wood handle) but is updated with more modern handle scales and a pocket clip for a more convenient carry. It is surprisingly strong and useful, and the quality is very good. The price is surprisingly low, considering what you get in terms of quality and functionality, making the Folding Hunter a bargain well worth snapping up.

REVIEWER: MARK UNDERWOOD

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: KA-BAR Folding Hunter

Price: £31.95

Contact: PJS (UK) Ltd - www.blades.co.uk



Note the ambidextrous thumb stud and the well-placed jimping



Detail of the slim and unobtrusive pocket clip



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GM10.23/27



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NO COMPLAINTS

Chris Parkin gets to look at the brand-new Sako 90 Peak

CHECK OUT
THE VIDEO
REVIEW ON

youtube.com/@GunMartTV



Sako rifles have been held in high regard for decades, and this all starts from a visual perspective, with the barrel. This is a 20" stainless steel tube with a 15x1 threaded muzzle for a moderator. The crown is impeccably cut and Sako makes great claims about the importance of this final contact for the bullet and just how critical it is to be precise. The barrel shows a 16.5mm diameter, before swelling out towards the action. Flutes run along the barrel to reduce weight and the steel is finished with a uniform matte texture to avoid reflection. However, it's not so aggressive that it drags skin dust from your hands. Sako cold hammer forges their barrels

for consistency and longevity, and this one has five grooves and lands and a 1:11" twist rate, giving a little more stability for relatively longer/lower-density copper projectiles.

New bits

I wasn't a huge fan of the 85 actions, due to the semi-controlled-feed bolt face. Therefore, I was pleased to see Sako has reverted to the recessed push-feed bolt face I found so effective on their model 75. The action is the mechanical foundation of any rifle and one that draws primary attention when people ask how smooth the bolt is etc., and the 90 is certainly smooth and not easy to jam. It's a stainless steel receiver

with a three-lug bolt that offers a 60° lift for cocking and cycling the action. The lugs glide along their respective raceways, which are broached, effectively sliced out of the steel in incremental steps to form the characteristic triangular form around the circular core.

Several other new concepts have been included as well. Picatinny bases are now machined as part of the action, instead of the precious tapered dovetails. I never really had an issue with them, but as time and fashions have moved on, so much of the shooting world runs on Picatinny for mounts, night vision, and thermal kit, so it makes sense to steer away from proprietary mounting solutions.



The recessed push feed bolt face has returned. Note the twin sprung plunger ejectors



Sako's familiar action controls are in place. Note the carbon fibre



The trigger position can be adjusted, and the weight can be changed in five stages

Detail of the left side bolt release catch

There are now two sprung plunger ejectors on the bolt face to eject the brass. These replace the manual ejector design of the 75 and 85 and effectively steps ahead of many competitors, and Beretta's own Tikka line, which uses a single ejector plunger. Twin sprung plungers have proven a little more reliable at effectively steering the case's ejection from the ejection port. This also has the secondary effect of allowing the ejector port cutout to be minimised, maintaining action strength and stiffness. The final benefit is that if you do have a breakdown, you have a spare ejector to avoid an emergency scenario. All

Sako actions are scaled to the chambering and this medium length offers 98mm of bolt travel.

The bolt handle is 60mm long, with a 20mm spherical tip for grip. It's well-scaled to avoid excessive bulk but still allows assured mechanical leverage application to the bolt to extract cases and re-cock the action. There is a bolt release catch on the left side and the safety system is on the right, with forward for FIRE and rear for SAFE with bolt locking. If you want to open the bolt while on safe, Sako has retained their familiar lever in front to allow this.

The bolt shroud shows a tactile cocked action indicator that

emerges from its underside, with a red dot to aid visibility. The shroud now also has a discreet, sprung locking pin that gets compressed between itself and the action as the bolt is closed. This has been added to prevent accidental de-cocking of the bolt when out of the rifle, and you won't even notice it's there unless you look for it.

Feed

The magazine isn't really any different. It's a stainless steel and aluminium unit that holds five rounds in two columns (+1 in the chamber if desired). The feed lips won't wear out and the twin staggered columns



allow easy loading in or out of the rifle. Secondary benefits are that additional rounds dropped on the follower will feed directly to the chamber in an emergency, and the unit has exceptionally smooth and delicate functionality, with no damage to the bullet's meplat from the feed ramps on this .308. To release the magazine, first apply pressure to the base of the mag, then press the release catch located on the underside of the rifle. This is a desirable safety feature that helps avoid magazine loss and you will get used to it at speed if required.

The trigger

I have never had a disappointing Sako trigger, and the latest variant seeks to impress even further. The

curved blade offers linear adjustment to alter reach from the grip, and there is a 5-stage weight adjuster in front. This is easily accessed with a T25 Torx driver and happily clicks through 661, 973, 1310, 1435, and 1769-gram stages (24, 34, 46, 50, 62 oz.) to offer your desired setting. It's perfectly crisp, with a snappy lock time Sako advertises as 1.3 milliseconds. The detents between stages mean you will never have a problem choosing between them or returning to a previous preference for gloves in winter, versus a bare finger in summer, for example.

The bottom metal is stainless steel, and twin Torx screws fasten the action into the stock, where the flat base and inlet meet precisely, without applied

stress. The small recoil lug has a corresponding pocket in the stock.

The furniture

This is a lightweight rifle at just 2.6kg (5lbs 11oz), using a compact barrel and a carbon fibre stock. It's nothing particularly visually striking, but the delight is in the detail. Resin Transfer Moulding under vacuum pressure is used to distribute and soak the carbon fibre cloth with epoxy in the moulds. The final article shows the designated directions of the warp and weft of the cloth, and when you fire the gun, you appreciate the stock's stiffness, yet natural control with harmonic damping and most importantly, low noise signature.

The forend free-floats the barrel and is stiff enough to maintain this

AMMO TABLE

Ammunition	Factory Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft-lbs)	Measured		100m group		M.O.A.
			Velocity ft-lbs	Energy (ft-lbs)	mm	inches	
Sako Gamehead 123-grain	3020	2491.6	2823	2177	24.3	1.0	0.8
Sako Powerhead Blade 162-grain	2675	2574.7	2620	2470	14.7	0.6	0.5



The rifle is screwcut 15x1 for a moderator or brake.



Sako now incorporates Picatinny scope mounting bases



Action and adjustable trigger detail

in all scenarios, plus the sling studs are securely anchored. There are finger grooves for grip and unlike many, the profile has not been made too skinny to save material mass. It's still hand-filling and easy to grip, as Sako has also applied a slightly rougher tactile coating that won't wear off or become slippery when wet or muddy.

The recoil pad is approximately 22mm thick and held with two screws. This means that spacers can be added to alter the 14.25" length of pull. The comb is slim and allows a decent cheek weld, although it's not particularly high. However, this is a lightweight hunting rifle, and if you want adjustable ergonomics, you are looking in the wrong place.

Performance

A Stalon moderator and a Steiner scope in Burris rings were fitted to the review rifle. I bore-sighted and zeroed the rifle at 100 metres before shooting a few group tests and trying the rifle in various positions. Sako says their cold hammer forged barrels don't need running-in, but I always take the first 20 rounds on any gun steadily anyway, to check what the cleaning patches are telling me. The Sako ammo I was feeding the gun was burning cleanly, and no detrimental copper residue seemed to be getting deposited, so thumbs up so far. Performance on paper was as expected from a Sako. The rifles are all individually tested before leaving the factory to make sure they provide sub-MOA precision on target, and I have been to the factory and watched this happen, so I don't need convincing of the company's dedication. See Ammo Table.

Conclusion

The Peak is a desirable rifle that I would use for any hunting foray,

due to its inherent reliability, accuracy, and handling dynamics. It's one of the few rifles that I can't really criticise, dislike, or say "if only they had" in my head. I think the Sako 90 action has progressed with evolutionary logic to maintain its character, and not reactionary desperation to keep up with its peers. The stock is a superb example of detailed technical design for great ergonomics, without excessive flourish delivered or required to distract you from weakness. The rifle functions precisely as advertised and expected, with no room for disappointment at its price point.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Sako 90 Peak

Calibre: .308 on test, .22-250, .243, 6.5CM, 7mm-08, 6.5x55, .270, .30-06, 8x57, 9.3x62, .270WSM, 300WSM, 6.5PRC, 7mmRM, .300WM also available

Barrel Length: 20"

Overall Length: 40.25"

Weight: 5 lbs 11 oz

Length of Pull: 14.25"

Magazine Capacity: 5-Rounds

Price: £3895.00

Contact: GMK Ltd - www.gmk.co.uk



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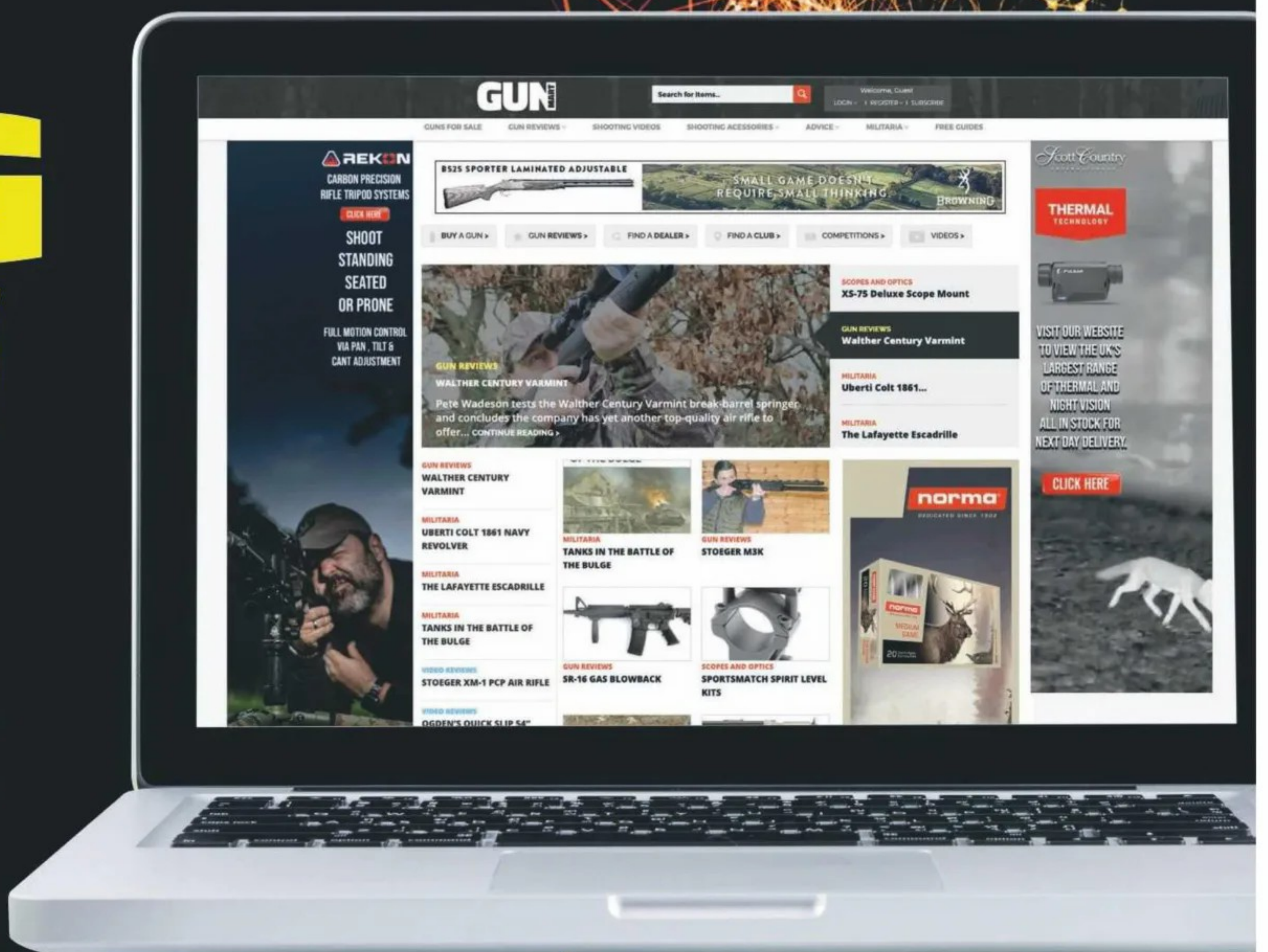
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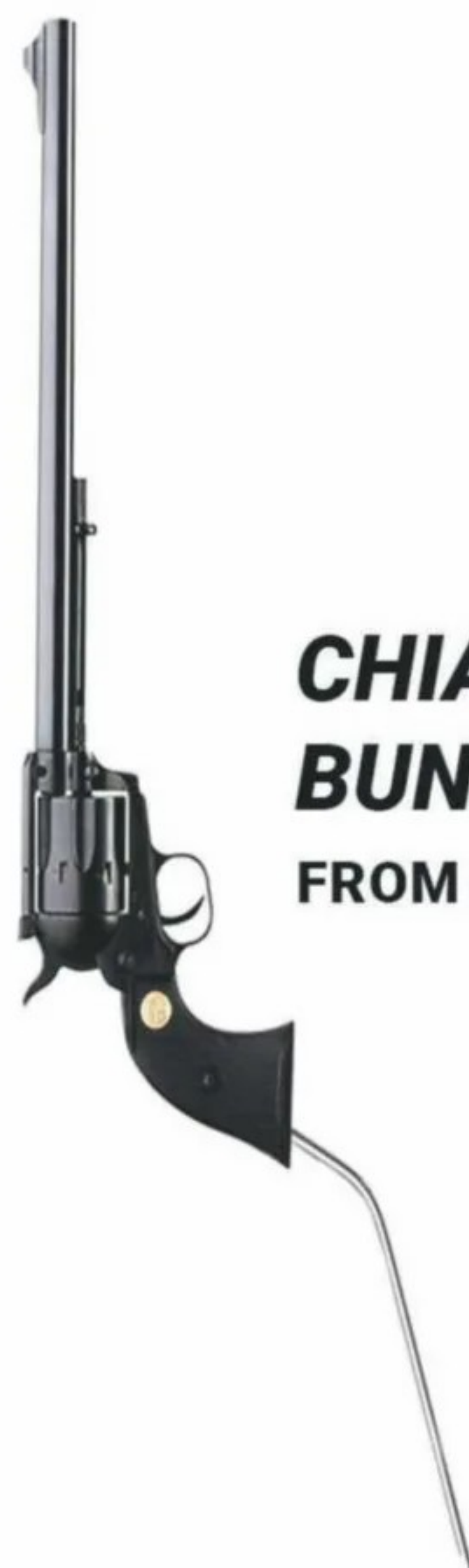
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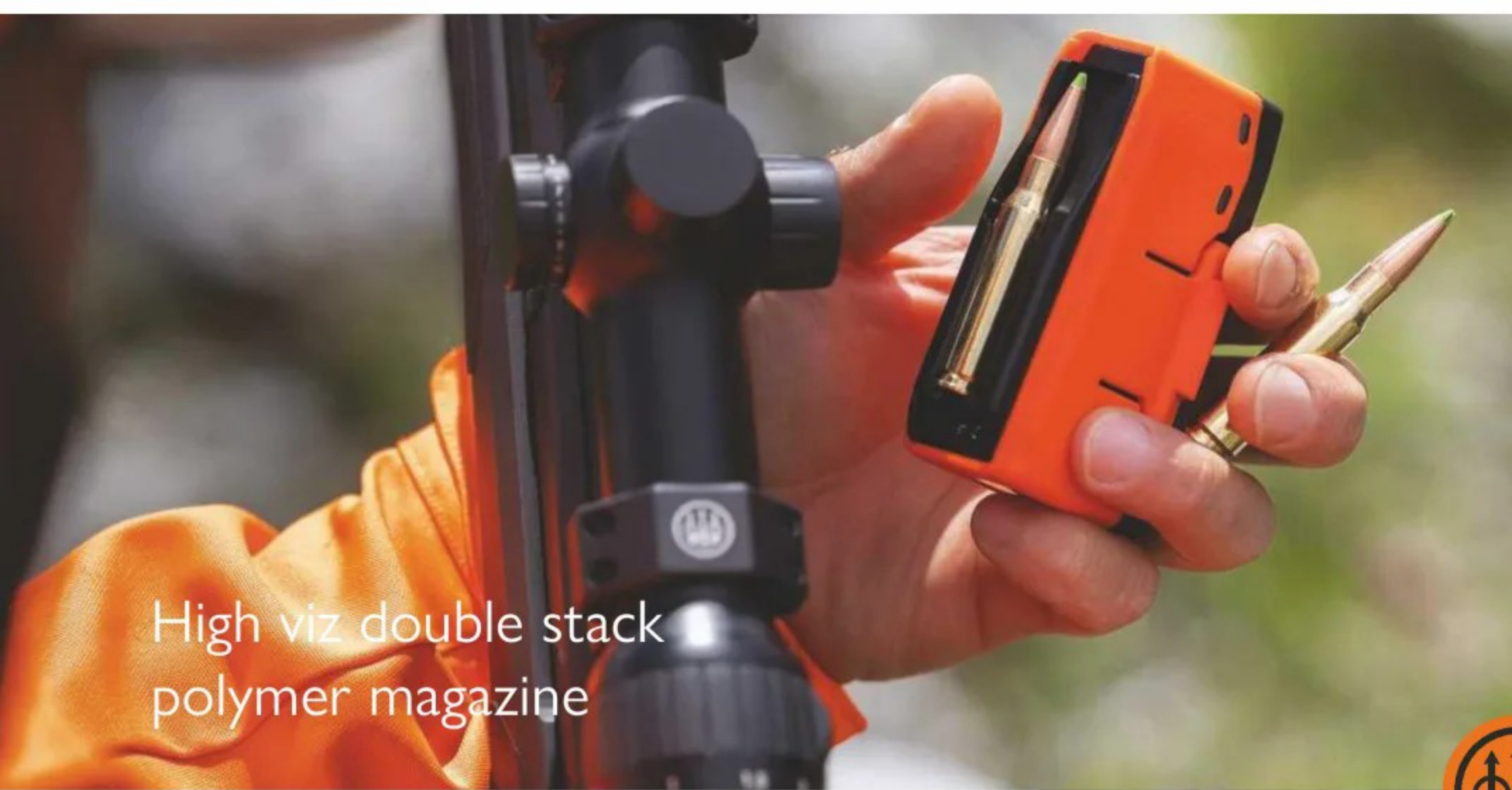
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2 Good

Is front-mounted thermal the way to go? **Jules Whicker** gets hands-on with Pulsar's new Krypton 2 to find out.

Pulsar's thermal range covers all the bases: monoculars, bi-oculars, riflescopes, and – the subject of this review – the front-mounted devices commonly known as 'add-ons' or 'clip-ons'. Pulsar typically develops its devices in three phases. First, there are free firmware updates to the Gen-1 model, which enhance image processing, add functions, and optimise display features. Then comes a Gen-2 version, incorporating higher-spec hardware that boosts its performance. Finally, the device receives a major redesign that enhances its exterior ergonomics, provides the internal real-estate required by the next generation of components, and earns it a new name: thus, the Helion monocular has morphed into the Telos, the Accolade bi-ocular into the Merger, the Trail riflescope into Thermion. It's a neat pattern, but the Krypton 2 doesn't quite fit it, because it's not just the internals that

are new. So, let's take a closer look at just how Pulsar's new clip-on takes its predecessor to the next level.

CHOICES, CHOICES

But first, why go for a 'clip-on' such as the Krypton at all? It really depends on how your personal armoury is configured. If you have less than say five rifles, and they all use the same high-quality base system (e.g., a true-to-spec Picatinny rail), you might consider selling all your day scopes, acquiring some premium rings, and buying a Thermion 2 DXP55 Duo. This would enable you to shoot all your rifles accurately and effectively around the clock at normal hunting ranges, with no need to re-zero. By contrast, if your rifles have different mounting systems, and if you want to shoot at long range by day, like to

be able to dial in your corrections, have a preference for a particular reticle, or simply don't trust any scope to return to zero after being dismounted, however good the mounts, then that's where clip-ons come in.

At this point, it's worth remembering that – while brilliant for night shooting – thermal imaging is also a genuine asset by day. With your quarry in the open, daylight optics are enough, but when it comes to a muntjac in the undergrowth or a squirrel in the canopy, thermal will let you track it with ease, leaving you ready to take the shot as soon as there's an opening.

Consequently, I rely on thermal for almost all my daytime squirrel shooting and use it for a good part of my stalking, too, especially in the summertime.

With the more expensive Duo, you can switch from a colour



This still from a Tactacam video shows the crosshairs much better than the thermal image – but you get the idea!

A good combination: a short 1-8X LPVO and the Krypton mounted via a PSP-V Picatinny adapter



The bayonet fitting on the PSP-B adapter is potentially very quick, but first-time engagement can be hard to achieve

daylight image to a thermal one, or combine the two, at the press of a button. The Krypton can't match that magic, but it can nevertheless be mounted in seconds, allowing you to transition swiftly from ID-ing your quarry in your day scope, to tracking and targeting it in the thermal. And if it moves back into the open, it's just as easy to dismount the thermal and access all the magnification and clarity of your day scope.

You'll appreciate this flexibility, too, when a hunting sortie carries you through from daylight into the hours of darkness, summertime foxing being a good example. Because a good day scope beats thermal (even the Duo) for longer-range precision, you can make the most of it until the light fails, then attach the Krypton to continue into the night.

As you will gather, I like clip-ons! Indeed, I bought the Krypton FXG50 I reviewed here in 2020. Thanks to a big 50mm/f.1.2 germanium glass lens, a BAE 640x480/12 $\mu\text{m}/<40\text{mK}$ thermal sensor, a 1746x1000px AMOLED display, and Pulsar's class-leading image-processing technology, its performance is not to be sniffed at. But the fact that there was still room for improvement is apparent from the features Pulsar have upgraded in the new Krypton 2. So, let's get back on track and look at those.

THE IMPROVEMENTS

Most obvious is the housing. The original Krypton repurposed the one from their F455 digital NV clip-on. It's a good housing, finely machined from tough-but-light magnesium alloy, but in the Krypton 2, Pulsar has moved on from the squared-off

aesthetic of the Trail/Helion generation towards the sleeker looks of the Axions and trimmed off some grams and mm in the process, making the Krypton 2 some 60-grams lighter, 12mm shorter, 15mm narrower, and just 9mm taller than the original. Also improved is the objective lens cover, which is now a permanently attached item that folds flat against the right-hand side of the housing.

Still recognisable is the IPS7 B-Pack battery (now top-mounted), although the Krypton 2's more energy-efficient internals have extended its run time by 180 minutes to a whopping 11 hours per charge. Unlike the Thermion or Merger, there's no internal battery, so you can't hot-swap, but spares (£82.95) are quickly fitted, and a fast start-up gets you back in action in no time. Alternatively, you can run your Krypton 2 from an external 9V power bank via the USB-C power/data port on the left-hand side.

Also on the left-hand side are the key controls. As a left-hander, I found the top-mounted controls of the original Krypton, especially the focusing knob,

easier to reach. The new button layout also feels less intuitive. There are four buttons: one top-and-centre (POWER/NUC), a pair at the bottom (DOWN/MODE and MENU/SELECT), and the fourth (UP/RECORD) at 2 o'clock from these. I'm not sure why Pulsar didn't pair the UP and DOWN buttons for easy scrolling and put MENU in the 2 o'clock position, but fortunately, the Krypton 2 comes complete with a Bluetooth remote control that lets you manage all the functions (except focus) from wherever you attach the remote using the 3M self-adhesive hook-and-loop pads provided.

ADAPTORS

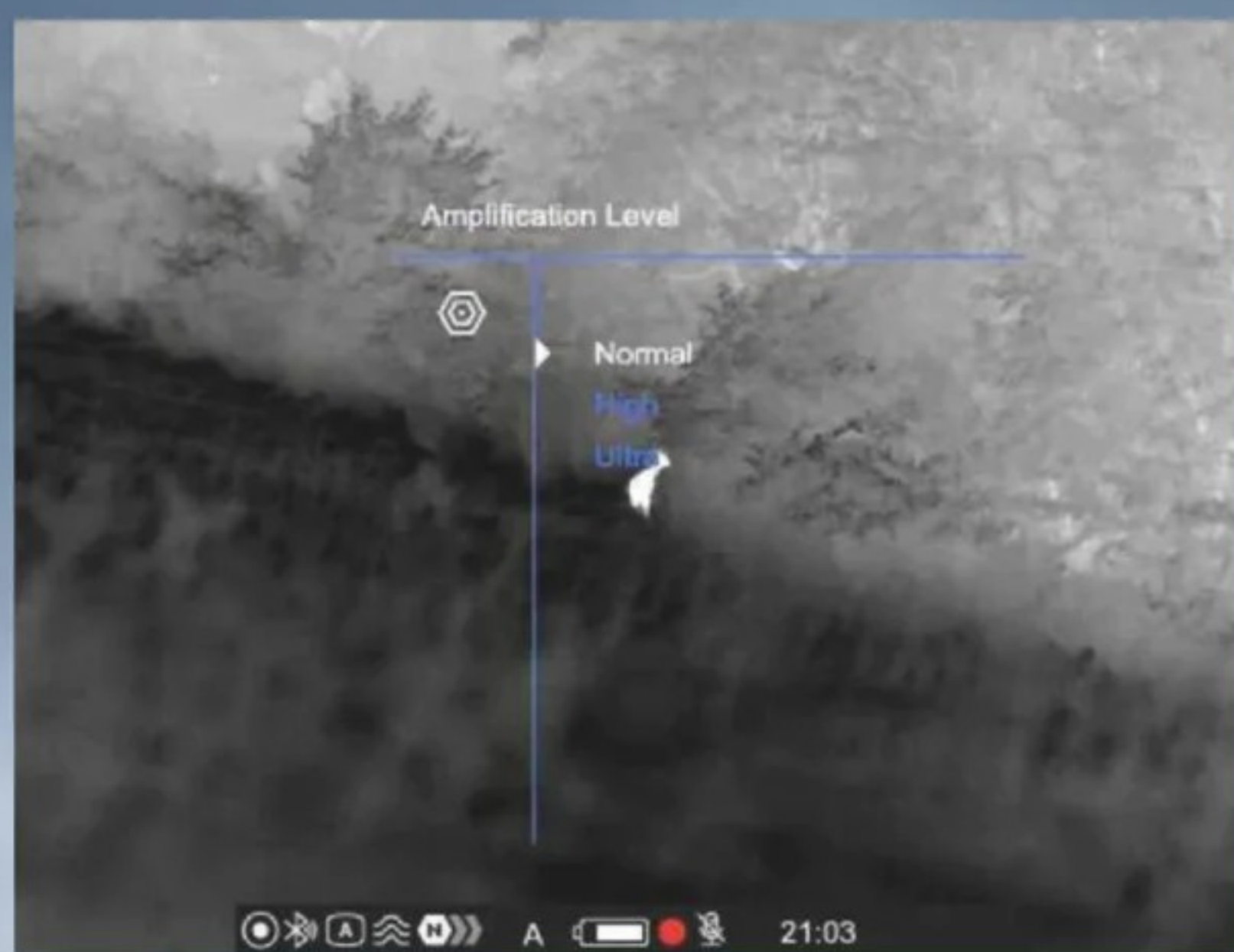
Changes have been made to the adapter system, too. Pulsar's first clip-on, the digital F455S, mounted via a QD bayonet fitting into an adapter (FN) that remained attached to the objective bell of the day scope. Mounting/dismounting was quick, but each scope needed its own adapter. The Krypton addressed this with a new design (PSP) in which the thermal remained attached to the



The Krypton's bayonet fitting is also compatible with Pulsar's 5x30B and 3x20B monoculars for easy conversion into an effective spotter



Personally, I'd have the UP and DOWN buttons next to each other! Note the neat cover to the USB-C port at the rear



All Pulsar thermals now feature three pre-set amplification modes for rapid image optimisation as conditions change

adapter, which clamped to the day scope via a QD lever. The latest iteration (PSP-B) uses both QD systems to provide the best of both worlds.

Better still, the Krypton 2 is backwards-compatible with PSP adapters, so you can still use it with the excellent PSP-V Picatinny rail adapter (£139.95). PSP-B adapters are available in three sizes (42, 50 & 56) to suit most scopes, and each comes with a set of eight polymer bushings to ensure a perfect fit. The PSP-B bushings also seem a touch more flexible – and thus grippier – than the PSP ones.

Additionally, the bayonet fitting on the Krypton 2 accepts Pulsar's 5x30B and new 3x20B (£99.95) monoculars, which let you quickly convert your clip-on into a spotter. The 5X monocular was a bit overpowered for the original Krypton, but is a good match for the Krypton 2, whilst the 3x20 would suit either model.

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

External changes aside, the real step forward is in the internals. Refinements include: tweaking the geometry of the objective lens from f.1.2 to f.1.0 to deliver more photons to the sensor, which now comes from Lynred (France); boosting the resolution of recorded video from 960x720 to 1024x768px; adding a fast 5Hz Wi-Fi channel; and replacing the original monochrome AMOLED display with a colour unit, giving you access to the full suite of eight colour palettes (White-Hot, Black-Hot, Red-Hot, Rainbow, Ultramarine, Red Monochrome, Sepia, and Violet).

More importantly, the display definition has been increased to



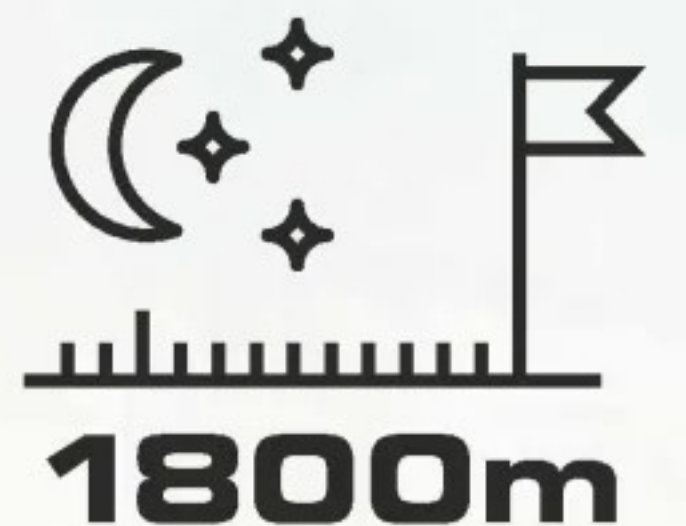
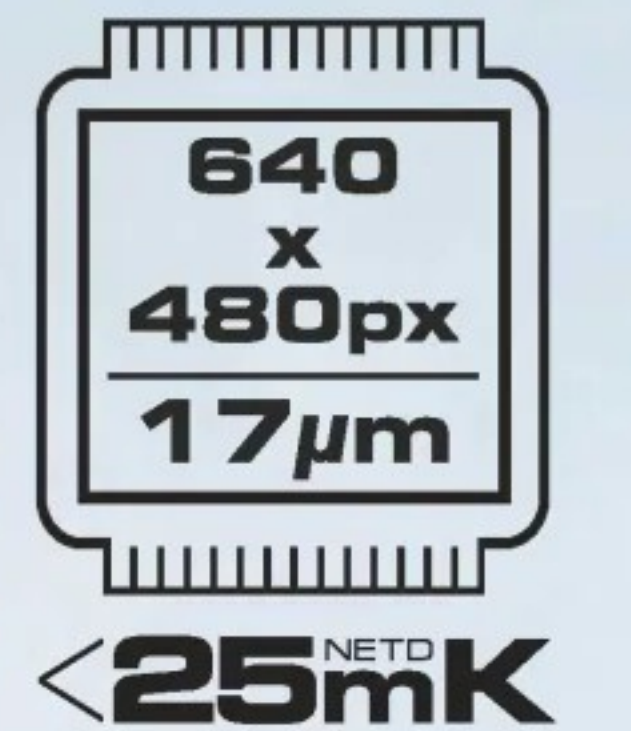
1920x1080px, which means you can use more of your scope's zoom before the pixels become intrusive, raising the threshold from 6x to 8x, or thereabouts. Correspondingly, Pulsar has tweaked the firmware to let you shrink/re-centre the main menu, quick menu items (brightness, contrast, recording status), and information bar, so that these remain visible for longer as you zoom in.

Aligning the Krypton 2 is also easier. You still need to confirm the day scope's zero by shooting, but the X and Y sliders are now integrated into the menu. Additionally, a 'display alignment' function facilitates centring the Krypton's display in the reticle of your day scope – done by adjusting the angle of the housing in the gimbal within the adapter – by providing a large cross as a reference point

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding my left-handed nit-picking about the controls, it is clear that the Krypton 2 represents an across-the-board improvement over its predecessor. But the absolute clincher is the price, which has plummeted from a daunting £4K to an appealing £2,849.95. And if that's still too rich for you, there's now a 35mm version (FXQ35) that boasts a 384x288/17µm/<25mK sensor, wider FOV (18.7x14m @ 100m), smaller dimensions (116x73x83), and an even lighter price tag of £2,249.95. This unprecedented combination of refined technology and keen pricing means there's never been a better time to get a Krypton clip-on.

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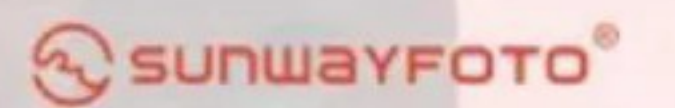


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Getting the

JOB DONE

Pete Moore looks at an affordable rifle from Mossberg; The Patriot Predator

For many British shooters, the name Mossberg is primarily associated with pump and semi-auto shotguns. However, this famous American company goes back to the early 20th century and has produced all manner of guns.

It was around seven years ago that I tested my first modern Mossberg centrefire rifle, in the form of their MVP (Mossberg Varmint Predator) in .223 Rem. It came with a laminate stock of a loose, varmint/target configuration, with a very slim and deep butt, which was not to my liking. Feeling a bit basic, it nonetheless shot very well and later a colleague of mine bought the same model and replaced the furniture with an MDT Light Chassis system, turning it into a tack-driver. Stock aside, I was very impressed.

BORN IN THE USA!

Recently, the UK importers, Viking Arms, sent me a Mossberg Patriot Predator in .308 Win. This model joins the seemingly never-ending tribe of cheap hunting rifles from the USA. I think a lot of us, me

included, at times, can get a bit elitist with our guns. However, all a rifle has to do is shoot straight and show enough build quality to be capable in the field.

This ethos was started by Remington in 2001, with their Model 710. It offered a budget design that could be bought for a fraction of the cost of something seemingly more able. And if you don't fancy dropping £1000+ on the more prestigious makes, then it makes good sense. So, think synthetic stocks, basic finishes and in some cases, a scope and mounts thrown in for around £500-600. A very attractive proposition for many hunters who aren't looking for a badge.

A TOOL FOR THE JOB

Such a rifle is the Patriot Predator, which in truth comes out of the box as a reasonably well-made and proportioned package, that only requires scoping up to get you up and running. All for a mere £550. To be honest, if you're not a gun snob, then its synthetic stock and basic finish engender a sense of peace of mind,

as there's no good wood or fancy blueing to worry about getting damaged.

NO UGLY DUCKLING

Opening the box showed a reasonably good-looking and handy design, certainly more attractive than the Remington 710, which was 'butt ugly!' Most noticeable was the flat dark earth (FDE) sporter stock, the slim, semi-fluted barrel (threaded for a moderator), and a pre-fitted Picatinny rail. Also, a detachable box magazine. Please bear in mind, this is a sub-£600 rifle.

The bolt-action shows a straight handle with an integral cone end, and it offers good operation and grip. The action locks by twin lugs and shows a claw-type extractor and spring plunger ejector. The body is polished and lightly fluted, which I think is more cosmetic than functional. There's a rolling safety (rear/right) of the action and a cocked action indicator plunger (see & feel) in the shroud. The release catch is located rear/left.



Detail of the receiver. Note the fluted bolt, the safety catch, the Picatinny rail, and the LBR dual-blade trigger



The butt offers a short 13.75" LOP. The straight comb is high enough for a good eye/scope position



The slim 22" barrel is semi-fluted and free-floating. The twist rate is 1-10"

ONE ASPECT OF THE CALIBRE, CERTAINLY IN THE 22" VERSION, WAS RECOIL, AS IT WAS QUITE SHARP."

PETE MOORE

FURNITURE

The stock is a moulded synthetic design but feels a bit more solid than some similar products. The butt shows a mid-height, straight comb with a right-hand cheekpiece, and it gives workable head/scope alignment. The pistol grip is comfortable, as is the forend. The latter shows cross bracing in the base of the barrel channel, to improve rigidity.

The magazine well, complete with 5-round detachable box mag and release catch, is a single moulding, and is sandwiched between the underside of the receiver and the action void. The recoil lug sits between the barrel collar and the barrel. There's no pocket, as it fits flush at the rear face of the channel. Some chequering, QD sling studs, and a thick, squidgy recoil pad finish off the list. The length of pull (LOP) is medium/short at 13.75".

BARRELLED ACTION

The steel action is round, and the barrel attaches to it by a collar, a device

doubtless poached off Savage, which allows ease of manufacture and head spacing. A great feature is the Picatinny rail that Mossberg has fitted, so no worries about scope mounting. The LBA (Light Bolt Action) trigger is again, Savage-like, with its blade-in-blade design, with both having to be simultaneously pulled to work. If the outer is tripped accidentally, the mechanism goes into lockdown, which is reset by cycling the action. It's adjustable from 2-7 lbs, by a single screw, and the action has to be removed from the stock to do so. From the box, mine broke at 2.5 lbs, which was more than acceptable.

The 22" barrel is of light, sporting weight, plus it is semi-fluted. The muzzle section is expanded to allow a 5/8x24 UNEF thread for a brake or moderator. The twist rate is 1:10" for this .308 Win example, which should support most bullet weights. The finish is flat black. At 42.25" long and weighing a mere 6.25 lbs (bare-backed), the Patriot Predator comes up as a handy

hunting package that should do the business.

GLASS & AMMO

I used three types of ammo. The first was some Seller & Bellot (S&B), lead-cored, 180-grain PTS (ballistic tip), which I thought might be a tad heavy for a standard .308 hunting load. For the non-lead option, Hornady's 165-grain Full Boar, which uses their GMX monolithic ballistic tip. This has proved accurate and effective in a wide range of rifles. And finally, Norma's 170-grain, lead-cored Tip Strike.

Glass went to two Leupold scopes. For accuracy testing I used a 4-15x50 with a medium Duplex reticle, and as I wanted to do a bit of woodland stalking, my old VX7 1.5-6x24, whose compact dimensions really suited the Patriot.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

The LOP is a tad short for those with long arms, and bolt operation is a bit loose, but locks up solidly. The action cocks on

opening and is easy to manipulate in the shoulder. I like the 5-round box magazine, that can also be topped up in situ, or when you need to just throw another round in quickly and close the bolt. The release catch is at the front of the well, and the mag falls free. However, it's possible to falsely insert it, so that it appears in, but isn't. But a good slap on the base ensures full engagement.

The LBR trigger is good and although only weight-adjustable, it gave a crisp, short, and consistent release. The safety catch doesn't lock the bolt when applied, which is a mixed blessing, but is well located under your thumb, so doesn't affect your firing hand position in operation. Weight and dimensions are good, and it's an easy, all-day carry.

Calibre choice on this model is interesting and reflects changing attitudes. You get .243/.308 Win, .22-250 Rem, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 and 7mm PRC (Precision Rifle Cartridge), with options on 22" or 24" barrels to suit the heavier numbers. There is no .270 Win or .30-06, doubtless replaced by the PRCs. Very niche is the 16.25" .450 Bushmaster chambering, and I doubt if Viking even bother with this one. Their website only shows three options - .243, .308 Win and the Creedmoor.

RANGE TIME

Testing was done off the bench at 110 yards, and as can be seen, all three loads shot around MOA (minute of angle), and typically were under the factory quotes, due to these figures



AMMO TABLE

MAKE	WEIGHT (GRAINS)	QUOTED VELOCITY (FPS)	ACTUAL VELOCITY (FPS)	ENERGY (FT/LBS)	GROUP (MOA)
S&B	180	2510	2414	2328	0.9
HORNADY	165	2610	2513	2325	1.0
NORMA	170	2543	2507	2384	1.2

1700 FT/LBS THRESHOLD

MAKE	DISTANCE (YARDS)	SPEED (FPS)
S&B	210	2070
HORNADY	190	2158
NORMA	193	2129

usually being gathered using tight-chambered, 24-26" barrels. But for a .308 Win 22", is about right, as it's pretty forgiving on length.

The S&B impressed, as for the heaviest load, it shot well and carried energy effectively, plus being a ballistic tip, would give good expansion. Non-lead is a bit different, as effective expansion is more

dependent on the velocity, but the Hornady did well with enough performance out to 200 yards, which many consider the limit. The Norma did the business as well, so another good bet. In truth, not a lot separates these three, apart from individual choice.

KICKY

One aspect of the calibre, certainly in the 22" version, was recoil, as it was quite sharp. OK, .308 Win can be a bit snappy, but in the Patriot, it was certainly more noticeable. This was from an unmoderated barrel, as I did not have a suitable can, so screwing one on would doubtless tame things a bit.

My only negative was that the ejection cycle was not that positive. Work the action too slowly and chances are, the fired case will drop back into the action, as opposed to being kicked out. So, be aware, you need to be consistently aggressive in operation. Apart from that, and especially at this price point, I have no real complaints.



To its credit, the Patriot shot all three loads on or near MOA. The S&B 180-grain PTS proved tightest of all at 0.9

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- **NAME:** Mossberg Patriot Predator
- **CALIBRE:** .308 Win (on test)
- **BARREL LENGTH:** 22"
- **OVERALL LENGTH:** 42.25"
- **WEIGHT:** 6.25 lbs
- **LENGTH OF PULL:** 13.75"
- **MAGAZINE CAPACITY:** 5+1
- **PRICE:** £550 (guide)
- **CONTACT:** Viking Arms - www.vikingshoot.com



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Multiple Readings

Chris Parkin ponders how much simpler rifle testing will become with the new FX Chronograph

I found FX's radar chronograph for airguns so useful that I couldn't wait to see the centrefire version. Although the concept isn't new, Labradars have been hard to get for a few years, due to production limitations, and the market is always better when competition exists.

TAKING A LOOK

The FX True Ballistic Chronograph is delivered in a padded case that unzips to reveal the unit, a detailed instruction manual and a USB-C charging lead. All you need without any additional faff. I never read instructions until I need to, because I like to judge the immediate simplicity and functionality of any new product. This gives me instant feedback on whether it's likely to be a hassle-free and intuitive tool or a time-consuming toy that's more of a hobby in its own right.

I'm pleased to say that FX sailed through test one! The display screen and controls with the Doppler radar emitter, are clipped within what becomes the stand, so you unclip it and with an underside thumb wheel, screw the screen vertically onto the rubber-footed base. The thread at this junction is a standard 1/4" camera thread, so it's just as easy to mount to a tripod if desired. There is a small rubber flap to protect the charging port, and once plugged in, it takes a couple of hours to charge the inbuilt lithium battery. The manual details long-term care instructions, as well as the red/green light's flashing sequences to illustrate charging and remaining capacity. There is also a battery indicator on the screen when in use. The battery has so far long outlasted multiple range sessions on the first charge. Incidentally, writing this has reminded me to check it and charge it, so I'm

not leaving it flat, which can damage batteries long term.

WORK IT

Doppler radar chronographs project a 'cone' of electromagnetic waves towards the target you are shooting. They then measure the returning signals that bounce back off the projectile. There is a small peephole at the top of the unit, to help align it on target, and the instructions detail how to site the chronograph adjacent to the rifle's barrel.

I have used it with centrefire, rimfire, and sub 12 ft-lbs air rifles, to test the extreme limits on a unit that's capable of reading velocity from 400 to 4000 feet per second. There is a hinge under the screen that allows for vertical as well as horizontal alignment. The unit is just really easy to use.

Smaller rifles/projectiles, like the airguns, require the unit to be closer to the





Velocity readings at my four chosen distances



The system automatically calculated muzzle energy at the same intervals (remember to enter bullet weight!)



The master screen 3 offers the averaged calculations

barrel, but 6.5s and 308s are very forgiving in comparison. However, the closer it is to the barrel, without physically being in the way, the more accurate reading you will get.

CONTROLS/MENUS

Once set up and switched on, there are five control buttons. On/off is below the screen and the other four wrap it to control menu functions. I found it intuitive to set up, but if you need more explanation, FX's instructions are detailed and printed in a proper booklet for easy reference, not a folded scrap of paper!

The main screen is a white background with black and blue lettering. Configuration is the top left button, and one press takes you into the initial setup, where you can control key variables. The primary unit is simply which reading you want to show in column one on the display, while the secondary unit is similarly the next. You can choose between fps, m/s, joules, and ft-lbs to instantly display speed in your chosen unit, as well as the muzzle energy. Just make sure

you set up specific projectile weights in grams or grains.

The distance unit is either metres or yards, and you can program the FX to take four projectile speed readings at the exact distances you choose, out to a maximum distance of 300m. With projectile weight and velocity readings at these distances, the FX will then automatically calculate your projectile's G1 or G7 ballistic coefficient. All this displays on the screen in real time with every shot!

Other menu functions included an automatic shutdown time to save battery (remember the unit is constantly yet silently projecting radar waves), so you can choose for it to remain live for between 60 and 500 seconds from the last reading. This is a very helpful battery-saving feature. You can also program barrel offset, which helps refine exact speed calculations, but this is not mandatory.

To avoid interference from other units nearby, you can also change the channel (the radar's precise operating frequency). If

needed, you can choose to turn the interference indicator on or off. I never needed to touch this, and I think it's a feature you may need more around built-up areas, while indoors, or with other electronics silently confusing matters. However, I never had an issue. There is, of course, full capability indoors/outdoors regardless of the light conditions, although there is a minimum range requirement of 25 yards for the projectile flight to the target, to give a chance for radar reflection.

The three display screens offer a variety of numerical layouts but essentially, after the shot, they list the speed and energy at four distances, how many shots were used in the calculation, average speed, extreme spread, standard deviation, the average ballistic coefficient, and the range at which your projectile is calculated to descend below supersonic speed (if it was initially supersonic). The Bluetooth function also allows it to connect, display, and exchange results with your smart device. However, I like its standalone functionality.

CONCLUSION

The science behind ballistics is extremely complicated, and way beyond me or the scope of this article, but the FX True Ballistic chronograph and manual are a superb starting point if you want to learn and measure the ballistics of your personal rifle's projectile out to 300m. From my perspective, the unit is truly intuitive to use, reliable, and has made my job significantly easier and less time-consuming. I have actually purchased one because it delivers perfectly on all its advertised functionality. This is on the shortlist for my product of the year.

This tool has made my job easier and faster. It records and calculates all my rifle test data



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- > **NAME:** FX True Ballistic Chronograph
- > **PRICE:** £899.99
- > **CONTACT:** Sportsman Gun Centre - www.sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

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HORNADY LOCK-N-LOAD POWDER MEASURE

Reviewer: Mark Underwood

Powder measures that use either fixed or adjustable cavities to measure powder charges are undoubtedly accurate and consistent, plus they are also much faster than weighing each charge on a scale. There are versions of this type of powder measure that come with several fixed cavities, and switching between them is very quick and easy. There are also types that have one adjustable cavity that you can set to the desired powder weight before locking it. These are good, reliable, and consistent systems, but there is an even better way.

LOCK-N-LOAD

The Lock-N-Load Powder Measure has metering inserts, a type of cavity measure that can be adjusted and set to discharge the desired weight. Plus, you can switch to a different metering insert with the push of a button. This means that you have the best features of the two types of cavity-style metering systems.

This powder measure is supplied with one metering insert, and you can buy additional ones to suit your needs. Once fitted, the powder measure can handle charges from 0.5 to 265-grains of powder, although for smaller charges, such as those for pistol calibres, you need to buy a pistol insert and rotor, which are not prohibitively expensive. This measure actually has one of the largest charge ranges available, and it can be used for reloading anything from the smallest of pistol calibres to the largest of the magnum rifle calibres.

The measure can be mounted on the edge of your bench or shelf, using the mounting bracket supplied, or you can purchase a Fast



Interchangeable metering inserts labelled and set for different loads



Changeovers are quick and easy with the push of a button



Two calibre-specific drop tubes allow powder to feed directly into cases



The V-shaped baffle regulates the pressure on the powder entering the metering insert



Detail of a drop tube



Detail of the large handle on the side of the measure

Flow Powder Measure Stand and place it on the bench in a convenient position.

SETTING CHARGE WEIGHTS

With a metering insert in the measure, and the hopper full of powder, you run several charges through the measure and then weigh a few to confirm the charge weight. To set it to the desired powder charge, you then turn the plunger on the metering insert and keep weighing the powder until you get to the desired weight. One full turn of the plunger changes the weight by approximately 5-grains, and you soon get a feel for how much you need to turn it to make the desired adjustment. The O-ring on the metering insert allows you to keep tension on the plunger, so you can make fine adjustments without the setting slipping. Once you have set your desired charge weight, you can tighten the lock ring to fix the setting.

QUICK CHANGEOVER

To swap metering inserts, you simply press the release button on the side of the rotor. Next, slide out the insert and put in the replacement. It locks into place and after a quick check of the weight being discharged, you are ready to go again. Each insert can be labelled with the powder name and the charge weight, and then stored with the appropriate set of dies.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

The measure is supplied with two drop tubes suitable for calibres .204 to .45, and using the largest one that fits your case

mouth ensures the fastest powder flow. They simply screw into the underside of the measure and can be changed over in seconds.

Tolerances on this very well-engineered measure are tight, with just 0.002" clearance between the drum and the rotor, and the metering inserts have no play in them whatsoever. The instructions recommend that you disassemble, clean, and degrease the main parts of the measure before use, and it should also be kept clean and well-maintained. All parts of the measure are really well made, and they fit together perfectly.

The powder hopper is particularly large for this type of measure, and this design can often result in charge weights changing as the powder level in the hopper drops. This is because the weight of powder pushing down onto the charge cavity drops, resulting in the actual weight of powder being discharged gradually reducing slightly, as you use more powder. To prevent this from happening, Hornady has introduced a metal powder baffle into the bottom of the hopper. This V-shaped baffle effectively 'holds up' the bulk of the powder and so stops it from acting as a downward force on the powder cavity. Two small inlet holes in the sides of the baffle allow a controlled and constant flow of powder through, and this ensures a more consistent pressure driving the powder into the measuring cavity. Even after taking the powder hopper from almost full to nearly empty, which is not something that is recommended with

some hopper-fed powder measures, there was no 'creep' in the discharge weight. This is a useful feature if you do large batches of reloading.

CONCLUSION

In use, this proved to be an excellent powder measure. Using the step-by-step instructions provided, the initial strip down and re-assembly is easy, and setting a metering insert to the desired weight takes just a few minutes. Once a metering insert is set and locked, it discharges very consistent weights. Having different inserts for different rifles is very handy and with each one labelled with the powder name and charge weight, you can change over from one calibre to another in seconds, knowing that you are going to be discharging the correct weight immediately. Hornady has combined the best features of the different types of cavity-based powder measures with very high-quality engineering, and some clever additional features, to produce a top-quality, reliable, accurate, and consistent powder measure. Although modern plastics can be well-engineered, if you are someone who still prefers an all-metal product, this is the powder measure for you.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- > **NAME:** Hornady Lock-N-Load Powder Measure
- > **PRICE:** £131.25
- > **CONTACT:** Edgar Brothers Ltd - www.edgarbrothers.com



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.177 CALIBRE PELLET SPECIFICATIONS

PELLET	WEIGHT	HEAD SIZE	BC
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BLACKSTAR	0.68g/10.49gr	4.50MM	0.023
SILVERSTAR	0.47g/7.25gr	4.50MM	0.016
GREENSTAR	0.43g/6.64gr	4.50MM	0.013

.22 CALIBRE PELLET SPECIFICATIONS

PELLET	WEIGHT	HEAD SIZE	BC
GOLDSTAR	0.95g/14.66gr	5.53MM	0.019
BLACKSTAR	1.18g/18.21gr	5.50MM	0.026
SILVERSTAR	1.06g/16.36gr	5.50MM	0.020
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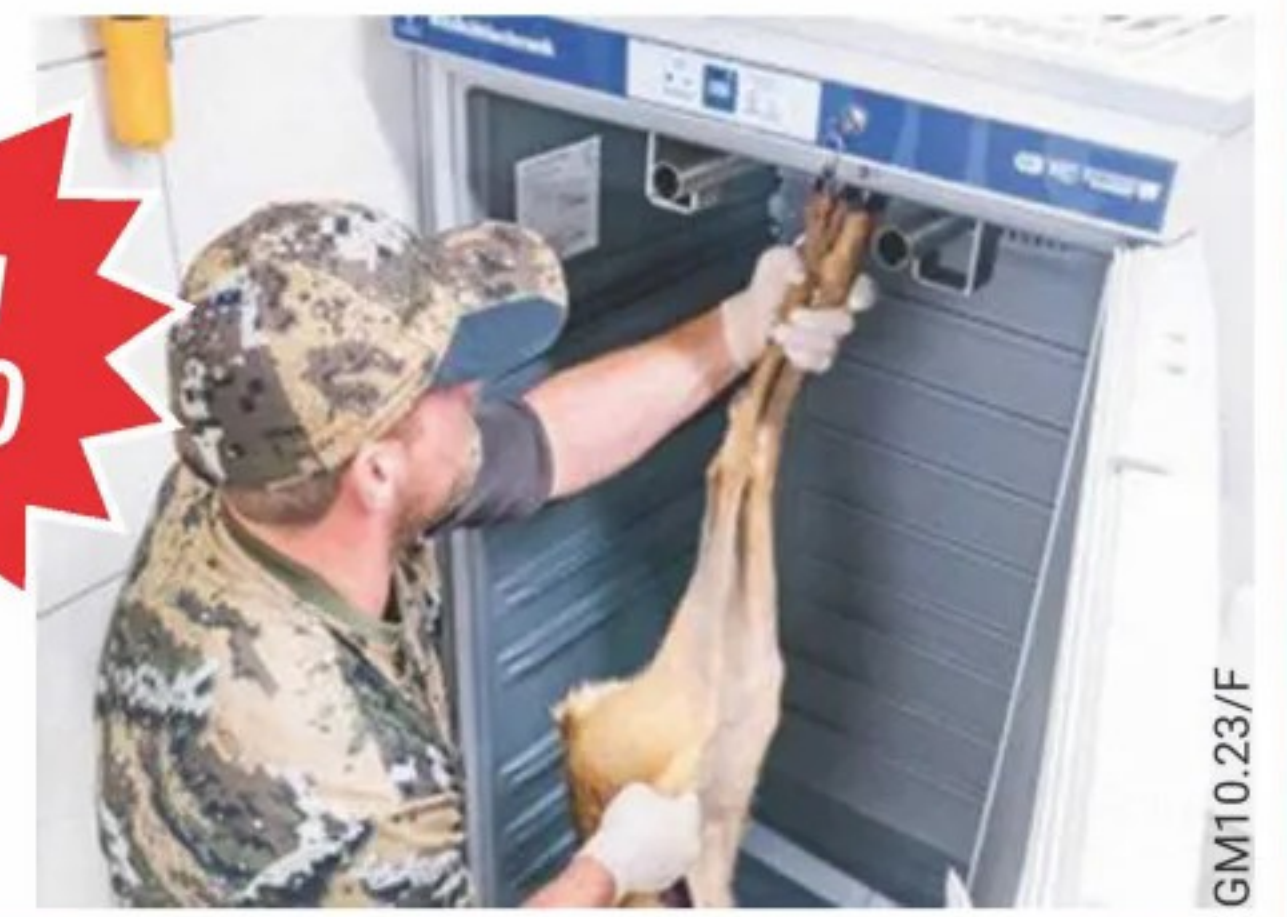
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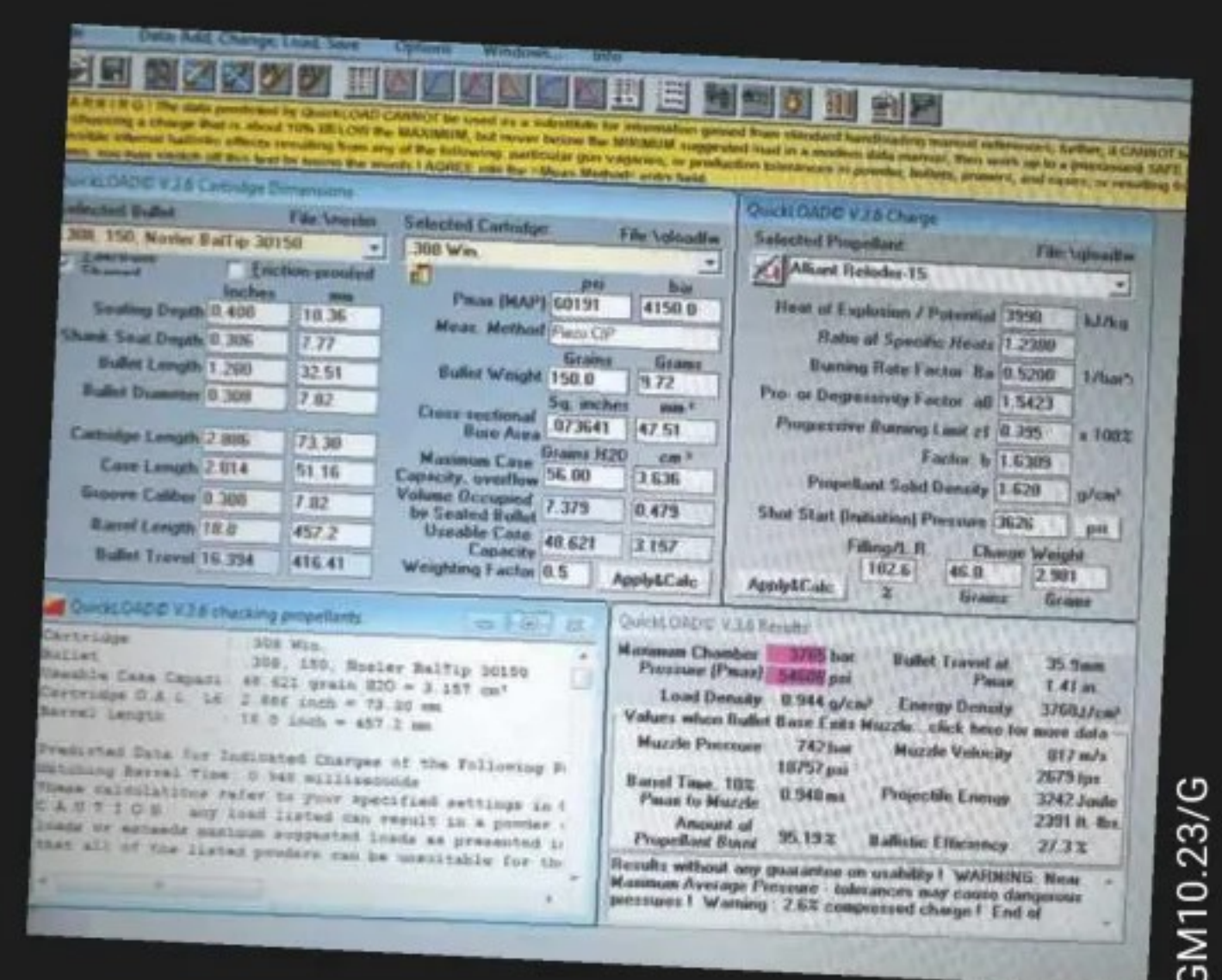
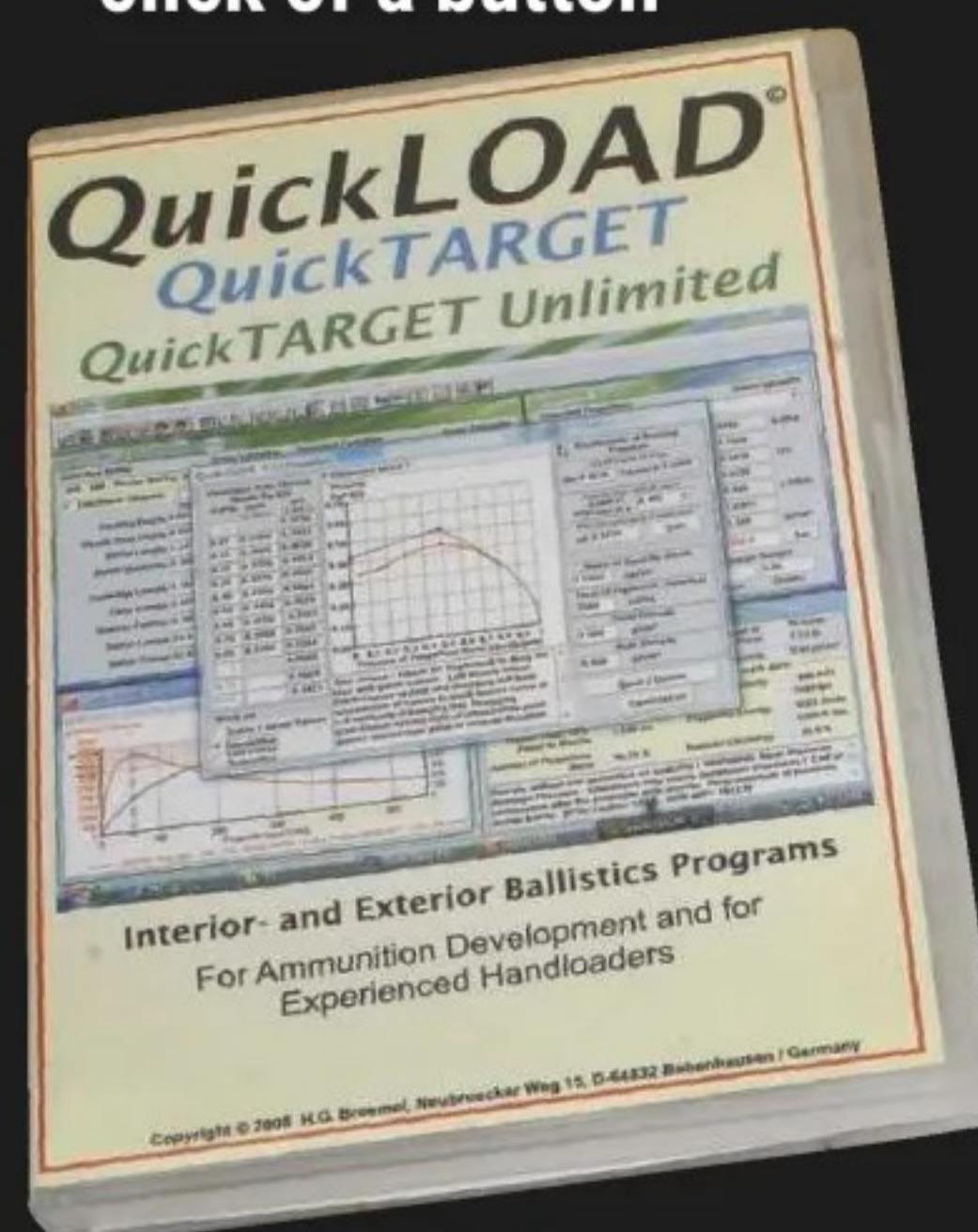
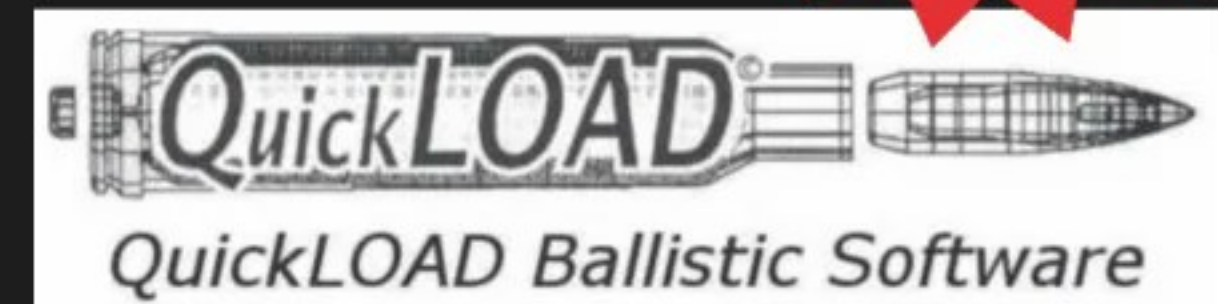
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Chris Parkin

eyes up the Burris
Veracity PH
4-20x50
Riflescope

The view through
the optic. Note
the dialled range
up top



A bit DIFFERENT

At first glance, you really might not notice the true capability of the Burris Veracity PH riflescope. However, under the skin, it carries some very helpful functionality.

Essentially, this is a 4-20x magnification unit with a 50mm objective lens, side parallax, and a 30mm tube. Its reticle is in the first focal plane. If you remove the right side windage cap, there is a familiar-looking adjustment dial below, yet if you twist the elevation turret, there are no clicks. The only other factor you will visually notice is that the field of view within is not quite circular. So, what's the secret? Well, the scope is absolutely normal in mechanical terms, other than no sprung click detents, yet the internal mechanics are still pushing the inner erector tube up/down and left/right as normal. The external dial is marked in minutes of angle, which looks normal. To light up the system, you simply turn the extreme left side dial, which looks like a reticle illumination dial, into the ON position.

Looking through the scope, you now see a small LED display across the upper edge of the field of view, and as you turn the turret, the numbers change. In short,

what you do is zero the scope as normal on target, then reset the turret to mark '0' with its circumferential screws. There is also an easily engaged/disengaged zero stop, which you may or may not decide to use. Next, use the Burris Connect ballistic app to set up your rifle/scope/ammunition combination with the usual variables, like muzzle velocity, ballistic coefficient, scope height above the bore, and zero distance. The left side dial can then be set to the Bluetooth symbol, so that can you transfer the setup. Then, the magic begins.

MAGIC

It would be unwise to take long shots straight away, but if you want to check and confirm everything, which I

seriously advise, measure the distance to your target by whatever means you normally use, like with a laser rangefinder etc. Then, while looking through the scope, turn the upper elevation dial and watch the numbers increase or decrease until they are at your required distance. Now, here you may expect there to be some magical illuminated additional aimpoint, but there isn't. The conventional etched black reticle remains. Burris uses the normal mechanics of the scope to dial, just like you would with a conventional turret, but because there are no specific incremental mechanical clicks, it has infinite precision. The Veracity can be set up in metres or yards, has easily controlled brightness, and side focusses/parallax adjusts clearly, along with the reticle using the fast-focus eyepiece at the back.

The true benefit is that whereas other scopes must use extra reticle illumination, fibre optics, or additional lens packages with sandwiched LCD screens, the Burris retains all its characteristic daytime optical quality, with high, bright, and unhindered light transmission. Even if you were without

The single grub screw on the lower right side disengages the zero-stop, making initial setup less complicated



batteries, the mechanical turret, although not clicking, still retains position through friction, and can be dialled by reading the external engraved markers according to precisely confirmed DOPE.

NICELY DONE

have to say, I think Burris has supplied a really good system here, as the scope and app are easy to use (you don't need the app after setup), the instructions are clear to follow, and you don't compromise the quality of the image with additional glassware within the tube. If the battery were to die (it has actually got two internal batteries under the left side dial cap), you are not stuck high and dry. Although the scope is only available with MOA indicators, it doesn't really matter, because you will

work in metres or yards as to your preference anyway. There is an internal clinometer for the scope to automatically compensate uphill and downhill trajectories, and the automated off function can be set for 1,2,4 or 12 hours. Roll/Cant angle is also indicated by an internal bubble level, helping you hold your rifle straight.

Burris' bullet and ammunition library allows you to pick factory data or to personally refine your ballistic solution to hit the mark. The reticle is sharp, the image is easily focussed without excessive parallax backlash, and all the other mechanical controls were intuitive variations on what we consider the norm. The windage dial can be zeroed, and I thought the ability to easily engage or disengage the zero-stop function makes the initial

zeroing of a rifle much easier for the less experienced users.

CONCLUSION

I tested the scope on inanimate targets beyond 400m and found the results on target were well within the lateral and wind variables that must be accommodated for when taking a long-range shot. I only had it for a very short period and would love to have done more with it, as crucially, it didn't seem to offer pseudo benefits with hidden compromise. The benefits were all useful functions. Most importantly for me, I liked the intelligent combination of electronic and tactile mechanical controls to offer me a firing solution, and a secure connection to the app when I needed it with 100% reliability. I also think the scope is incredibly good value.



The fast-focus eyepiece ensures a crisp reticle. Note the knurled zoom ring



The turrets don't give away too many clues, other than the Bluetooth symbol



You can still manually dial, if necessary, with 36 MOA elevation available above the zero stop



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- > **NAME:** Burris Veracity PH 4-20x50
- > **RETICLE:** FFP
- > **WEIGHT:** 771-grams
- > **EYE RELIEF:** 3.5 - 4.25"
- > **CLICK VALUES:** 1/4 MOA
- > **FIELD OF VIEW:** 26 - 5.5 ft. (Low to High @ 100 yards)
- > **BODY TUBE:** 30mm
- > **MINIMUM FOCUS:** 50 yards to Infinity
- > **LENGTH:** 15"/381mm
- > **ADJUSTMENT RANGE:**
66 MOA Elevation, 37 MOA Windage
- > **PRICE:** £995.00
- > **CONTACT:** GMK Ltd - www.gmk.co.uk

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*Scopes & mounts not included

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BARNES VOR-TX .45-70 GOVERNMENT

Reviewer:
Mark Underwood

The choice of .45-70 Government factory ammunition is pretty limited in the UK, with only a handful of brands available, so opportunities to try some are limited. The Barnes VOR-TX ammunition on test carries a hefty price tag, at around £5 per round, but it looks very interesting. Testing it was an opportunity not to be missed.

The ammunition carries a 300-grain Barnes TSX FN (Triple Shock X Flat Nose) bullet, which is an all-copper (lead-free) projectile that's designed for hunting relatively large game. Despite being described as Flat Nosed, the bullet actually has a massive hollow point occupying almost all of the front of the bullet. This deep hollow point ensures significant expansion, described by Barnes as "double-diameter", which provides maximum energy transfer to the target. Plus, all-copper bullets like this also provide maximum weight retention and excellent accuracy.

The numbers

The stated performance figures are 1925 fps / 2469 ft/lbs at the muzzle, and 1505 fps / 1509 ft/lbs at 100 yards. So, impressive performance from a 24" test

This massive hollow point ensures huge expansion and energy transfer



muzzle velocity was pretty close to the stated figures, at around 1880 fps. Barnes states that at speeds over 1150 fps, the bullet will expand to at least 1.7x its original diameter, and at 100 to 200 fps faster, expansion will be 2x. This equates to very impressive stopping power.

Shooting

It would be fair to say that this ammunition is not for the faint-hearted! The recoil is 'significant', particularly when fired from a short-barrelled rifle. That said, after the apprehension of the first shot, and an anticipatory flinch, it was surprisingly manageable. Once you get comfortable with the liveliness of this particular round, it is actually fun to shoot.

Conclusion

Wild boar shooting is usually done at relatively close, and often rapidly reducing distances. With this particular quarry being less than friendly, you need ammunition you can rely on. The Barnes ammunition on test is reassuringly effective, with reports of its immense stopping power against very large game regularly coming from countries like America, and a one-shot-kill always seems to be the outcome. While accuracy might not be as pinpoint as match-grade ammunition, the VOR-TX is certainly more than capable of delivering sufficient accuracy to do its job on the intended target.

THE BARNES AMMUNITION ON TEST IS REASSURINGLY EFFECTIVE, WITH REPORTS OF ITS IMMENSE STOPPING POWER AGAINST VERY LARGE GAME..."

MARK UNDERWOOD

barrel. The ammunition comes with a warning that this is a 'full-pressure' load that cannot be used in all .45-70 Government calibre guns. Barnes has confirmed that the chamber pressure for this round has been kept below 28,000 psi, which is the maximum recommended by SAAMI.

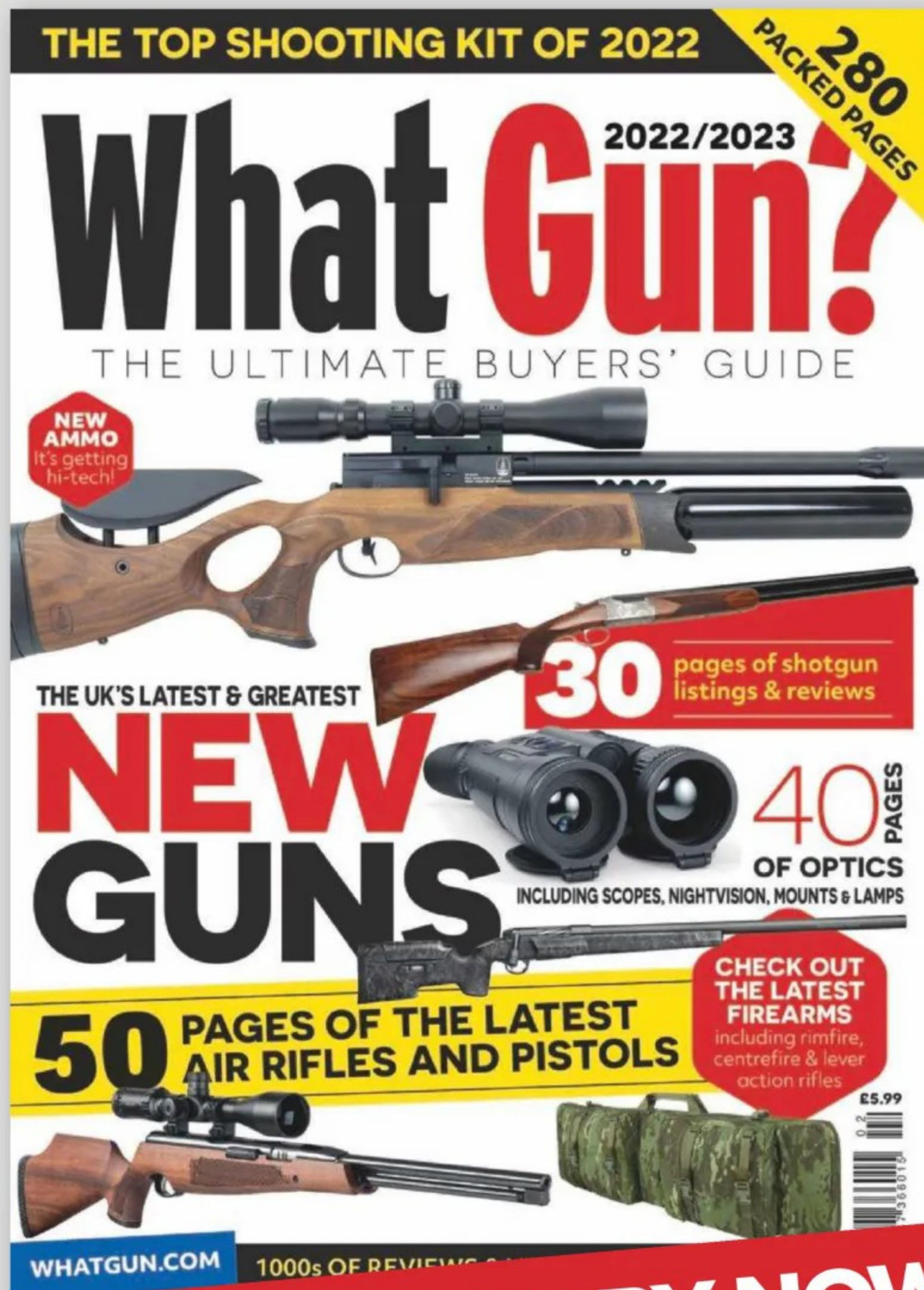
For a calibre that is often credited with having a trajectory like a rainbow, this ammunition is actually fairly flat shooting. When sighted in at 100 yards, the bullet drop at 200 is only 15".

Out of a Perdosoli 1886 Guidemaster with a 19" barrel, the

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- > **NAME:** Barnes VOR-TX 45-70 Government Ammunition
- > **PRICE:** £90 for a box of 20 (guide)
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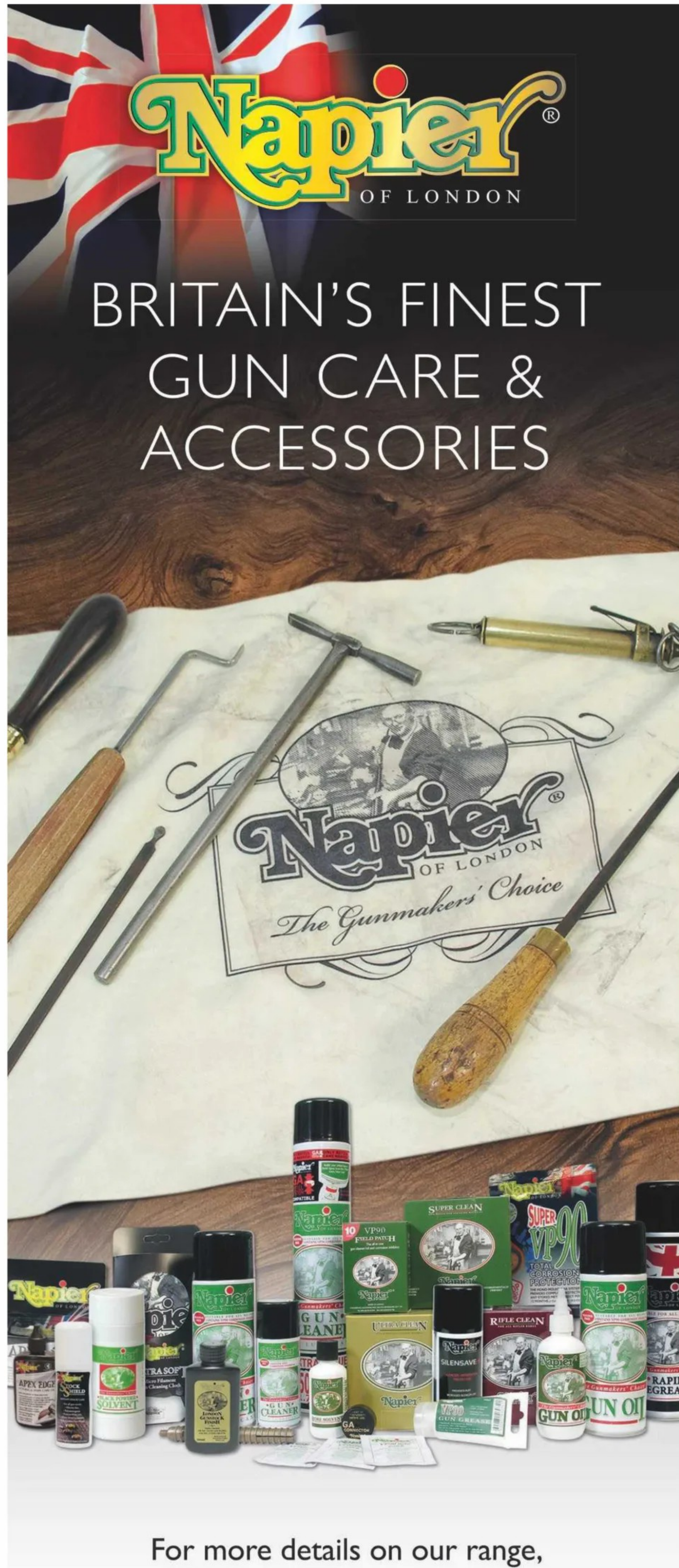
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A Wheel Gun



Ed Jackson goes back to basics and tests the Chiappa SAA 1873 .22LR Buntline Long Barrel Revolver





With the hammer on half cock and the loading gate open, you can start inserting rounds and rotating the cylinder



With all the rounds depleted, you can use the manually operated ejector rod to push the empties out. Note the protruding pin

Chiappa Firearms is an Italian company that is still family-owned to this day.

It was founded in 1958 in Brescia, which for those that don't know, is an area that is steeped in history when it comes to manufacturing firearms. In fact, I was lucky enough to get an invite from the UK Importers, Raytrade UK, to visit the Chiappa factory in Brescia back in 2019, where I got the opportunity to walk the factory floor, looking at all their latest machinery and the manufacturing processes that they use. Of course, no trip would be the same without a visit to the range, where I sampled no less than 24 of their guns! The selection included various versions of the Rhino revolver in 9mm and .357, a FAS 6007 .22LR target pistol, M9 and 1911 semi-auto .22LR pistols, a Colt-type Single Action Army (SAA) 1873 Regulator revolver in .38 special, a Double Badger combination gun in .243 and .410, a PAK-9mm pistol, RAK-9mm rifle, MFOUR-22 rifle, M1 Carbine in 9mm, a Winchester 1887 lever-action shotgun, a Spencer

rifle in .45 Colt, an Enfield muzzle-loader, Alaskan lever-actions in .44 and .357, a Ridge Runner, and an 1886 lever-action in 45-70.

As you have probably gathered from that list, Chiappa produces quite an array of firearms, including historic replicas of American firearms, lever-actions (rifles and shotguns), single-shot BPCRs (black powder cartridge rifles), muzzleloaders, airguns, rifles, handguns, signal guns, and blank firers.

What have we got?

The Buntline was a long-barrelled version of Colt's legendary 1873 Single Action Army (SAA) revolver. Here, on test, we have a reproduction from Chiappa that's chambered in .22LR, but that's not all, as the eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed the 'coat-hanger' attached to the pistol grip, which as most of us know, is required to ensure that the length of the pistol meets the minimum requirement for a Section 1 firearm here in the UK. This Chiappa is therefore classed as a 'Long Barrel Revolver' (LBR).

First impressions are off an amusingly proportioned revolver that on the face of it, could be a real challenge to shoot, but maybe a lot of fun, too. On closer inspection, it was clear that this was a demo gun, as there were some scratches

running around the cylinder, most likely caused by improper handling. In the hand, the revolver feels spot-on, and all the controls are well-weighted, giving the impression of a well-put-together firearm. The whole pistol wears the same black finish, and it is well-applied throughout.

That barrel

As touched upon earlier, the revolver's overall length comes in at 24", to meet the legal requirements here in the UK. Of course, the steel barrel really stands out, and so it should, measuring 17mm in diameter and 12" long! Look closely and you will find 'Chiappa Buntline 22LR' engraved on the left-hand side.

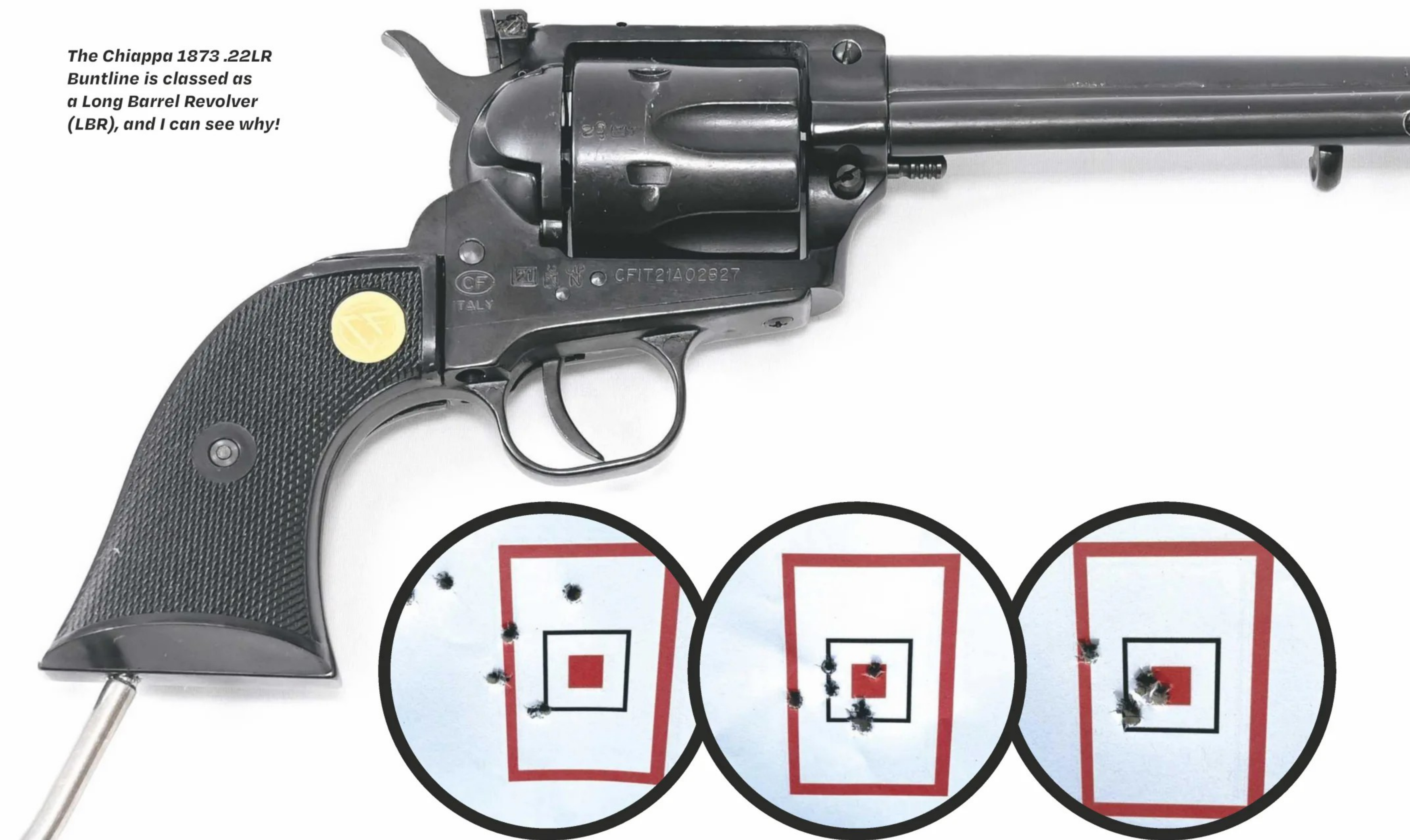
Positioned on the lower right-hand side of the barrel is a manually operated, spring-loaded ejector rod that's housed within a small tube. It is secured by a single screw and is flared along its length, allowing it to mate to the barrel perfectly. It then merges seamlessly with the front of the Chiappa's frame. A perfectly proportioned, half-moon finger tab

Detail of the rear sight, which is adjustable for elevation and windage



The grips are black plastic and feature some decent chequering for grip. Note the trigger and the small guard

The Chiappa 1873 .22LR Buntline is classed as a Long Barrel Revolver (LBR), and I can see why!



(L-R) My first attempt at a group through to my final one

sits in a runway that guides it along its correct path, pushing a small pin into each chamber, in turn, to help the shooter remove empty cases and unload the revolver. In use, I found that you must be deliberate in your operation of this tab, to ensure that the pin follows its full range of motion with enough energy to eject an empty case the first time, every time.

Controls

Look to the rear of the Buntline and you will see a well-sized hammer with a knurled spur, for plenty of grip, and being a single-action revolver, the shooter must cock this manually between shots. Importantly, there are three positions that the hammer can be in – closed, half cock and full cock. When in the closed position, the cylinder cannot rotate, and pulling the trigger does nothing. For maximum safety, the hammer is traditionally left in the closed position on an empty chamber.

Pulling the hammer back into the 'half cock' position allows the shooter to load the firearm, as the cylinder is now free to rotate. Look to the rear/right of the frame and you will find a hinged loading

gate. Opening this will give you access to the rear of the steel-lined alloy cylinder and its six chambers, and you can then insert a round into each one, rotating the cylinder by hand each time. It is at this point that you can decide if you want to leave one of them empty. I never felt the need to do this, as once loaded, I planned on shooting all six straight away! With the pistol loaded, and your target in sight, you can then pull the hammer to the rear (full cock), which rotates the cylinder accordingly. You are now ready to shoot.

The trigger itself shows a small, curved blade, and due to the revolver's ergonomics, you will find that your trigger finger sits at the top of it, in contact with the frame. This is a little weird, and I found that my finger basically runs along the frame as the trigger is pulled to the rear. This is not a problem, it's just how it is. The pull itself is actually quite pleasant and fairly predictable, although coming in at just 2 lbs 15 oz (average), you need to make sure you are ready!

Take aim

Chiappa has fitted a decent set of sights to this LBR, with a basic

polymer blade secured up at the muzzle by a single screw, and an adjustable unit at the rear that sits in a groove that runs along the top of the frame. All you need is a flat-head screwdriver, and you can alter the elevation and windage. Also, you will be pleased to hear that there are some markings to help guide you when making adjustments, which is a nice touch! I must note, however, that even with the screw tightened fully, the front sight still moved a tad. Saying that, this is a demo gun that has been knocked about a bit, plus I am sure you could pad the base of the blade out, allowing you to tighten it down more. At the end of the day, however, they were very effective in use, probably due to the long 14" sight radius, and I didn't have to adjust them at all!

Nice and simple

This Buntline uses an alloy frame, and the cylinder is secured within it by a removable rod that sits to the rear of the ejector rod housing. To remove the cylinder, you need to depress a spring-loaded button that looks like a screw, and at the same time, pull out



The Buntline is easy to disassemble, showing very few parts

the rod from the centre of the cylinder. Now, with the loading gate open, the cylinder will fall into your hand from the right-hand side of the frame, giving you easy access to the six chambers and the barrel for cleaning. Easy, right?

Furniture and balance

As per the original Colt 1873 SAA, it goes without saying that the dimensions of the pistol grip are very small, and that means one-handed shooting, which could be seen as quite daunting given the length of the barrel! Have no fear though, as this fun gun actually balances remarkably well, and in use, I found that the weight of the muzzle pushes the rear of the grip into your palm in a very natural way, providing you with positive control over the revolver. In addition to this, the black polymer grips include some pretty aggressive chequering, ensuring the Chiappa remains under control in all conditions.

Of course, it is a shame about the silver rod at the base of the grip, but it must be there. The only positive is that if you want to adjust the

balance slightly, I am sure you could attach some weights somehow!

Range time

I headed down to the firing line and positioned myself roughly seven yards from the target. Using some Winchester sub-sonic ammo, I got right into it and tried printing my first group, which ended up measuring around 2.2". It did take me a little while to get used to holding the Buntline steady and to figure out how to get the best out of the trigger, but this is why I enjoy shooting, and it was great to see steady improvement. This was evident when I switched to some SK match ammunition, leading to a group measuring just over 1". Before long, I achieved a PB that measured 0.892", and the fact only one shot ruined that group, meant that I was pretty sure this 'little' Chiappa Buntline was capable of some decent accuracy in the right hands!

While printing groups, I got the opportunity to load/unload the gun multiple times, and although some people may find this process a bit tedious, I actually found it quite



Detail of the front sight, which is secured by a single screw



A closer look at the loading gate and the rear of the cylinder

therapeutic, as it gave me time to think about what I would try next to further improve my groups.

Conclusion

When I requested to test this LBR, I was really looking forward to experiencing the fuss-free, simplistic type of shooting that comes with a revolver like this. No additional accessories were required, just some safety specs, ear pro, and .22LR ammo! On the range, shooting the gun was addictive, especially when you got into a rhythm with it. Yes, it's fairly basic, but that's the attraction, and given the low asking price of £325, what's not to like?

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Chiappa SAA 1873 .22LR Buntline Long Barrel Revolver

Calibre: .22LR

Barrel Length: 12"

Overall Length: 24"

Weight: 2.8 lbs

Capacity: 6 Rounds

Price: £325

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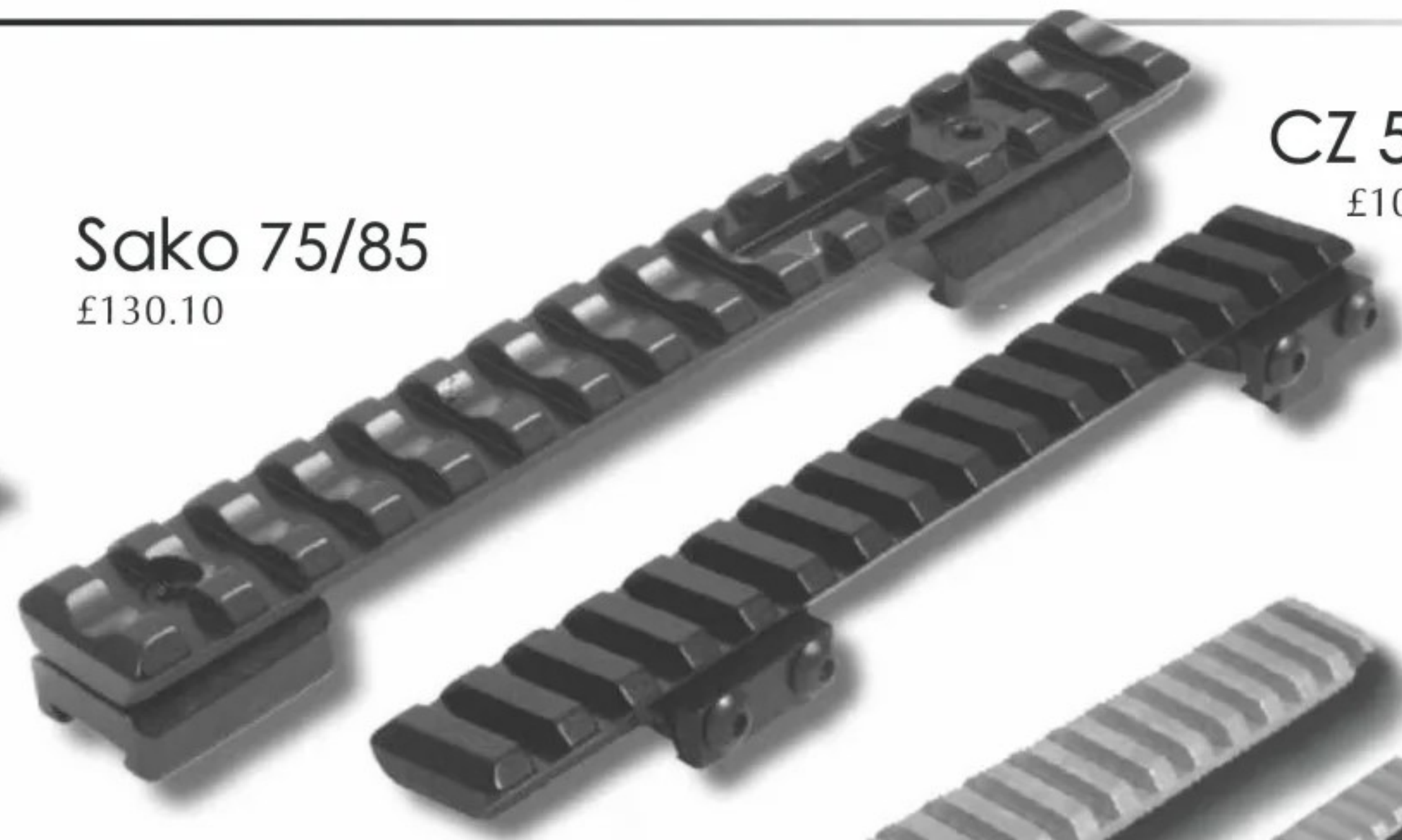
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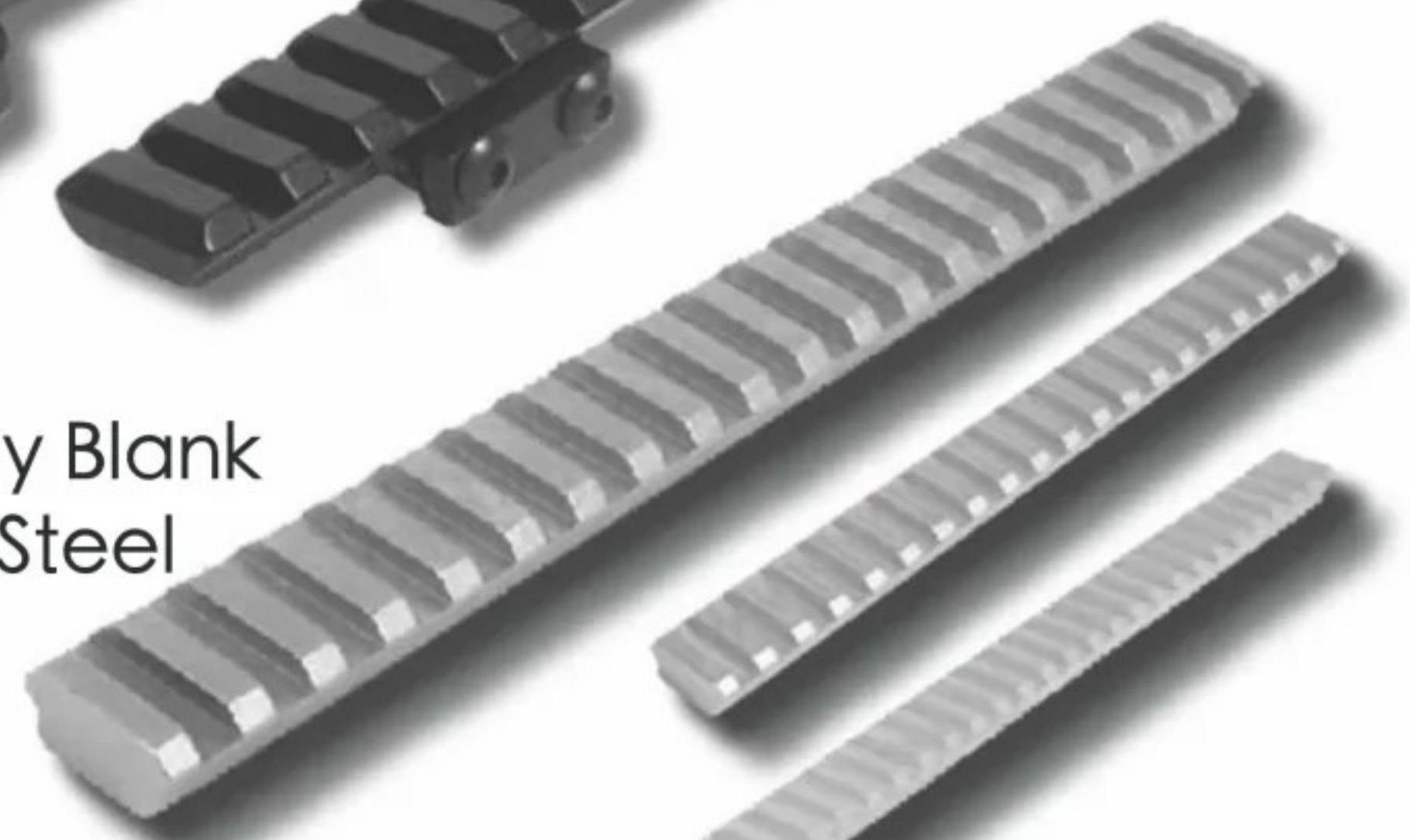
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| 1 inch | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 30 mm | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 34 mm | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 36 mm | 7.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm |
| 40 mm | 8.0mm, 12.0mm |



£165.49

**Quick
Detachable**

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Ring Diameters: | Heights Available: |
| 1 inch | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 30 mm | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 34 mm | 6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm |
| 36 mm | 7.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm |
| 40 mm | 8.0mm, 12.0mm |



RECKNAGEL

Tip Off Mounts

Picatinny Tip Off Mounts for Swarovski Rail Scopes and Zeiss Rail Scopes

Tri-Nut Fixing [57053-0050] £228.11

Quick Release Lever [57553-0050] £228.11



Picatinny One Piece Tip Off Mounts for Rail Scopes for: Swarovski / Zeiss / S&B

Nut Fixing - £269.75

Quick Release Lever - £269.75



RECKNAGEL

Pivot Mounts

Recknagel pivot mounts are high quality, quick detachable and feature excellent return-to-zero with low mounting height. The very low construction starts at 10.8 mm (including the base) for 26mm, 30mm, 34mm, 36mm or 40mm rings.

Mounts for Zeiss ZM, Swarovski SR, Schmidt & Bender Convex are also available.

- Browning (A-Bolt, Euro Bolt, X-Bolt),
- Howa,
- Mauser,
- Remington,
- Sauer (80, 90, 202, 101),
- Steyr Manlicher,
- Winchester
- and many more.

Price Depending on Model, from £415.00

A Picatinny rail can also be mounted with your existing pivot system to facilitate night vision scopes and red dot sights.



Thermal Scope Adaptors

Adaptor for Thermal or Night Vision

30mm [03681-3000] - £217.70

48mm [03681-4800] - £217.70

56mm [03681-5600] - £217.70

62mm [03681-6200] - £217.70



Attaches to your scope and allows the Thermal Scope to screw onto the adaptor.

Fits the Leica Calonox



ZIEGLER

THE BEST QUICK DETACHABLE CLAW MOUNT IN THE WORLD

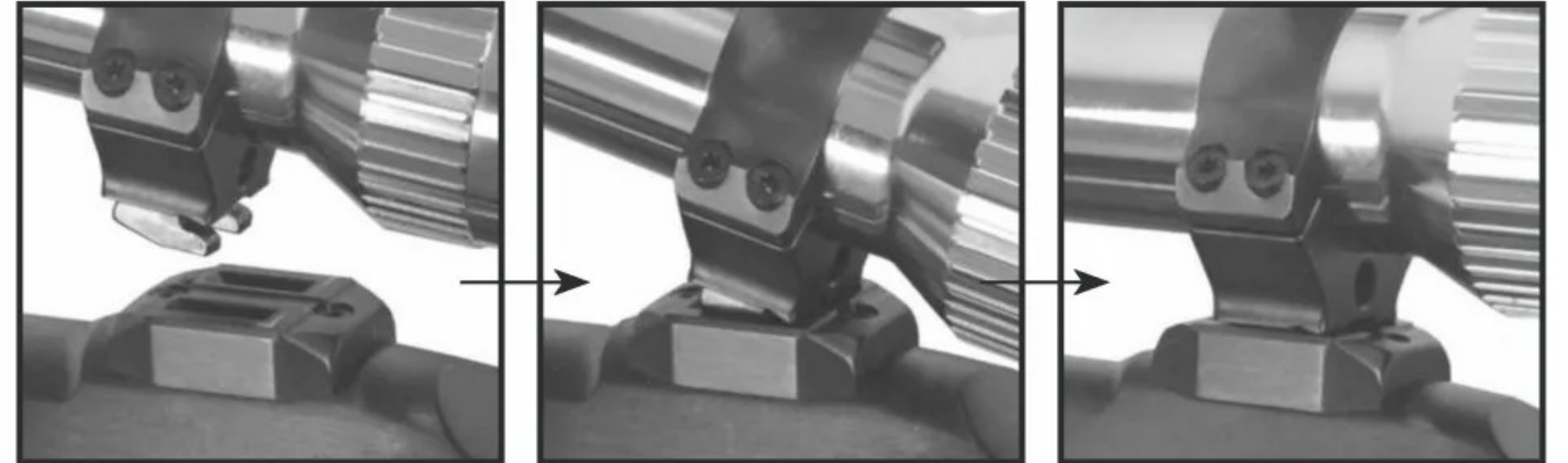
The mount is available for most popular rifles and is designed to fit straight to your rifle without any gunsmithing. Versions available for ring and rail mounted scopes and a special Picatinny version for night vision and other applications.

With additional Ziegler components for a second or even third scope, you can interchange between scopes in a matter of seconds. A simple process to remove and to attach your scope means no messing around looking for tools in the field.

The Ziegler ZP mount has been extensively tested by one of Europe's elite Special Forces. During testing the mount was found to hold repeatable zero out to 1,300 metres.

QUICK DETACHABLE REPEATABLE ZERO MULTIPLE SCOPES

HOOK FOOT RING AND BACK BASE



LOCK FOOT RING AND FRONT BASE



At last, a mount that allows you change scope instantly without the need to re zero each time.



ZIEGLER

ZP mount, standard ring mount or night vision with additional parts for second scope available

See the Video at www.alanrhone.com

ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts

Picatinny One-Piece Mount
30mm / 34mm / 36mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £408.25
Lever Fixing - £485.66



Adjustable Inclination Mount

Adjust the MOA Elevation
from 0-70 MOA in
increments of 10 MOA
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Ring Options: 30 / 34 / 36mm

Tri-Nut Fixing
£651.54
Lever Fixing
£729.13

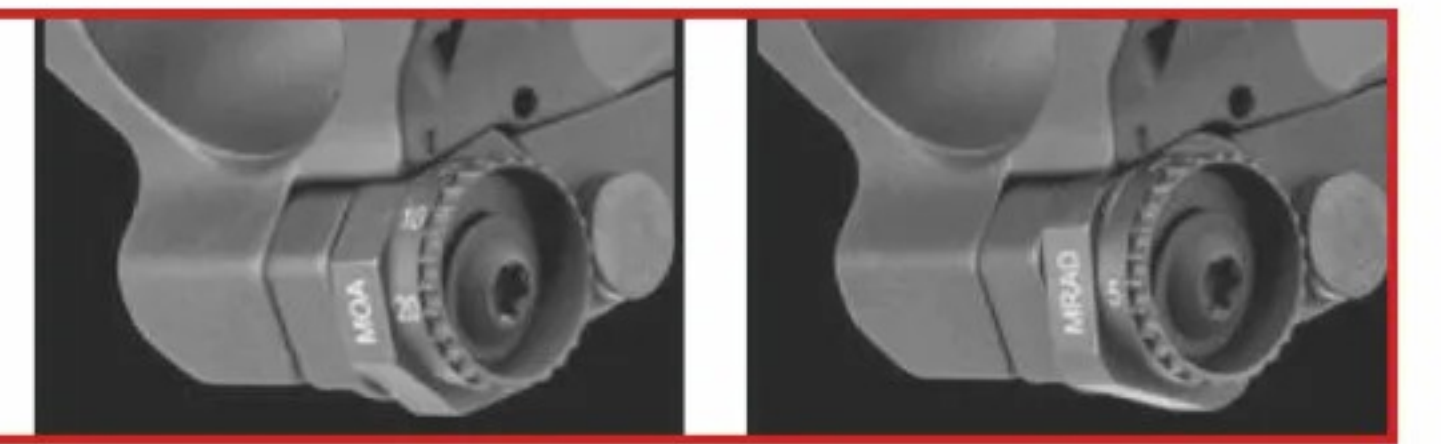


Picatinny One-Piece Mount
Extended Version
30mm / 34mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £430.37
Lever Fixing - £507.78



Now Available in MRAD
from 0-20 MRAD in
increments of 5 MRAD



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Ultra Lightweight

Ultra Lightweight
Picatinny One-Piece
Starting from 122 g
30mm / 34mm Options
Nut Fixing - £286.62



Ultra Lightweight
Picatinny One-Piece
Extended Version
Starting from 146 g
1 Inch / 30mm / 34mm Options
Nut Fixing - £286.62



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Special Use

For S&B 5-20x50 PM II
Picatinny One-Piece
(Reduced Ring Spacing)
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £441.42
Lever Fixing - £486.62



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Two-Piece

Picatinny Rings
30mm / 34mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £375.07
Lever Fixing - £452.48



ERATAC

Ring with UNI-Interface

To fit to mid-tubes or objectives

1 Inch [03680-5726] - £103.04
30mm [03680-5730] - £103.04
34mm [03680-5734] - £103.04
36mm [03680-5736] - £103.04
48mm [03680-5748] - £144.67
56mm [03680-5756] - £144.67
57mm [03680-5757] - £144.67
62mm [03680-5762] - £144.67



Addons for UNI-Interface

Picatinny Rail, 35mm - £38.52
[T0903-0008]
Picatinny Rail, 55mm - £38.52
[T0905-0008]
Picatinny Side Adaptor - £68.57
[T0913-0000]
Adaptor for Docter Sight (Centric) - £68.57
[T0920-0005]
Adaptor for Aimpoint - £77.41
[T0970-0000]
Bubble Level - £88.46
[T0940-0002]
ACI-Angle Cosine Indicator - £330.84
[T0941-0000]
ACI-Bubble Level Adaptor - £110.59
[T0940-0000]



Cleaning and caring for your gun is a big part of accuracy, even if seen as a necessary evil. Cleaning should take as little time as possible. After all, one doesn't shoot for the pleasure of the subsequent cleaning.

VFG have developed a unique and easy to use cleaning system comprising calibre specific felt pellets. The pellets fit onto an adaptor on your regular cleaning rod.

The pellets are a close fit to the bore of your rifle and, when pushed through, expand to fit right into the bottom of the valley between the lands, ensuring no fouling is missed. In most cases, cleaning solvent is not required and is not recommended.

For stubborn copper fouling, VFG produce an 'intensive' felt pellet. This pellet is green in colour and is impregnated with phosphor bronze particles, the same material a phosphor bronze brush is made of. Easily and thoroughly removes copper fouling with no risk of damage to the bore of your rifle.

Cleaning is as simple as running the white felts through until clean, a couple of scrubs with the intensive felt, if required, and then once through with a light oil to protect from rust before storage. Easy and fast!



No need to buy a new rod!
Adaptors available for all popular American and British rods

Dedicated rods also available if required.

Match Pocket Set 4-4.5mm **167291** - £31.55
Firearm Pocket Set .22 & Upwards **167292** - £27.63

Pocket Pull Through - suitable for all calibres of rifle and shotgun. A plastic covered steel wire (the flexible "cleaning rod") and a grip disc are part of the set.



Cleaning Rod 4 - 4.5mm
1 Piece Steel Rod (£50.93) **361324**

Cleaning Rod .22 - 6.5mm

1 Piece Alu Rod **361316** (£42.61) / 3 Piece Alu Rod **361312** (£50.93)
1 Piece Steel Rod **361317** (£62.34) / 3 Piece Steel Rod **361313** (£69.82)

Cleaning Rod 7mm and Over

1 Piece Alu Rod **361318** (£51.07) / 3 Piece Alu Rod **361314** (£51.13)
1 Piece Steel Rod **361310** (£64.83) / 3 Piece Steel Rod **361315** (£74.81)



VFG Cleaning Rod for 4-4.5mm / .22 - 6.5mm / 7mm and above Barrels (Approx. 910mm cleaning length)

VFG Adaptors for your existing Cleaning Rods

English Rods (e.g. Parker Hale) Female Thread

- Adaptor for .22 - 6.5mm (**66807**) - £7.48
- Adaptor for 7mm and Over (**66806**) - £7.48

US Rods (Pro Shot, Dewey, Tetra, Tipton, etc.) Male Thread

- Adaptor for .22 & Upwards 8-32 (**361897**) - £7.48



Available in different sizes to suit all popular calibres

STANDARD CLEANING FELTS

These small felt pellets, which are calibre specific are used with the VFG Adaptor to clean your barrel. The felts screw onto the cleaning rod tip and the rod is then passed down the barrel to give a smooth and effective clean.

Available in both small box quantities and also bulk quantities of 500.

Calibre	Box (Qty.)	Code	Big Box	Code
4 - 4.5mm (.17)	£7.24 (100)	332066	£27.43 (500)	333366
.22	£7.35 (80)	331881	£27.43 (500)	331884
6 mm (.243)	£7.48 (50)	331885	£26.19 (500)	331948
6.5 mm	£7.48 (50)	331952	£32.42 (500)	331953
7 mm (.270)	£8.74 (50)	331954	£33.67 (500)	331956
7.5 mm (.30)	£8.74 (50)	331957	£33.67 (500)	331958
8 mm (.338)	£8.74 (50)	331959	£33.67 (500)	331960
9.3 mm (.380)	£7.48 (40)	331963	£39.90 (500)	331964
.375 (H+H Mag)	£9.97 (40)	331965	£49.09 (500)	331966
10.3mm (.40 Cal)	£7.48 (30)	331971	£49.09 (500)	331973
.44 (.44 Mag)	£8.74 (30)	331974	-	-
.45 (.45 Mag)	£8.74 (30)	331976	-	-



Intensive give a more thorough clean

INTENSIVE CLEANING FELTS

Intensive felts, impregnated with phosphor bronze particles, for rapid, safe removal of copper fouling without the need for aggressive solvents.

Available in both small box quantities and also quantities of 500 in certain calibres.

Calibre	Box (Qty.)	Code	Big Box	Code
Intensive 4 - 4.5mm (.17)	£12.47 (100)	332068	-	-
Intensive .22	£8.74 (80)	331999	£36.17 (500)	332000
Intensive 6 mm (.243)	£12.47 (50)	332001	£56.12 (500)	332002
Intensive 6.5 mm	£12.47 (50)	332004	£62.34 (500)	332006
Intensive 7 mm (.270)	£13.73 (50)	332007	£64.83 (500)	332011
Intensive 7.5 mm (.30)	£13.73 (50)	332018	£64.83 (500)	332020
Intensive 8 mm (.338)	£13.73 (50)	332020	-	-
Intensive 9.3 mm (.380)	£14.96 (40)	332023	-	-
Intensive .375 (H+H Mag)	£14.96 (40)	332027	-	-
Intensive 10.3mm (.40 Cal)	£12.47 (30)	332029	-	-
Intensive .44 (.44 Mag)	£12.47 (30)	332031	-	-
Intensive .45 (.45 Mag)	£12.47 (30)	332034	-	-

Steel Picatinny Rails

Made from hardened steel and available in different MOA options for all popular rifle models. The rails fit straight on to your rifle, with no gun smithing required and are pre-drilled for a perfect fit. Each rail comes complete with screws and wrench.

Available in the following Models:

- Anschutz 54/64 (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Blaser R8/R93 (0 MOA) - £166.96
- Browning A-Bolt (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Browning BAR (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Browning X-Bolt Super Short (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Browning X-Bolt Short (0/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Browning X-Bolt Long (0/20 MOA) - £88.91
- BRNO 98 (0 MOA) - £88.91
- CZ 452/455 (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- CZ 527 - 16mm Dovetail (0 MOA) - £136.61
- CZ 550 Standard (0/20 MOA) - £136.61
- CZ 550 Magnum (0/20 MOA) - £136.61
- Howa 1500 Short (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £88.91
- Howa 1500 Long (10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Remington 700 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Remington 700 Long (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £88.91
- Rosler Titan 6 (20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sabatti Rover Short (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Sabatti Rover Long (10 MOA) - £88.91
- Sako A7 Short (0/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sako A7 Medium (0/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sako A7 Long (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Sako 75/85 X-Short (0 MOA) - £136.61
- Sako 75/85 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £136.61
- Sako 75/85 Medium (0/10/20 MOA) - £136.61
- Sako 75/85 Long (0/10/20 MOA) - £136.61



Sako 75/85
in X-Short, Short,
Medium and Long

- Sako TRG 22/42 (10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sauer 100 / 101 (0 / 20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sauer 200 (10 MOA) - £88.91
- Sauer 202 (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Sauer 202 (0/10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Savage 12 Short (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Savage 12 Long (10 MOA) - £88.91
- Tikka T3 (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £88.91
- Weatherby Mark V Short (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Weatherby Vanguard Short (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Winchester 70 Short (10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Winchester 70 Long (10/20 MOA) - £88.91
- Winchester 70 X-Long (0 MOA) - £88.91
- Winchester XPR (0 MOA) - £88.91

Chrome Finished Picatinny Rails:

- Howa 1500 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £98.91
- Howa 1500 Long (10/20 MOA) - £98.91
- Remington 700 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £98.91
- Remington 700 Long (0/10/20 MOA) - £98.91
- Tikka T3 (0/10/20MOA) - £98.91
- Sako 75/85 (0 MOA) - £146.61

Picatinny Rings - Fixed (Steel or Ergal)

The picatinny rings in diameters: 1 inch, 30mm, 34mm, 35mm, 36mm and 40mm.



Steel/Ergal from £123.60

Lightweight Alloy from £88.90

Picatinny Rings - QD

These steel picatinny rings come in 30mm diameter and 8mm or 12mm height options.



£147.45

75mm Rear Extension



- EXTENDED Sako 75/85 X-Short (0 MOA) - £182.15
- EXTENDED Sako 75/85 Short (0 MOA) - £182.15
- EXTENDED Sako 75/85 Medium (0 MOA) - £182.15
- EXTENDED Browning A-Bolt 3 (0 MOA) - £117.10
- EXTENDED Browning X-Bolt (0 MOA) - £117.10
- EXTENDED Mauser M12 (0 MOA) - £117.10
- EXTENDED Sauer 100 / 101 (0 MOA) - £117.10
- EXTENDED Tikka T3 / T3X (0 MOA) - £117.10

Quick Release Mounts for Picatinny

Precision made quick release mounts designed to fit onto the picatinny system. The various options allow you to secure a variety of scopes onto your existing picatinny rail, whether it be a ring mounted day scope or a rail mounted scope such as Zeiss or Swarovski Rail.

QD Picatinny Mount - Rings

Simple to fit, attaches straight to your picatinny rail. The ring mount is ideal for day scopes. Available in various heights:

- 1" Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
- 30mm Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
- 34mm Rings in 6.5mm / 8mm
- 36mm Rings in 5mm

£355.61



QD Picatinny Mount - Extended Picatinny

Attaches straight to your picatinny rail and provides an extended section of picatinny rail, forward or rearwards. Ideal for Night Vision Scopes.

£355.61



Extension 95mm
Total Rail Length 175mm

QD Picatinny Mount for Zeiss Rail Scope

- Also available in
- Schmidt & Bender Rail
- Swarovski Rail

£355.61



QD Picatinny Mount for ATN X-Sight II

Also fits the Thor HD and Mars HD

£336.10



QD Picatinny Mount for Yukon Photon

Set with rearwards extension and optimum clearance height.

£355.61



QD Picatinny Mount for Pulsar Night Vision

Set with rearwards extension and extremely low height.

£336.10



QD Picatinny Mount for ATN 4K

A quick release mount for Blaser which accepts the New ATN 4K. With Universal Interface picatinny mounted on the front ring for lamp mounting.

£390.31



Blaser Scope Mounts

QD Mount - Rings for Blaser

Simple to fit, attaches straight to your Blaser rifle. The ring mount is ideal for day scopes. Available in the following heights:

- 1" Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
- 30mm Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
- 34mm Rings in 6.5mm / 8mm
- 36mm Rings in 5mm
- 40mm Rings in 6mm

£375.13



Fits Blaser models
R8 & R93

QD Mount - Picatinny Rail for Blaser

Forward or Rear extended rail options, ideal for mounting Night Vision Scopes to achieve optimum eye relief.

Fits Blaser models
R8 & R93

£375.13



QD Mount - Extra Extended Picatinny Rail

Simple to fit, attaches straight to your Blaser rifle. The added benefit of an extra extension on the picatinny rail, thus allowing a greater range of placement. The longest model even has lateral rails for mounting torches to it. Ideal for night vision.

420mm Rail
£537.76

256mm Rail
£394.64

327mm Rail
£442.35



Picatinny Rail for Blaser (0 MOA)

A fixed picatinny rail option. Standard Rail length of 123mm, Extended Rail length 174mm, all with a low height of 9.5mm.

Standard Rail - £166.96

Extended Rail, 0 MOA - £203.83

Extended Rail, 20 MOA - £221.17



QD Mount - ATN X-SIGHT II for Blaser

A quick release mount for Blaser which accepts the ATN X-SIGHT II, plus the Thor HD / Mars HD. Extends back 114mm from the Blaser rear mounting notch.

£357.78



QD Mount - ATN 4K for Blaser

A quick release mount for Blaser which accepts the New ATN 4K. With Universal Interface picatinny mounted on the front ring for lamp mounting.

£411.99



Universal Interface

Quick Release for 12mm Euro Rail

The Contessa Quick Release system is based around the 12mm 'Euro Rail' system and comprises of an adapter that fits to your rifle to provide the 12mm Euro Rail platform. Once fitted, a multitude of different mounts can be instantly attached and removed without the need to re-zero.

Mounts are available in most ring sizes and heights, Zeiss and Swarovski Rail, Burris and others.

The Picatinny rail mount is available in standard and extended lengths, front or rear extension, for use with night vision.

Please note: you need both the euro rail base, listed below, and the quick Release mount. The euro rail adapts your rifle to take the 12mm Euro Rail System. Some rifles will already be equipped with the Euro Rail as standard. If your dovetail measures 12mm across the top and has a horizontal slot for a recoil lug, it is probably a Euro Rail.

Available 12mm "Euro Rail" Bases



Anschutz 11mm Dovetail	£84.57	Merkel Helix	£97.58
Bettinsoli	£67.22	Remington 700 Short	£71.56
Browning BAR	£58.55	Remington 700 Long	£71.56
Browning X-Bolt Long	£71.56	Sako 75/85	£97.58
Browning X-Bolt Short	£71.56	Sauer 202 Standard	£71.56
Browning European	£71.56	Sauer 202 Magnum	£71.56
CZ 550 (19mm Dovetail)	£97.58	Tikka T3	£71.56
CZ 527 (16mm Dovetail)	£97.58	Winchester 70	£71.56
CZ 452 (11mm Dovetail)	£97.58	Winchester 70 WSM	£71.56

Ring Mounts

Multiple Ring Sizes and Height Options:
1 Inch - 2.5 / 5.0 / 7.5mm
30mm - 2.5 / 5.0 / 7.5mm
34mm - 6.5 / 8.0mm
36mm - 5.0mm
40mm - 6.0mm
Additional Rings - £74.33

£323.09

Quick Release Mount with choice of ring size



ATN X-SIGHT II Mount

New from Contessa. This mount allows you to mount your X-SIGHT II to the 12mm Eurorail system with an ultra low mounting height and 110mm extension to the rear.

£307.91



Picatinny Rail Mounts

Extended Length 169mm
Standard Length 117mm
£323.09

Mounts for Rail Scopes

Burris/Nikon £357.78
Swarovski Rail £325.26
Zeiss Rail £325.26



IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



This month, **Mark Underwood** takes a more detailed look at seating primers using hand-held tools

Although priming on the press is much faster than priming by hand, and far more convenient, there are advantages to taking your time, disrupting the reloading process, and seating your primers using a hand tool.

Most reloaders will tell you that seating primers by hand is a time-consuming and arduous task, but many will also acknowledge that it really does help produce more reliable and consistent ammunition.

Priming on the press

When it comes to priming cases, most reloading presses will have some form of adapter or add-on accessory to seat primers. It is not a primary function of the reloading press, like resizing the case or seating a bullet with a die, it is an afterthought developed to improve the speed at which ammunition can be produced.

Presses are generally operated with a long lever, and a mechanical linkage, through which you apply enough pressure to move and operate up to five stages at once. This same mechanism has also got to be used to seat the very small and pressure-sensitive primer. If you do prime on the press, you can, to some degree, develop a sense for the amount of pressure required to seat them, but applying that pressure consistently is difficult to master. You also find on automated presses that you do not actually see the primer being seated, which can mean you miss the odd chewed-up or missed primer.

If you load 100 rounds in a progressive press, and place them nose down in an ammunition box, a close examination will most

probably show primers that are seated inconsistently.

The right tool for the job

The alternative to priming on the press is to use a hand priming device. Many reloading gear manufacturers make hand-priming tools, so it is easy to obtain one with the right fit and feel. The big advantage of this sort of tool is that there is far less leverage and far more sensitivity. Yes, this is going to slow down the

reloading process, but speed is not really the priority when it comes to producing the best quality ammunition you can.

All hand-priming tools operate on the same principle, with primers held in a tray and fed into the seating 'assembly' one at a time. The process is very simple. First, you assemble the tool with either a large or small primer adapter assembly and then choose a shell holder



My tool of choice is the Lee Precision Auto Prime

appropriate for the calibre you are seating. Unfortunately, the shell holders are invariably sold separately and are not the same as the ones that work on a reloading press. Primers are tipped into the tray and shaken to turn them all the correct way up, and it is then attached to the priming tool. You are then ready to start priming. Each time you squeeze the lever, a primer is raised up and pushed into the case held in the shell holder.

You can feel the primer touch the edge of the primer pocket, slide inside it, and then come to a stop as it hits the bottom of the pocket. The amount of 'feel' and sensitivity is remarkable, and you can very quickly develop a feel for how much pressure to apply and when to stop applying it. You can also get a feel for how different brands of primers seat, with harder or very slightly larger primers putting up more resistance than softer or smaller ones (variations in size are very small and primers of the correct size are still in tolerance). You can also get a feel for how tight the primer pockets are, with some brands being tighter than others, and older cases having primer pockets that are starting to get 'loose' after several uses.

The feet of the anvil inside the primer need to engage with the bottom of the primer pocket, to 'arm' the primer, and a hand priming tool enables you to hone your seating skills to ensure just the right amount of pressure is applied. It is still possible to apply too



Perfectly seated primers for consistent ammunition make hand priming worthwhile

much pressure, and squash the primer, but to do this you need to use sufficient effort to know it is wrong.

Downside

As mentioned, you do need a shell holder for each calibre that you reload for, so if you shoot several calibres, this can get expensive. Some shell holders can be used for several very similar calibres, but chances are you will need a shell holder for each one you reload.

The most obvious downside of hand-priming is the fact that it disrupts your reloading sequence because the cases need to be cleaned, de-primed/resized, and primed away from the press. If you use a turret or progressive press, this is more of an issue, and you need to set it up so that only the post-priming stages are carried out on the press (add powder charge, seat bullet, crimp etc.). Alternatively, you can de-prime your cases without resizing, clean them, prime them,

and then resize them on the press using a sizing die with the de-priming rod removed.

Need for sensitive seating

If you use a gun with a highly tuned action and very light strike, primers can be a bit reluctant to ignite. This is when going to extra lengths and using a hand-priming tool to produce your competition ammunition comes into its own.

Conclusion

Hand priming is unarguably slower than priming on the press, between the resizing/de-priming stage and the powder charging stage, but yes, it is worth the extra time and effort. If you are making up experimental ammunition and want to remove as many variables as possible, then hand-priming is

the



Primers queue up to be seated

way to go, giving the seating of each primer your undivided attention. If you use a lot of ammunition, and the amount of time you have to reload is limited, then on-press priming will produce satisfactory ammunition. However, if you do try hand-priming, you will probably be surprised by the difference it makes.

Contact: Lee Precision Reloading Tools – Henry Krank & Co – www.henrykrank.com



Hand priming allows you to feel how different brands of primers seat



Hand priming tools give a much better feel

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A193	22 Hornet SP 45gr	£74.00
A032	222 Rem SP 50gr	£78.00
A203	222 Rem FMJ BT 55gr	£74.00
A253	22-250 Rem SP 50gr	£100.00
A211	22-250 Rem SP 55gr	£100.00
A212	22-250 Rem FMJ BT 55gr	£100.00
A132	223 Rem SP 55gr	£74.00
A188	223 Rem FMJ BT 55gr	£74.00
A616	223 Rem HPBT 55gr	£85.00
A399	223 Rem Match BT HP 69gr	£93.00
A495	223 Rem Match HP BT 75gr	£94.00
A270	243 Win SP 90gr	£110.00
A134	243 Win SP 100gr	£110.00
A047	25-06 Rem PSP 100gr	£120.00
A208	6,5 x 52 Car FMJ BT 139gr	£110.00
A084	6,5 x 55 Swedish SP BT 139gr	£117.00
A083	6,5 x 55 Swedish FMJ BT 139gr	£117.00
A227	6,5 x 55 Swedish SP RN 156gr	£117.00
A161	270 Win SP 130gr	£120.00
A027	270 Win SP 150gr	£120.00
A141	7 X 57 FMJ BT 175gr	£120.00
A400	7mm /08 Remington PSP BT 140gr	£120.00
A345	7,5x55 Swiss FMJ BT 174gr	£120.00
A346	7,5x54 French FMJ 139gr	£100.00
A024	30 Carbine FMJ RN 110gr	£72.00
A028	30-30 Win FSP 150gr	£108.00
A119	300 WM FMJ BT 145gr	£138.00
A636	300 AAC Blackout FMJ BT 190gr	£100.00
A034	308 Win FMJ BT 145gr	£112.00
A020	308 Win SP 150gr	£115.00
A625	308 HP BT 155gr	£120.00
A362	308 Win PSP BT 165gr	£120.00
A363	308 Win HP BT Match 168gr	£135.00
A366	308 Win FMJ BT 175gr	£117.00
A035	308 Win SP 180gr	£117.00
A635	308 Win Z-Grom Lead Free 170gr	£155.00
A365	30-06 Springfield HP BT 168gr	£135.00
A094	30-06 Springfield FMJ 150gr	£120.00
A066	30-06 Springfield SP 180gr	£120.00
A041	7,62 X 39 FMJ 123gr	£86.00
A169	7,62 X 54R FMJ BT 182gr	£117.00
A143	303 British FMJ BT 174gr	£115.00
A424	7.92 X 33 Kurz FMJ BT 124gr	£85.00
A351	8x57 JS Grom 185gr	£115.00
A128	8x57 IS SP 196gr	£120.00
A541	8x57 IS FMJ BT 200gr	£120.00
A348	8mm Mauser FMJ BT Match 198gr	£139.00
A417	8x51R Lebel	£155.00
A384	8x56 RS Manl FMJ BT 208gr	£107.00
A265	375 H&H FMJ RN 300gr	£235.00
A267	375 H&H Mag SP RN 300gr	£235.00
A406	7mm Rem Mag PSP BT 140gr	£144.00

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A298	32 S+W Long 98gr WC	£46.00
A112	9mm Luger 115gr FMJ	£46.00
A044	9mm Luger 115gr TMJ	£46.00
A033	9mm Luger 124gr FMJ	£46.00
A166	9mm Luger 147gr FMJ	£46.00
A446	357 Sig FPJ 125gr	£59.00
A140	38 SPL SWC 158gr	£49.00
A339	357 Magnum FPJ 158gr	£61.00
A353	40 S&W TMJ 180gr	£59.00
A221	44 Rem Mag FPJ 180gr	£94.00
A222	44 Magnum 240gr FPJ	£94.00
A079	45 Auto FMJ 230gr	£63.00

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Ammunition can be ordered for collection or via RFD transfer. Please call or email us for more information.

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B399	22 cal (.224) HPBT Match 69gr	£23.00
B495	22 cal (.224) HPBT Match 75gr	£23.00
B032	22 cal (.224) SP 50gr	£19.00
B132	22 cal (.224) SP 55gr	£19.00
B193	22 cal (22 hornet) (.222) SP 45gr	£19.00
B161	270 cal (.277) SP 130gr	£31.00
B027	270 cal (.277) SP 150gr	£27.00
B010	30 cal (.307) FMJ RN 110gr	£24.00
B636	30 cal (.308) FMJ 125gr	£26.00
B007	30 cal (.308) FMJ 139gr	£30.00
B099	30 cal (.308) FMJ 150gr	£31.00
B009	30 cal (.308) FMJ BT 145gr	£30.00
B345	30 cal (.308) FMJ BT 174gr	£31.00
B366	30 cal (.308) FMJ BT 175gr	£31.00
B323	30 cal (.308) GROM 170gr	£45.00
B628	30 cal (.308) Z-GROM 170gr	£52.00
B028	30 cal (30-30) (.308) FSP 150gr	£31.00
B382	303 cal (.311) BT SP 150gr	£33.00
B437	303 cal (.311) FMJ BT 170gr	£31.00
B143	303 cal (.311) FMJ BT 174gr	£31.00
B006	303 cal (.311) FMJ BT 190gr	£31.00
B529	303 cal (.311) FMJ Match 182gr	£45.00
B362	308 cal (.308) BT SP 165gr	£36.00
B500	308 cal (.308) FMJ Match 175gr	£45.00
B625	308 cal (.308) HPBT Match 155gr	£40.00
B496	308 cal (.308) HPBT Match 168gr	£43.00
B497	308 cal (.308) HPBT Match 190gr	£45.00
B062	308 cal (.308) SP 150gr	£32.00
B583	338 cal (.338) HPBT Match 250gr	£56.00
B339	38 cal (.3555) FPJ 158gr	£24.00
B140	38 cal (.3575) SWC 158gr	£17.00
B221	44 cal (.4285) FPJ 180gr	£31.00
B222	44 cal (.4285) FPJ 240gr	£34.00
B180	45 cal (.450) FMJ 230gr	£31.00
B448	45 cal (.458) SJ FP 405gr	£72.00
B083	6.5mm (.263) FMJ BT 139gr	£31.00
B084	6.5mm (.263) SP 139gr	£31.00
B484	6.5mm (.264) FMJ BT 110gr	£31.00
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B134	6mm (.242) SP 100gr	£31.00
B131	6mm (.242) SP 90gr	£31.00
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C660	6.5 Grendel Improved	£63.00
C385	6.5 x 51 Jap	£63.00
C346	7,5 x 54 French	£65.00
C345	7,5 x 55 Swiss	£68.00
C030	7,62 x 39	£48.00
C031	7,62 x 54R	£62.00
C470	7.62 Nagant	£41.00
C413	7.63 Mauser	£32.00
C383	7.7x58 Jap	£69.00
C424	7.92 x 33 Kurz	£63.00
C417	8 x 50R Lebel	£90.00
C384	8 x 56RS Mannlicher	£76.00
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C636	300 AAC Blackout	£52.00

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PSP	- Pointed Soft Point	FMJ	- Full Metal Jacket
SPBT	- Soft Point Boat Tail	FMJRN	- Full Metal Jacket Round Nose
SPRN	- Pointed Soft Point Boat Tail	FMJBT	- Full Metal Jacket Boat Tail
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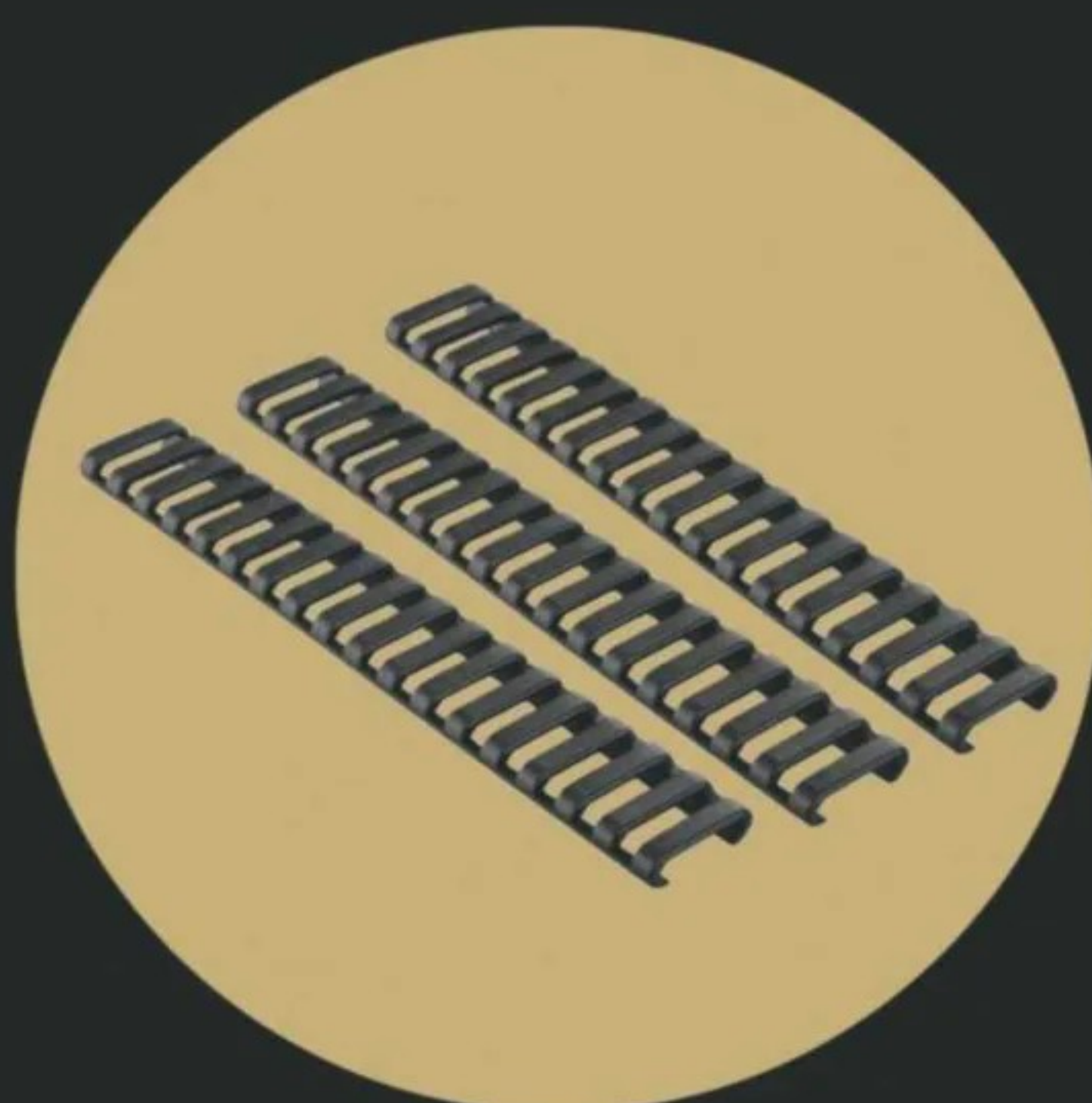









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• WINCHESTER MODEL 70 .375 H & H MAGNUM WITH BI-POD, dies, some fired cases and some factory ammo also available £425 ono. Email: steve.c223@hotmail.com Phone 01634 723343 or 07761468672 (Kent)

• PIETTA REMINGTON MODEL 1858 New Model Army .44 £90. Palmetto Pennsylvania flintlock pistol .44 £75. Arms Corp AK47/22 2 magazines £100. Percussion 3 band musket black powder £100. Repro Enfield musket display £50. Buyer collects, North Bucks. Tel: 01234 241853

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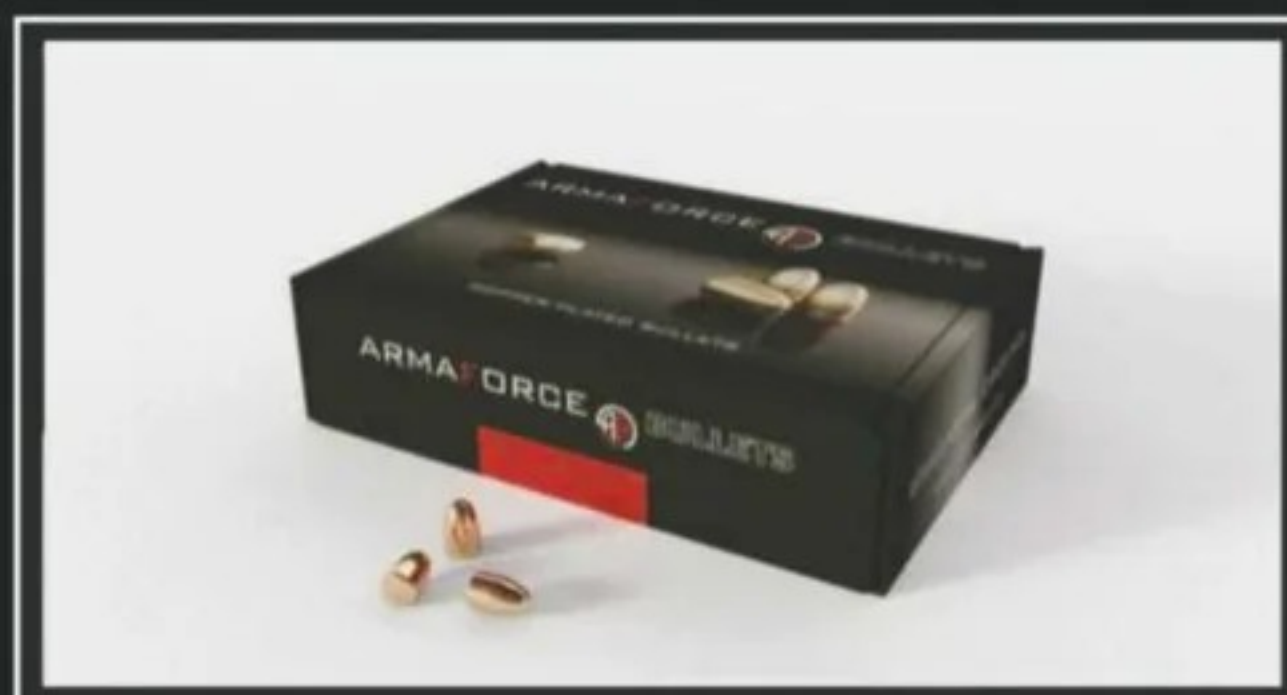
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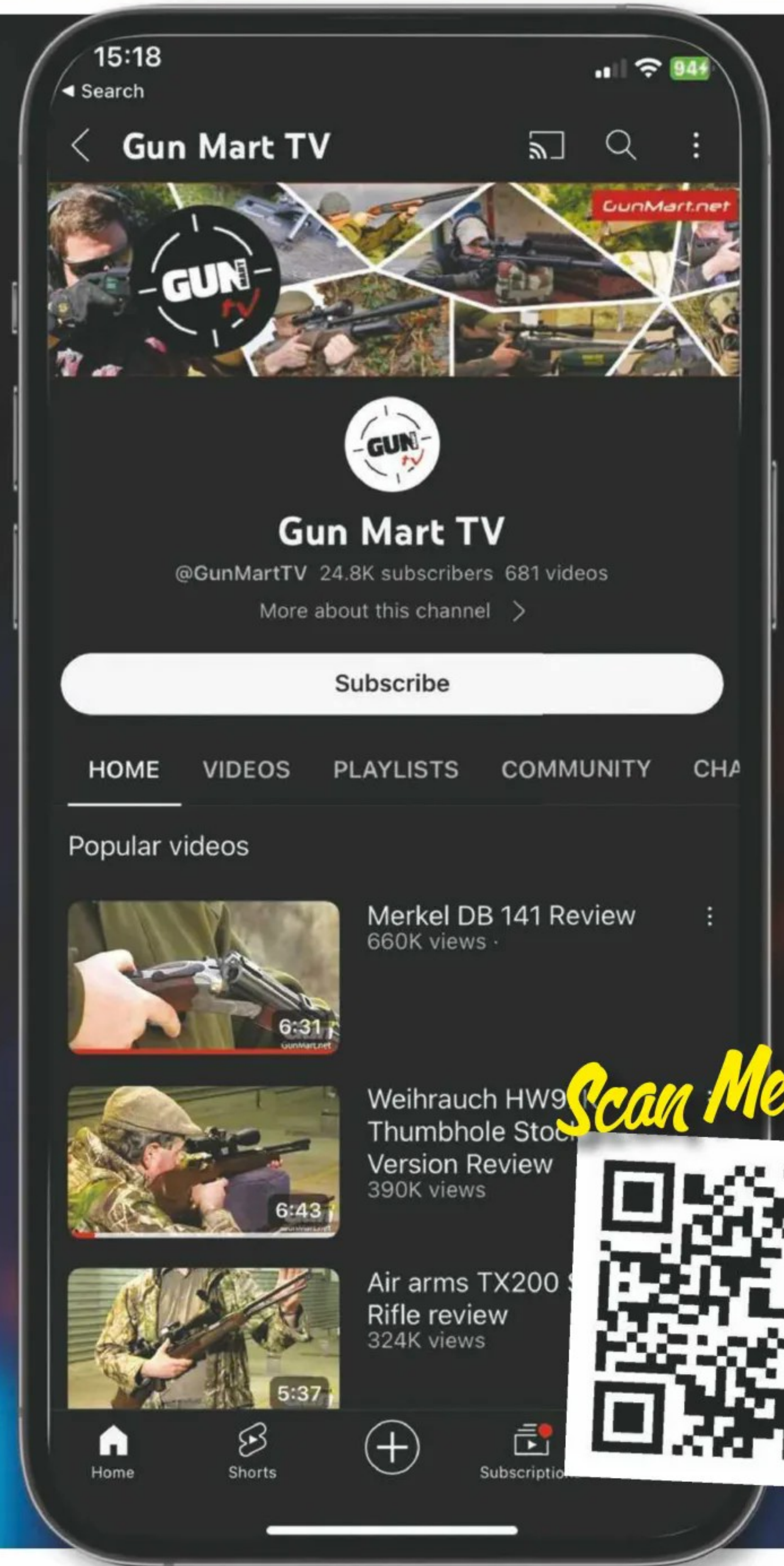


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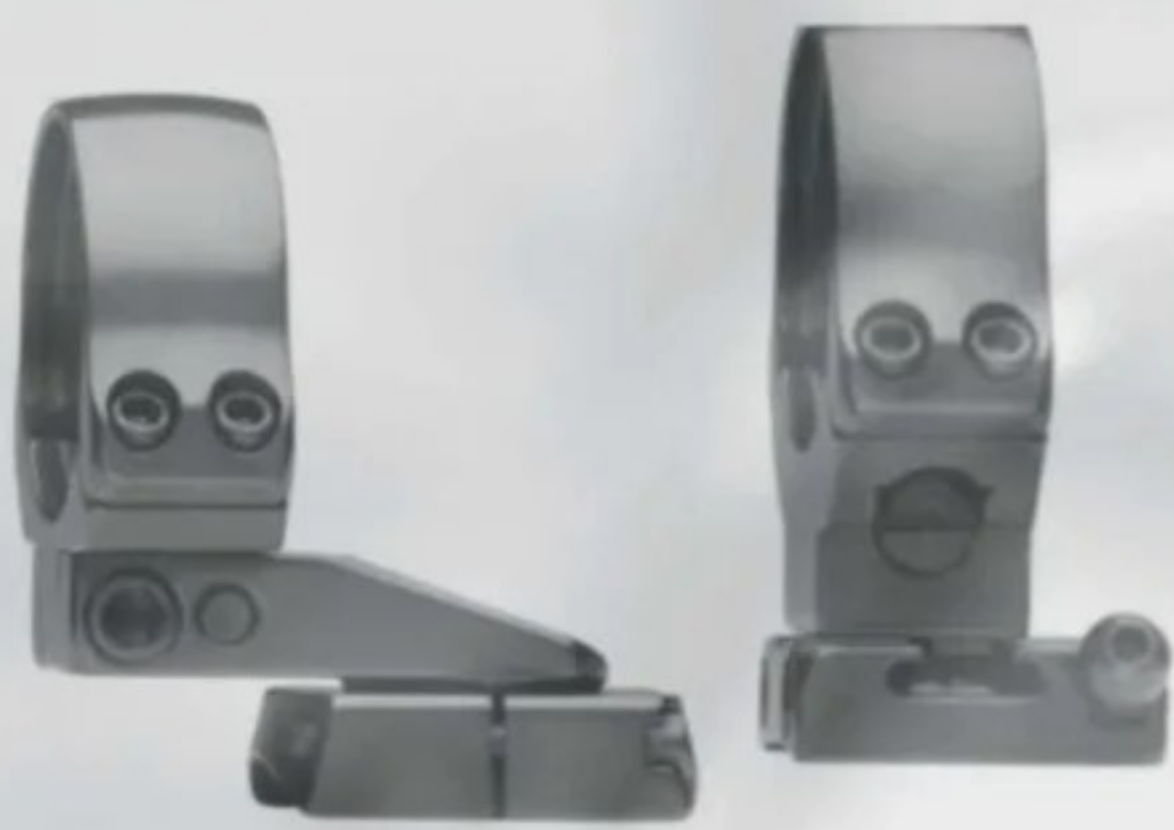


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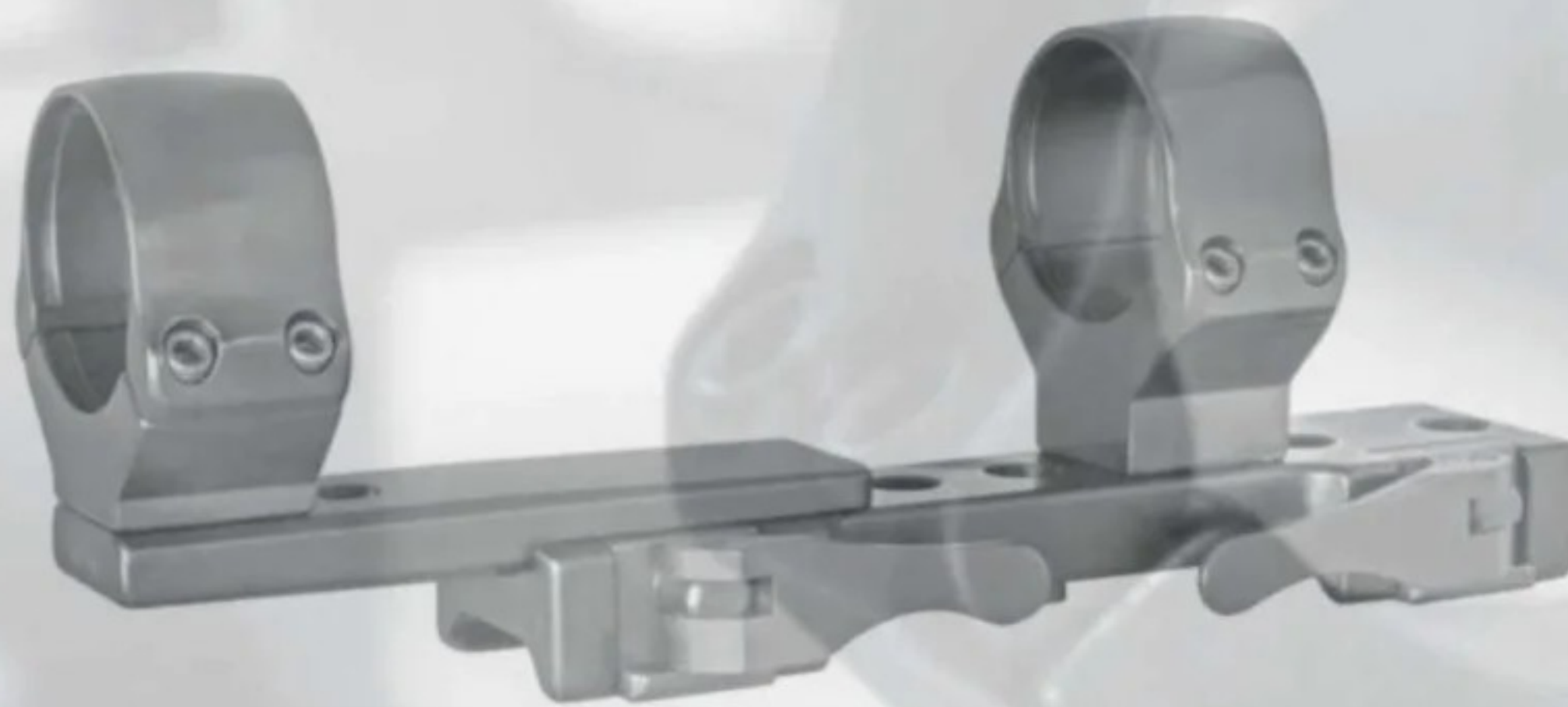
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Bruce Potts tests another very affordable shotgun from ATA; the SP Nickel

Fraction OF THE COST

ATA shotguns are distributed by The Sportsman Gun Centre, and I have tested a few of them over the years. I have

to say for such affordable shotguns, be that in an over-and-under or semi-automatic configuration, I have been impressed with the overall build quality, and especially the patterns produced downrange. This is the nickel-finished version of the popular SP range, which offers an over-and-under shotgun for less than £700. The SP (on test) comes in a Game configuration and there are many options, including black, laminate, sporter, game, deluxe hand engraved etc. So, a truly universal double.

All are available with ejectors, multi-choked steel-proofed barrels, good quality Turkish walnut, and a single selective trigger mechanism. They look very much like a Beretta design but at a cheaper price point.

Barrels

You can choose between 28" or 30" barrels, and seeing as I like mine shorter, I opted for the former. Regardless, all

barrels are chambered for 3" magnums, if you fancy that, and are steel proofed for steel shot up to half choke, as normal. The chokes are flush-fitting and there are five to choose from (F, IM, M, IC, and SK), so all bases are covered. They are easy to remove and clean with the provided choke key. The muzzles are slightly flared, so Beretta Mobil-type chokes can be fitted, giving shooters access to a host of aftermarket options, such as extended or custom.

The game-type rib shows a 10mm width and the customary serrated finish. Plus, there is only one sighting element, which is a red dayglo bead at the muzzle. Personally, I like a thinner rib and a single sight, as I find it easier to see game or clays around the rib or muzzle area and to track the target with both eyes open. There are eight vents to the top rib for some cooling effect, plus a solid mid-rib. The barrels are finished in a deep, rich, black bluing.

It is no secret that the barrels and action take inspiration from the Beretta 686. However, internally, there are many

differences. The lock-up is very positive, with twin protruding locking lugs from the action face that wedge into the barrel mortises. These are tapered, so a certain amount of built-in self-wear and tightening is achieved from prolonged use. As such, the barrels swivel on steel inset pins in the action walls, at the front. Also, the whole design is low-profiled, which is why it handles and lines up in the aim so wonderfully. The action's sides, as the gun's name suggests, are Nickel finished, however, it is pretty well non-reflective, and I personally like the fact that there is no laser engraving adorned to pep up the appearance. Less is more in my view.

Controls

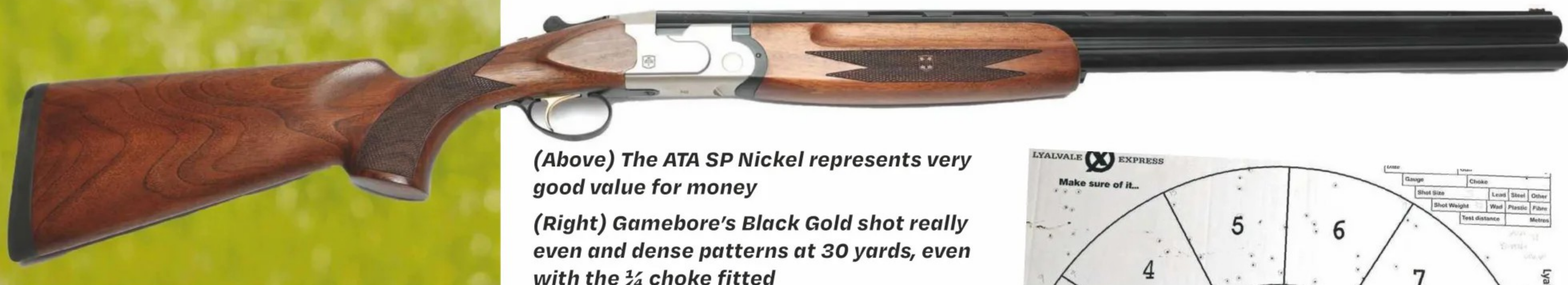
The top lever is blued and behind it, you will find the usual sliding barrel selector. Simply push it left to expose two dots (top barrel) and right for one dot (bottom barrel). This also combines as the safety catch, and this is an automatic version that is set to safe as the top lever is opened. The hammers work off a mechanical system, rather than inertia,



*Very Beretta-
esque, but a third
of the price and
well-finished*



*The auto-safety
and simple
barrel selector
are familiar with a
non-inertia firing
sequence, which
I prefer*



(Above) The ATA SP Nickel represents very good value for money

(Right) Gamebore's Black Gold shot really even and dense patterns at 30 yards, even with the 1/4 choke fitted

so fire on both trigger pulls. I am not sure why, but I do prefer this system.

The trigger is a smooth, grooved unit that is gold-washed. I measured the pull weight, and it came in at 4.85 lbs, which is not too bad really. ATA has also fitted a disconnecter mechanism that prevents the trigger from releasing the hammer if the breech bolt is not closed correctly. This is a nice safety touch.

Stock

ATA grades the stock on this gun as 2.5 walnut, and I would say that was correct, but probably a little higher, as we all know Turkish walnut scales of quality are always a little lower, hence you as a customer get better quality, which is brilliant! The lightly rubbed oil finish has a practical and easily cleaned matte appearance, that can be nourished with oil.

When it comes to shotguns, handling is more important than looks, especially if you want to hit the intended target. This SP Nickel has a 10" forend with a belly to it, and it shows a typical palm-filling swell to the bottom section. As well as the

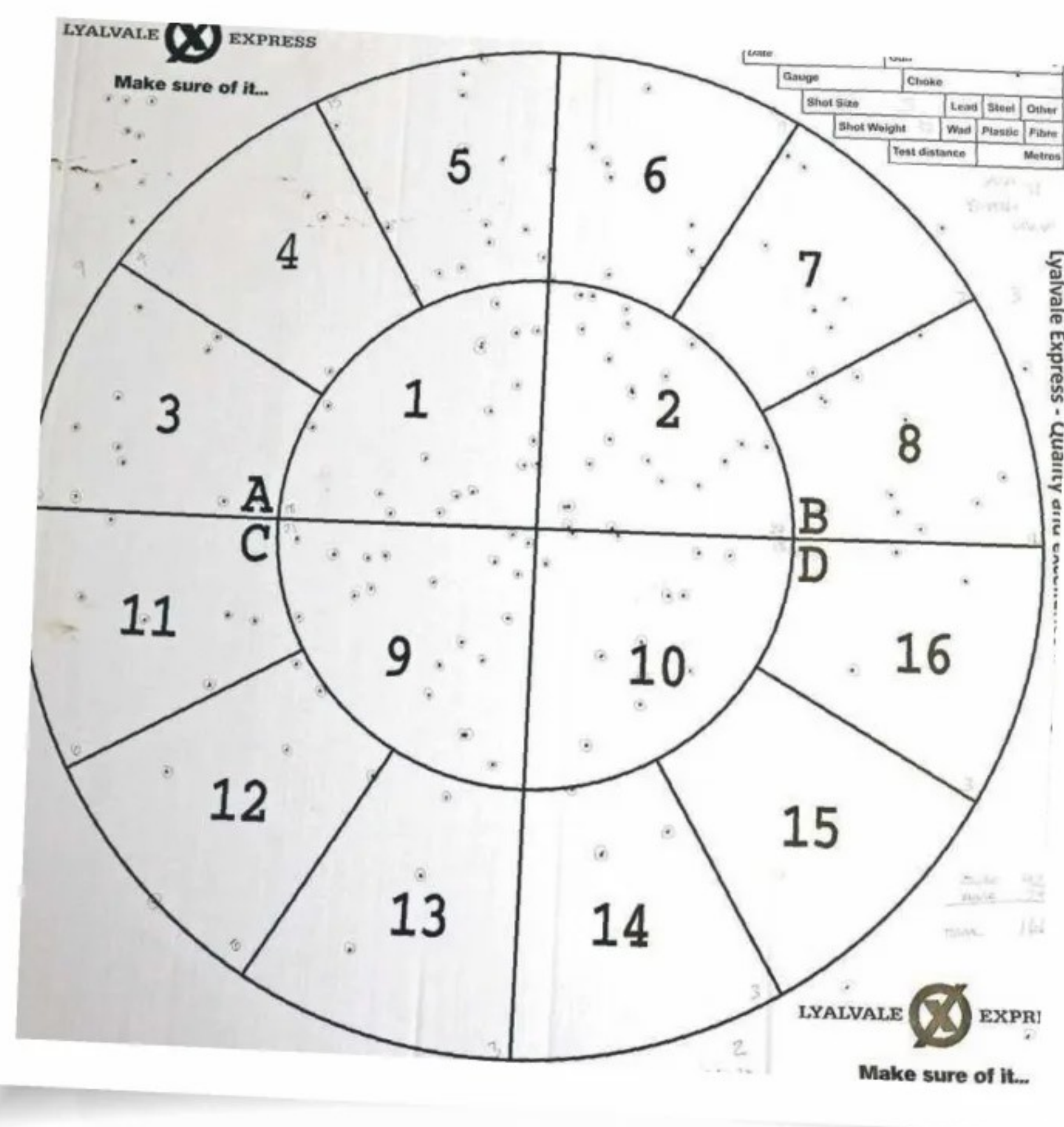
large finger grooves at the top, you will also find some checkering and a laser-etched ATA logo. The release is unusual, but one that I like, as you can give it a good push at the forend's tip, which makes separating the forend from the barrels a lot easier.

The butt section is equally well appointed, with a length of pull measuring 14.5". The stock has a pretty straight comb and minimal cast, so it's not bad from either shoulder, although left-handed versions are available.

For a 'cheap' over-and-under, this ATA really handles well, and shooters will appreciate the natural hold and handling of this model. For me, it just mounts the shoulder and aims along the rib every time it is mounted. There is no palm swell, but the pistol grip is generous and large, so any hand size achieves a good hold.

In the field

I fitted the 1/4 choke to the top barrel and 1/2 to the bottom, then shot some pattern boards at 30 yards



*A full complement of
flush-fit chokes, steel-
proofed up to 1/2*



ATAs always have a nice walnut stock, and this nickel version handled very well in the field

with the 1/4 choke just for a change, as we usually use a 1/2 choke.

The handling was very Beretta-like (low-level action weight with a nice overall fit), with the 28" barrels balancing the gun in the hand, and although the length of pull was a bit short for me, I had perfect eye alignment down the rib. The action was stiff to open at first as the gun was new, however, it soon smoothed out during the test period. Also, the recoil was very manageable with all the rounds shot. Overall, it's a reliable gun that performs, and you can shoot it without worrying about scratches due to its price. What more could you possibly want? Considering the price, I have always been impressed with how ATAs shoot on the pattern boards, given they produce even and dense patterns.

This SP Nickel was no exception. First up were Gamebore's Black Gold rounds, which held 32-grams of No.5 shot and were very

FOR A 'CHEAP' OVER-AND-UNDER, THIS ATA REALLY HANDLES WELL, AND SHOOTERS WILL APPRECIATE THE NATURAL HOLD AND HANDLING OF THIS MODEL"

BRUCE POTTS

manageable in the ATA for recoil. Using the 1/4 choke, we had a total of 166 pellet strikes at 30 yards, with 92 outer hits and 74 inner strikes. The pattern was very central and radiated out very evenly. This was a great start.

Next, we used Hull Imperial Game, a very consistent loading with 30-grams of No.6 shot size. We had a total of 234 pellet strikes on the 30" board, showing a slight left bias. This might have been because of me, but there were 145 outer hits and 89 in the central 15".

Finally, the Eley Pigeon Select, uses a load of 30-grams of No.6 shot, making it a direct comparison with the previous load. Here, we had

210 pellet strikes, with fewer inner strikes (59). These were well distributed, with the remaining 151 pellets around the circumference.

Conclusion

Look at it like this - for less than £700, you can get an over-and-under that has excellent handling and performs admirably, all at a fraction of the cost compared to its competitors. Yes, it does not have the build quality of the main competitors it emulates, but then again, it does not have the price, so you decide!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: ATA SP Nickel
Calibre: 12-gauge
Barrel Length: 28", 30" available
Overall Length: 45.5"
Weight: 7 lbs
Length of Pull: 14.5"
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DROP DEAD GAUGES

Bruce Potts assesses some Hull High Pheasant and High Pheasant Extreme cartridges

Its origins stemmed from the founder in 1924, Sydney Bontoft, who sold carbide to firms and farmers for lighting.

This then led to sales of cartridges to the farmers he visited. Seeing an opportunity, Sydney started to reload his own cartridges for sale, and in 1947, Hull Cartridge was started.

Hull's introduction of the High Pheasant range of cartridges really started a look into extreme performance for game loads. Hence this brand is made in two versions, one the standard High Pheasant and the other the Extreme version with ultimate performance. They are available in 12, 16, 20, 28 and .410 bores, but we will look at the 12-gauge versions.

High Pheasant

First up is the High Pheasant, which uses a 65mm case, CX primer, and shows a 16mm head. It offers the performance of a 70mm load but is suitable for use in guns with a minimum 65mm chamber, so older side-by-sides etc. It forms part of the Drop Dead Gauges range, thus combining fast and smooth shooting characteristics with moderate recoil. It uses biodegradable fibre wads to propel the hardened shot, reducing pellet deformation for uniform, dense patterns at longer ranges. It is available in two pellet sizes (No.5 or No.6) and in two weights (30 or 32-grams). This equates to 234 and 297 pellets for the 30-gram load with No. 5 or No. 6 shot respectively, whilst the 32-gram load is 250 and 317, respectively.

High Pheasant Extreme

By contrast, the High Pheasant Extreme cartridges are again part of the Drop Dead Gauges range. Hull developed them to be the cartridge for high bird shoots. Shooters always want more or blame cartridge performance for their misses! So, Hull devised these Extreme versions of the High Pheasant so that there are no excuses if you miss!

These loads use Xtreme shot, which minimises pellet deformation for uniform, tighter patterns down range. The powder they use achieves 1450 fps



but without excessive pressure or recoil. With the Extreme, you also get a choice of fibre or plastic wads for maximum performance.

These cartridges show a black 70mm case with a 20mm nickel head. Various shot sizes are available and include No.4, 5 or 6 in 30, 32, 34 or 36-gram weights. The pellets are harder and as such, a 36-gram load of No.5 shot has 238 pellets per cartridge, while a 32-gram load of No.6 has a total of 275 pellets.

In the field

I have used these cartridges in all their forms for testing shotguns over the years and for real field use against game/vermin. They remain a very consistent and fast shooting round, ideally suited for keeping up with any fast-moving and high game, speedy squirrels, and rabbits too! You will also notice that these rounds, although possessing high velocity, do have a smooth ignition system that affords less recoil at the shoulder.

However, you will still feel the 34 and 36-gram loads.

High Pheasant from £449.00 per 1000

Using some 32-gram No.5 cartridges in the Browning Black Shadow with a ½ choke fitted, I counted a total of 181 pellets on the pattern board, with a good spread of 71 pellets to the 15" inner ring and the remaining 110 pellets in the outer portion.

Also, the 30-gram No.6 load in a Browning Carbon Maxus (½ choke) shot another great pattern. This was much tighter, with a total of 220 pellet strikes, distributed 66 inner and 154 outer.

High Pheasant Extremes from £471.00 per 1000

Next up were some 32-gram No.5 High Pheasant Extremes holding 211 pellets (the 36-gram of the same would hold 238 pellets). On the pattern boards with the ½ choke from the Browning B725, I had a healthy spread and a total of 175 pellets. 113 pellets were counted in the outer 30" circle and there were 62 strikes within the inner sectors. Overall, nicely distributed, and hard-hitting on the boards.

The 30-gram No.6s shot a good overall pattern, with great coverage again and an even distribution of shot. We had 213 pellets strike the board, with a very dense inner 15" covered by 95 pellets. The remaining 118 pellets were found around the circumference.



The Drop Dead Gauges range combines fast and smooth shooting characteristics whilst using biodegradable fibre wads

The Extreme cartridges are very well made and available in some heavy shot weights, with either plastic or fibre wads

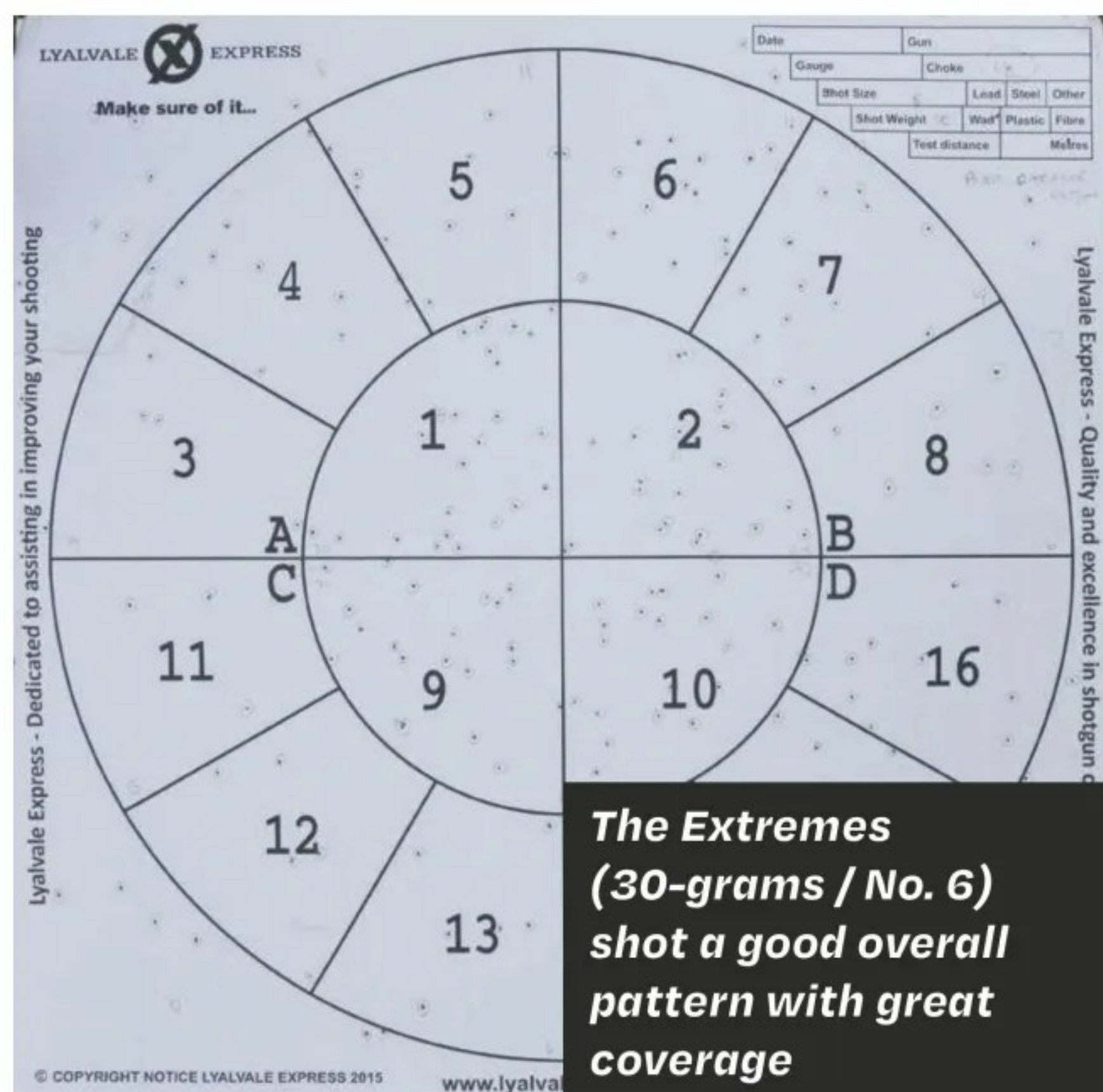
The 34-gram No.4 load (plastic wad) achieved a total of 155 pellet strikes within 30", with a nicely spread 62 inner hits and 93 outer strikes. A good pattern that would deliver multiple strikes with more retained energy at range.

Conclusion

The High Pheasant and High Pheasant Extreme cartridges offer peak performance. The pattern boards speak for themselves, showing very dense and even patterns. Also, even with the stouter 34/36-gram loads, recoil was no problem at all. Designed for 'extreme' ranges or high and fast birds, the High Pheasant range of cartridges offers top-notch performance that you can rely on.

Contacts

Hull Cartridge - www.hullcartridge.co.uk
Just Cartridges - www.justcartridges.com



The Extremes (30-grams / No. 6) shot a good overall pattern with great coverage



The larger No. 4 shot size (plastic wad) achieved a total of 155 pellet strikes within 30"



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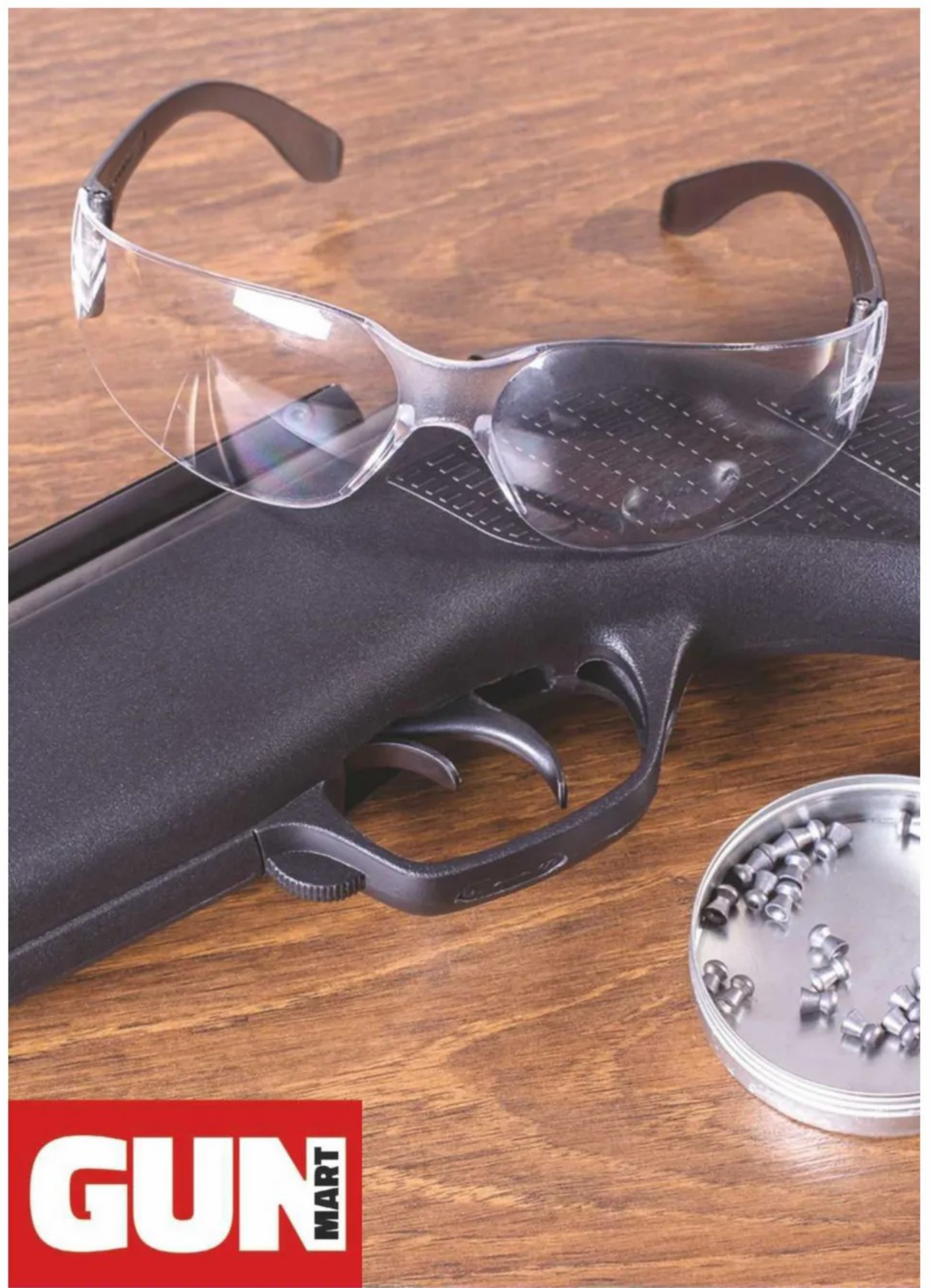
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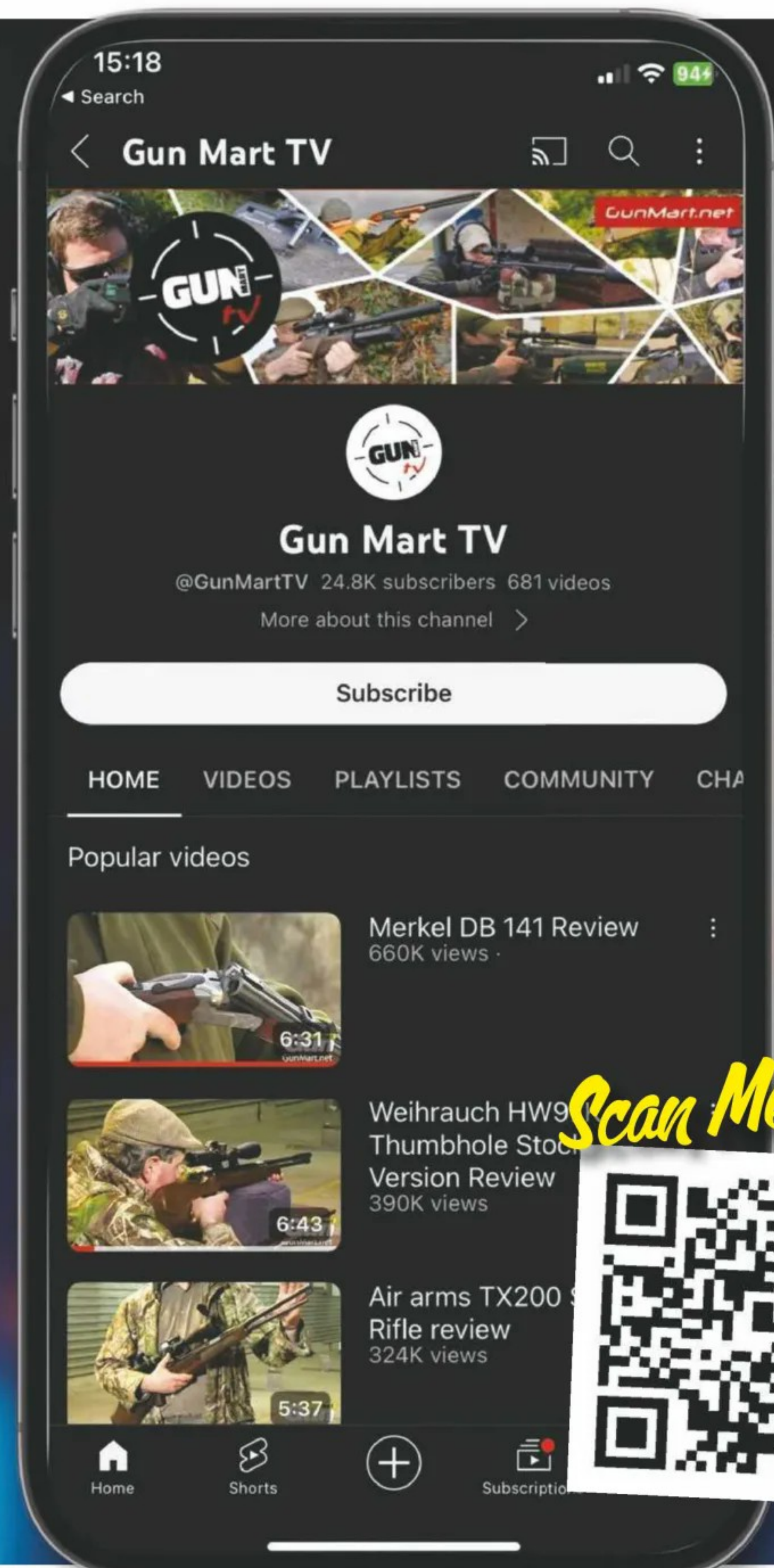
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Okehampton Castle



Britain has hundreds of castles spread out across the country, ranging from the small Lydford Castle tucked away in Devon, to the mighty castle that dominates the town of Dover, in Kent. Some have been the site of drama, such as Fotheringhay in Peterborough, where Mary Queen of Scots was executed in 1587. Despite their appearance, however, not all have been involved in wars or besieged. In fact, one such castle to escape involvement in any kind of military action is that at Okehampton in Devon.

The original castle was built over a period of 18 years between 1068 and 1086 by Baldwin FitzGilbert, who was presented with lands by King William for services rendered during the Norman Conquest in 1066. Part of his land was Okehampton, where, in 1068, a local revolt against Norman rule flared up and was repressed by FitzGilbert, who continued to exercise control over the local populace. The site chosen for his castle provided a point from which it could control the important trade route between Devon and Cornwall and dominate the crossing point over the West Okement River.

The early years

The first layout of the castle followed the typical Norman pattern known as motte and bailey, which comprised a wooden structure or keep on a mound built of earth. The area surrounding the base was enclosed by a wooden palisade known as the bailey, which incorporated a gate for access to the interior. Gradually, the wooden structure was replaced with stone to make it a more permanent site and expand in size. This development would continue over the centuries and would turn Okehampton into the largest castle in Devon.

When FitzGilbert died in 1091, his daughter, Adeliza, inherited his estate, but the family appears to have been disinterested in the inheritance. Between 1139 and 1153, the country

was engulfed in a period of civil war known as 'The Anarchy', a war in which the castle played no part. 20 years after the war, the site was acquired by the de Courtney family in 1173, who would hold it and enjoy the estates for the next 400 years or so.

During their tenure, the de Courtneys would transform the castle and its surrounding estates, moving away from being a militaristic base and transforming it into a hunting lodge with all the comforts and luxuries. The grounds and woodlands were amply stocked with game, including hares, foxes, deer, and boar. It was, in effect, a residence where the family could entertain guests in a lavish style. However, such opulence could not last forever and during the prolonged Wars of the Roses, 1455 to 1487, the de Courtneys found their loyalties divided.

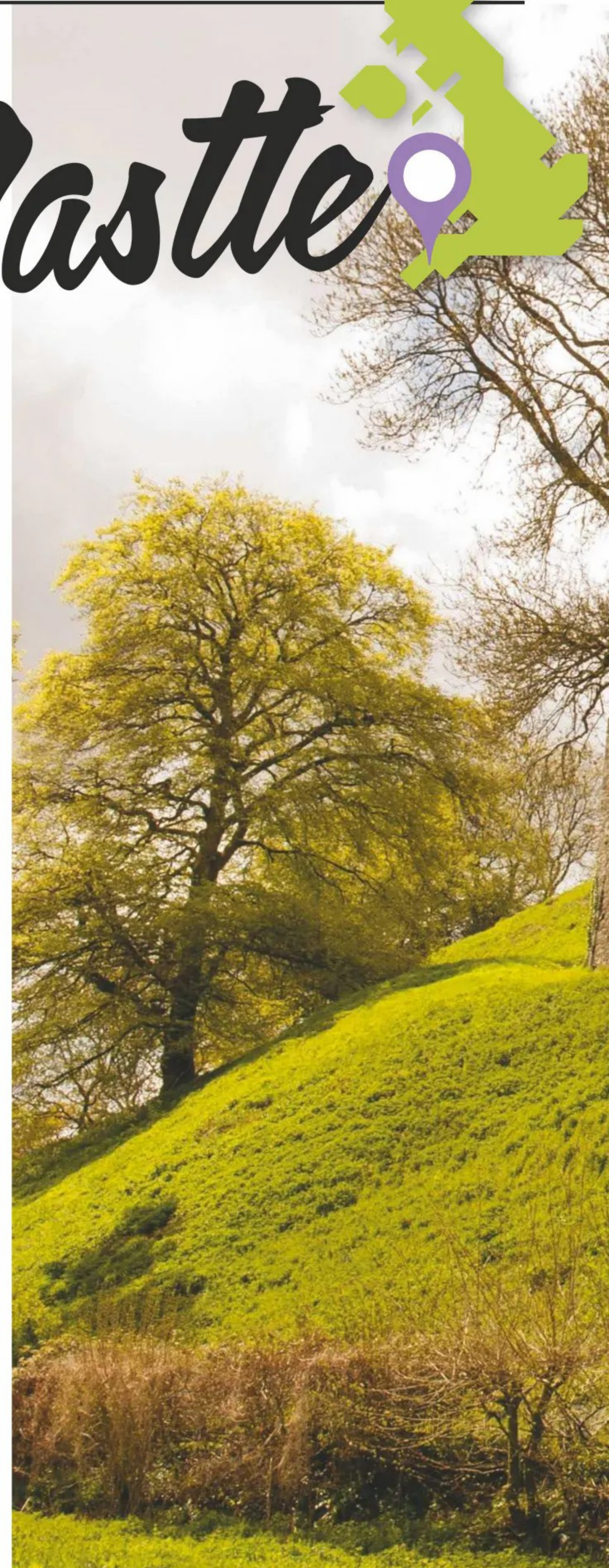
Some family members made allegiances with opposing sides and fought in battles such as Towton in 1461 and Tewkesbury in 1471. When the war ended, King Henry VII emerged victorious and the de Courtneys kept their castle, which, once again, had escaped being directly involved in the war. In 1539, King Henry VIII confiscated the castle and estate from the de Courtneys and it fell into disuse, finally being abandoned except for a part used as a bakery. It was never used during the Civil War and took no part in the fighting. It escaped being besieged and slighted.

Okehampton's historical importance

This is a site of socio-political history rather than military history, but it is still fascinating nonetheless in the understanding of how a powerful family survived these upheavals. The castle had obvious strength in its militaristic design and its location was important but, ultimately, was a folly. Seen from a different point of view, it was a display of the de Courtney's wealth, power, and political position, and it was they,

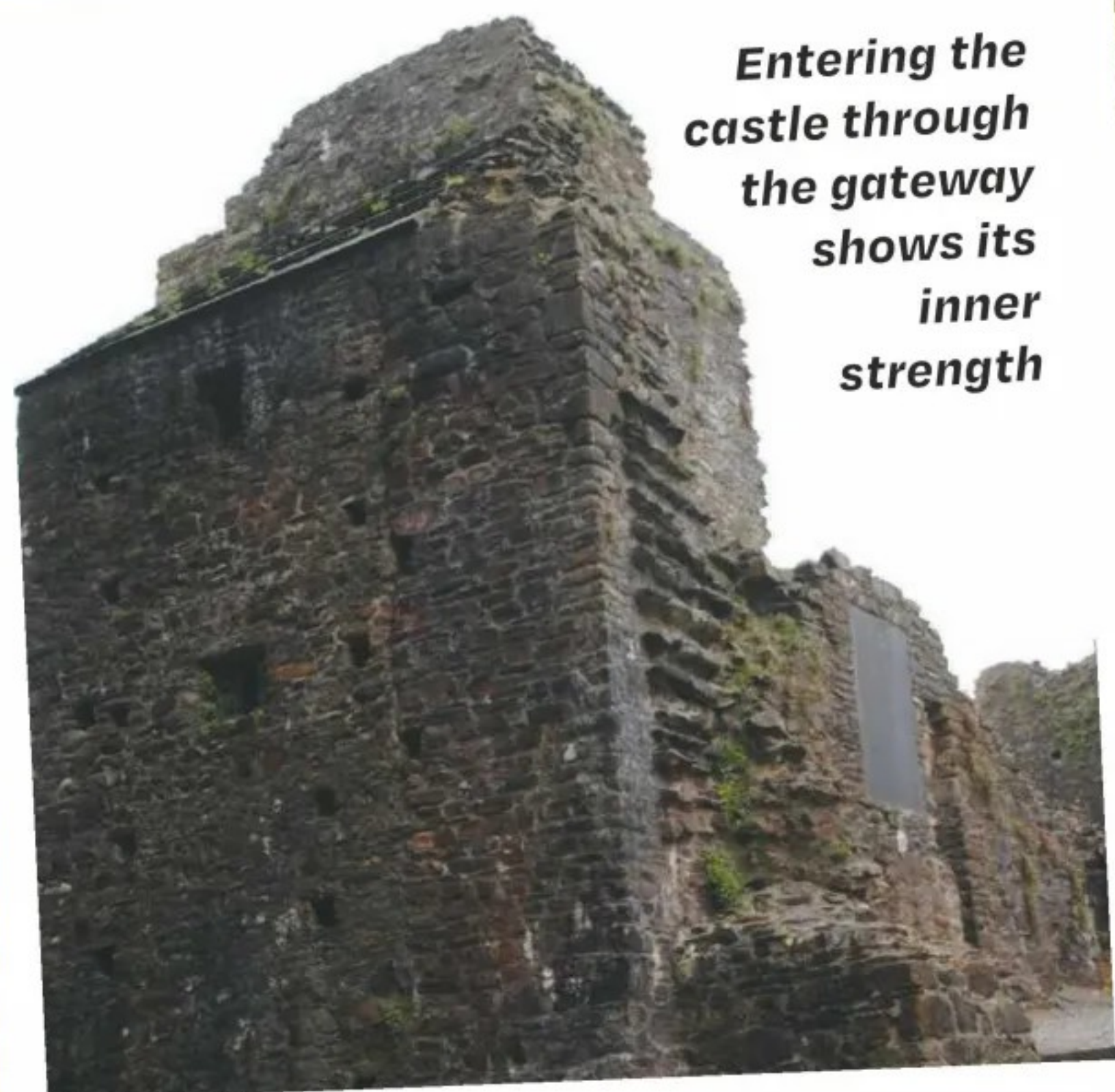
not the castle, who engaged in war. The surrounding estate, with its abundance of food, made it almost self-sufficient to feed the occupants, which at one time numbered 135 people. Some food, such as fish, was transported from the coast, a distance of 25 miles.

Perhaps it was the very strength of the castle, making it a daunting target, which prevented it from being attacked. Certainly, its ability to provide food would have made it a valuable asset to an army, but, for whatever reason, it always managed to escape such a fate. This strength can still be seen today by visitors who come to walk among the ruins. Now in the care and maintenance of English Heritage, this is one of the true hidden gems in its portfolio of

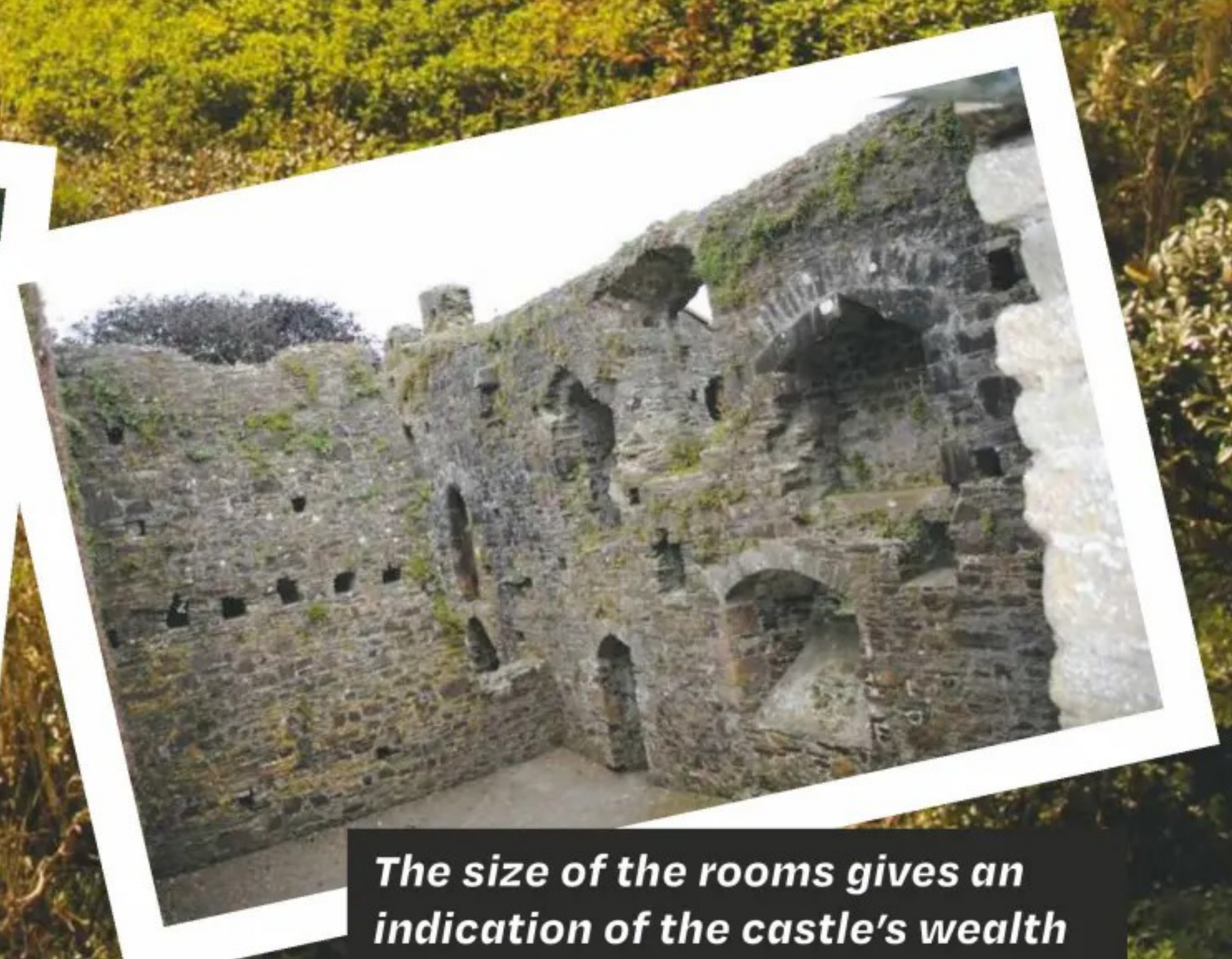




Entering the castle through the gateway shows its inner strength



Looking down across the lower ward from the top of the motte



The size of the rooms gives an indication of the castle's wealth

historical sites, quietly tucked away and surrounded by heavy woodland.

What can you see?

The entrance to the castle is through the barbican gate, which opens out onto the lower ward, and immediately the strength of the castle becomes obvious. Buildings once used for various purposes, such as the great hall, lodgings, and kitchen, flank either side. However, it is the once mighty keep, which probably stood three storeys high, standing atop the motte that dominates the site. The motte is over 100ft in height and a path and steps lead to the top, where it is possible to look out in all directions. With the aid of the on-site

information boards, it is easy to imagine how it once must have looked without the trees that now almost surround the location.

The surface area of the motte measures 97ft in length and 51ft in width, with the base surrounded by a dry ditch moat, all of which were built by manual labour. Stone for the construction came from local sources, and where the walls have collapsed, their thickness is exposed. In the days before gunpowder artillery, these walls would have withstood battering by catapults hurling stone projectiles. They may have withstood a certain amount of pounding by all but the heaviest gunpowder weapons.

Never having been put to the test, this is something we will never know.

How to get there

As with other castles, such as nearby Launceston, Okehampton spans almost 1,000 years and demonstrates how military architecture developed during that time. This is a marvellous location to visit, and for anyone with an interest in military or social history, this is a must-visit site. Visitors will be glad that they made the detour off the A30 to find it. Directions can be found on www.english-heritage.org.uk, just follow the links to Okehampton. Alternatively, follow the signs off the A30 in the location of Okehampton or, if using Satnav, type in the postcode EX20 1JA.



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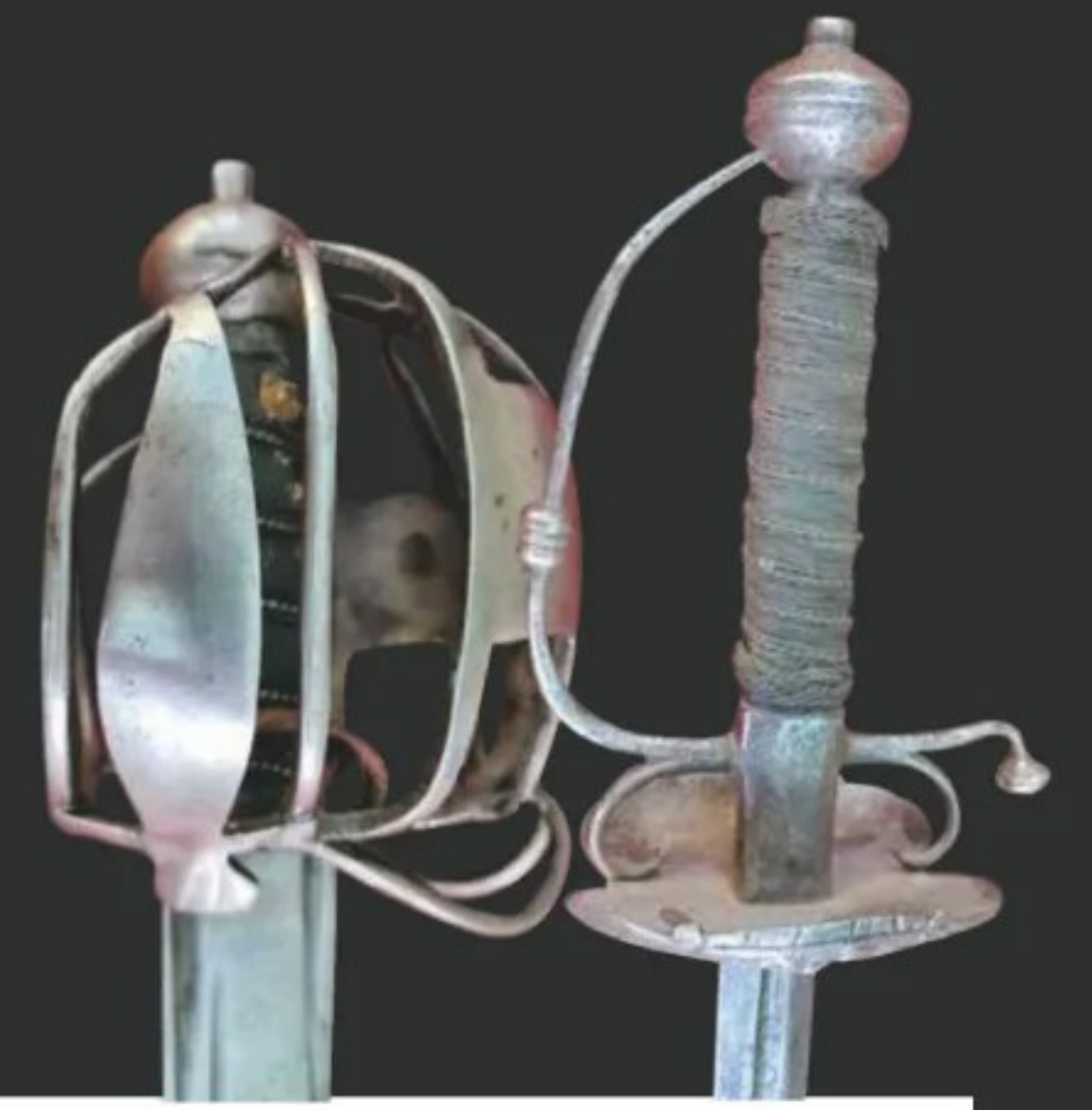
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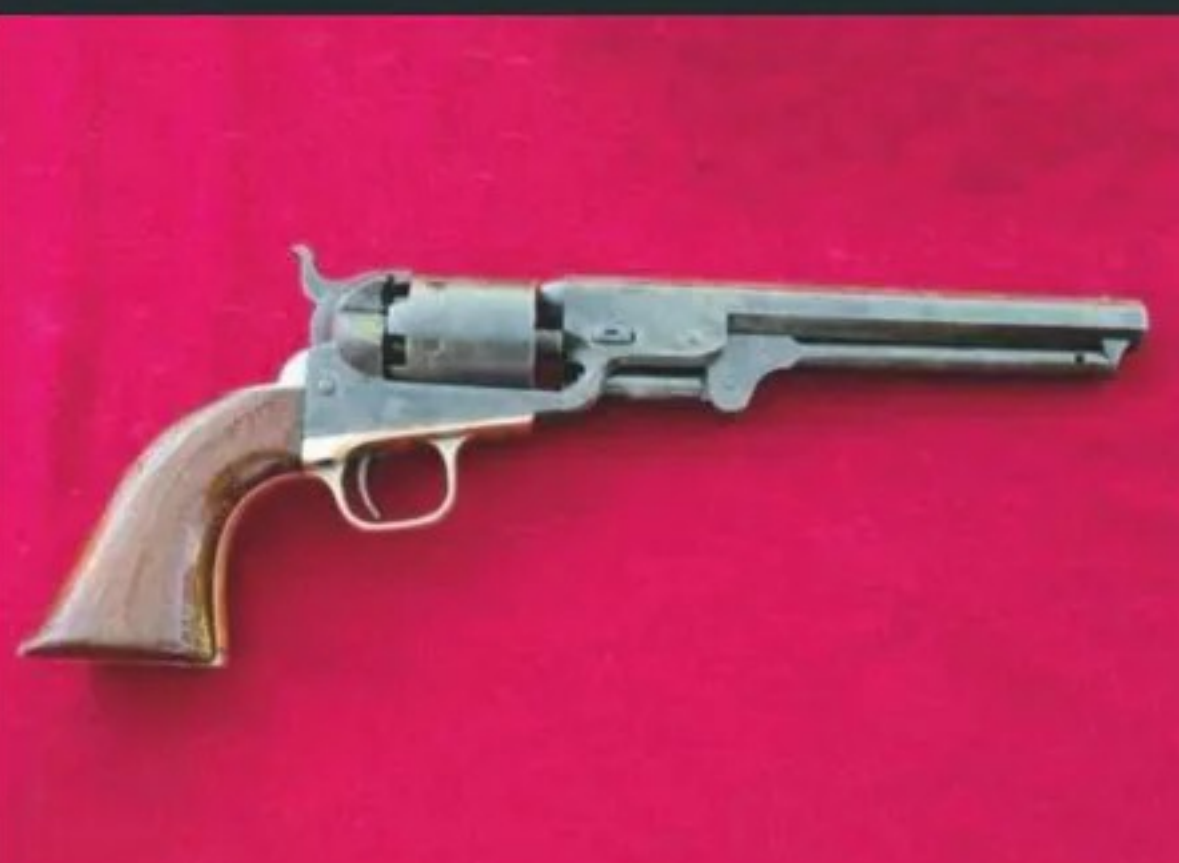
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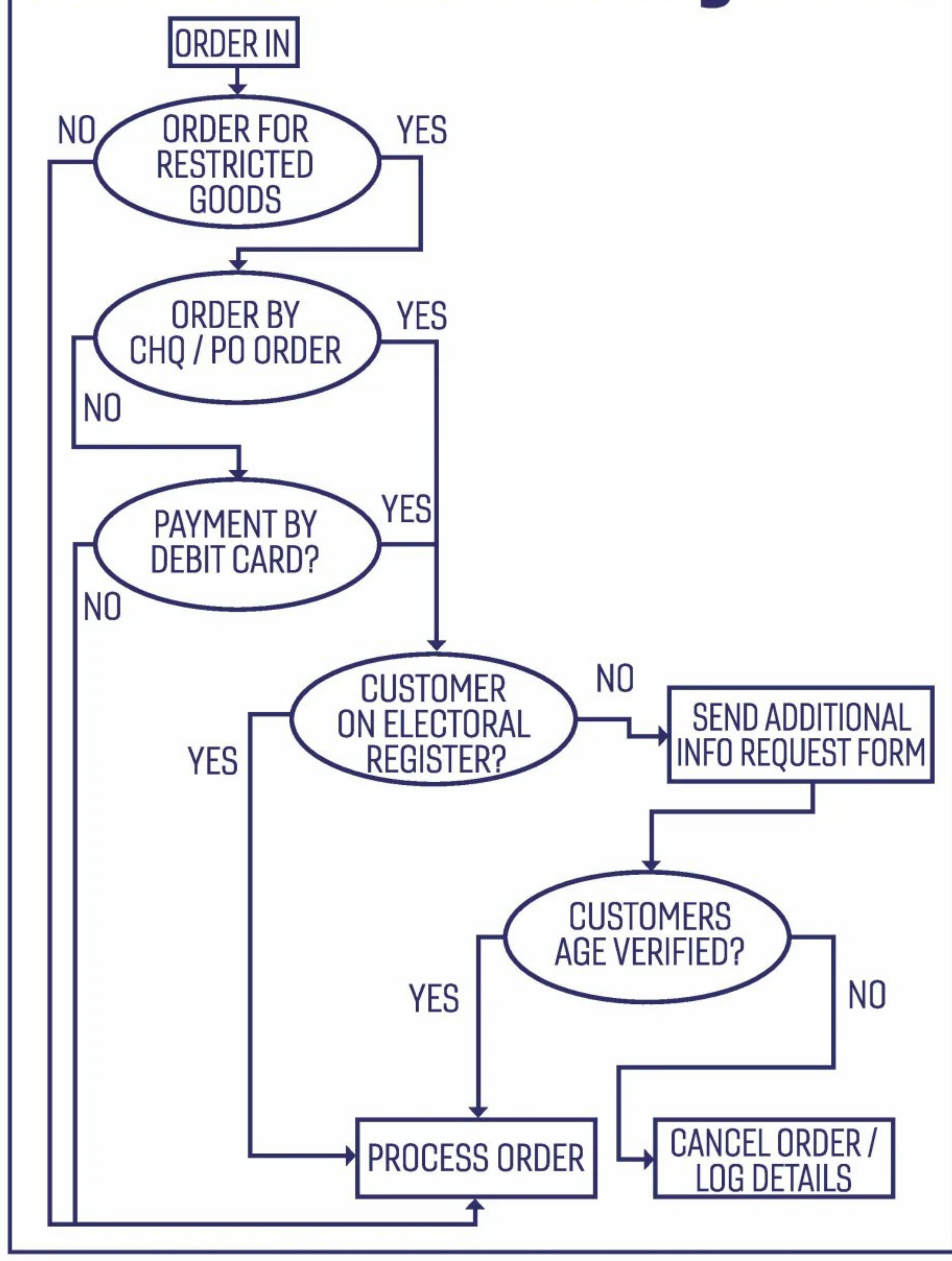
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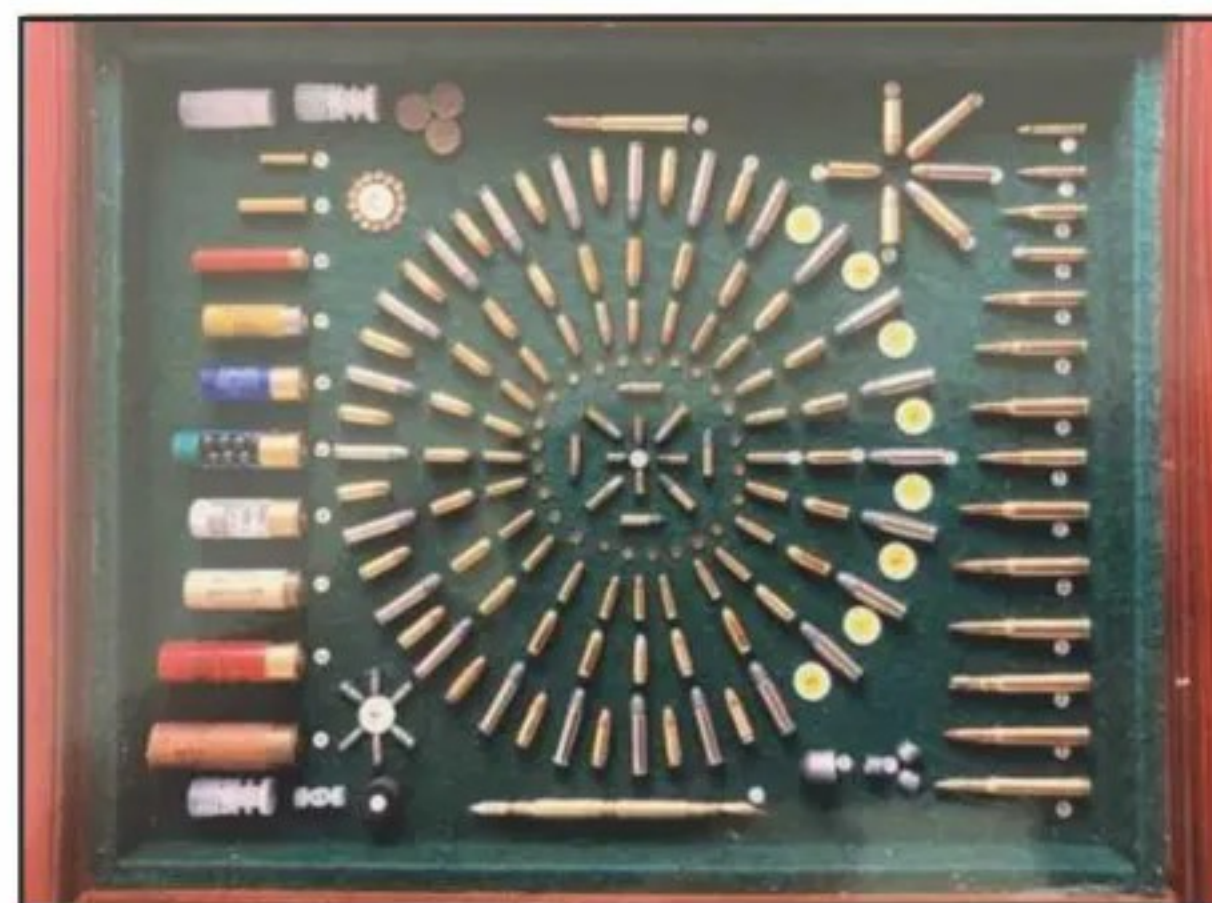


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03/23/g

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03/23/g*

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02/23/g

DIARY DATES *October 2023*

Event organisers, militaria dealers, museums, re-enactments groups, war gaming & modelling clubs and organisations who wish to list their event here, please send details to john.norris3@btinternet.com

1: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at Keston Village Hall, Heathfield Road, Keston, Kent, BR2 6BF. Good selection of collectables. Doors open between 8am and 12-noon. Contact Darren Swain on 07796 960764.

1: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at the Breckland/Thetford Leisure Centre, Croxton Road, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 1JD. Wide range of collectables for sale. Doors open between 10am and 2pm. www.thetfordmilitariafair.com

7: Saturday. The REME Museum at Lyneham, Wiltshire is hosting a model show with doors open between 10am and 4-30pm. Trade stands, demonstrations, and displays, some with a military theme. An opportunity to also visit the great museum exhibition. www.rememuseum.org.uk

8: Sunday. The Copdock Community Hall, Old London Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3JD is hosting a militaria fair with doors open between 09-30am and 2pm. Call 07810 311977 or 07733 474905.

8: Sunday. A giant flea market is being held at the Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6QN. Doors open between 9-30am and 4pm. Wide range of collectables for all interests, including some militaria. www.sheptonflea.com

8: Sunday. The South of England Militaria Arms & Armour Fairs will be at the Historic Dockyards, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TZ. Doors open between 7am and 2pm. Full range of collectables available. www.chatham-militaria-fairs.co.uk

8: Sunday. A giant militaria fair is being held at the Pudsey Civic Hall, Leeds, LS28 5TA. Doors open between 10am and 3pm. Full range of collectables. www.northernarmsfairs.co.uk

10: Tuesday. A militaria fair is being held at the Wolverley Memorial Hall, Shatterford Lane, Wolverley, near Kidderminster, Worcs., DY11 5TN. Contact Adrian Robins on 07816 853878.

15: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at the Cedric Ford Pavilion, Newark Showground, Lincoln Road, NG24 2NY. Doors open between 10am and 3pm. www.northernarmsfairs.co.uk

21: Saturday. Capel Battery in New Down Road, Capek-le-Ferne, Folkstone, Kent, CT18 7JJ is holding an open day. This is an opportunity to visit a WWII former coastal artillery battery site. www.capelbattery.com

21: Saturday. The Letchworth Scale Model Club is presenting Showcase 2023 at the Icknield Centre, Icknield Way, Letchworth, Herts., SG6 1EF. Doors open between 10am and 4pm. Trade stands, demonstrations, and displays, some with a military theme. Email: ismcshowcase2023@gmail.com

22: Sunday. A vintage, antique and militaria fair is being held at the Petersfield Festival Hall, Heath Road, Petersfield, Hants., GU31 4EA. Great venue combining militaria and vintage for a wide range of collectables. Doors open between 10am and 4pm. www.phoenixvamfairs.co.uk

22: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at the Three Counties Showground, Wye Hall (Brown Gate), Malvern, Worcs., WR13 6NW. Full range of collectables for all interests. Call Amanda Lycett on 07976 777117.

22: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at Penkrudge Market, Gas House, Pinfold Lane, Penkrudge, ST19 5AP. Good range of collectables available with re-enactors and military vehicles on site. www.3elephantantiques.com

29: Sunday. A militaria and medal fair is being held at the Stratford Leisure and Visitor Centre, Bridgefoot, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks., CV37 6YY. Doors open between 10-30am and 2pm. Wide range of collectables available. Please note, no firearms are sold at this venue. Call Mark Carter on either 01753 534777 or 07871 777062.

29: Sunday. A militaria fair is being held at the Village Hall, Riding Lane, Hildenborough, Kent, TH11 9HY. Doors open between 7am and 12-noon. Full range of collectables. www.bexley-medals-and-militaria.co.uk

BOOK

REVIEW ROUND-UP

We've reviewed the best books in Antiques and Militaria so you can select from the best!



THE BLITZ 1940-41
Author: Julian Hale
Publisher: Osprey Publishing, Oxford
ISBN: 9781472857880
Price: £16.99

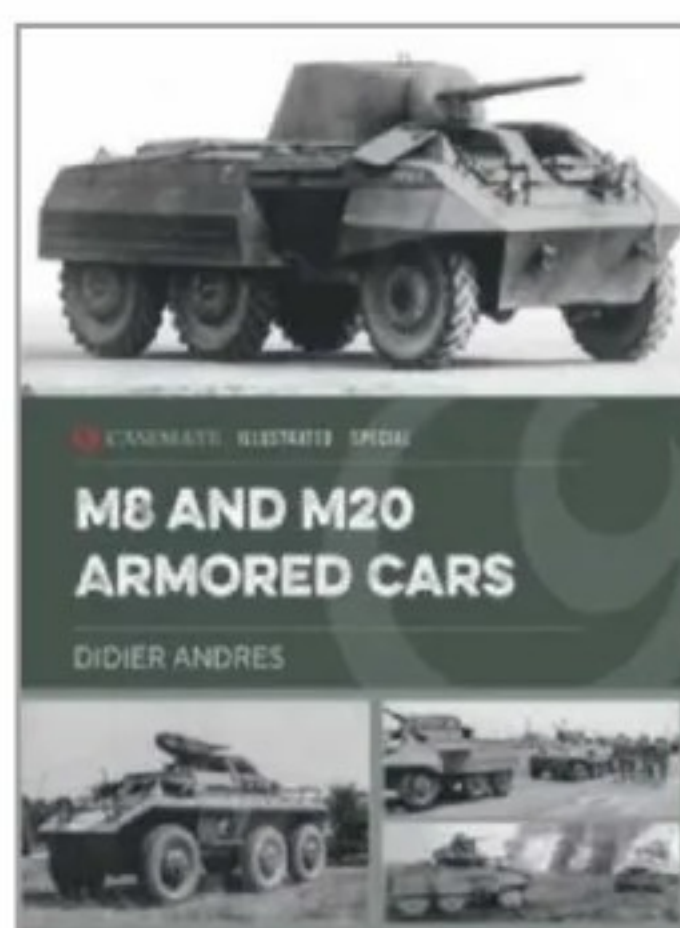
So many books have been written on the Blitz, which may make readers wonder if there's anything new left to say. In the case of this work, the way in which it is presented gives this chapter of the war a freshness to engage the reader from the start, and it works well. Germany entered the war with an entirely new air force, which had gained experience

during the Spanish Civil War. The RAF posed a more determined adversary supported by an infrastructure of air defences. The aircraft of both sides are examined, and British defences are described in depth, as well as the technicalities developed to defeat Germany's electronic warfare devices, including the Knickebein and X-Great systems. This is a good solid read, well supported with maps showing areas of London and the number of times they were attacked. Other cities attacked are not forgotten, nor is the small role played by the Italian air force.



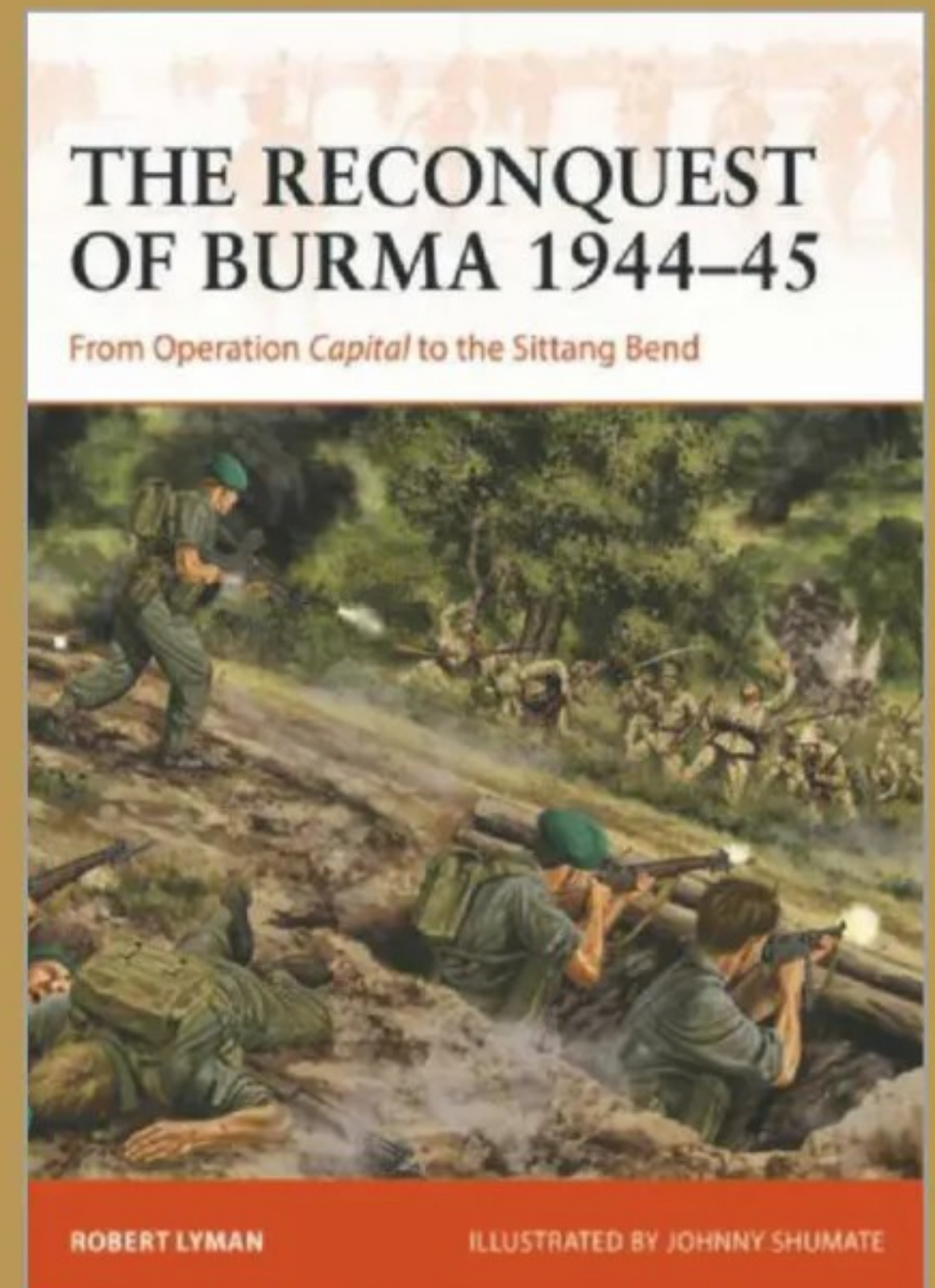
THE LAND ARMY'S LOST WOMEN
Author: Emily Ashworth
Publisher: Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley, South Yorkshire
ISBN: 9781526785459
Price: £20

As the likelihood of war approached, Britain began to make preparations, which included raising the Women's Land Army in April 1939 to help farmers when men went to war. Between 1939 and 1945, some 80,000 women from all walks of life served in the role, which helped feed the country. Never as glamorous as the ATS, WRNS, or WAAF, it nevertheless had an appeal about it. The hours were long, but the friendships forged between members of this largely unsung movement lasted a lifetime. Told by the women who were involved, relating conditions and their experiences, this is a revealing work. The WLA has never been forgotten, but it is not as well recognised as branches of the armed forces. Despite that, it has a following among re-enactment groups and collectors who will welcome this new work as reference material and a very fine read.



M8 AND M20 ARMORED CARS
Author: Didier Andres
Publisher: Casemate Publishing, Barnsley, South Yorkshire
ISBN: 9781636243108
Price: £34.95

Even before America entered WWI in 1917, it had been examining designs for armoured cars, so by the time the US Army went to war, some troops had experience with armoured vehicles. During the inter-war period, the US Army lost interest in them until the mid-1930s, when potential designs were examined. These aspects are used as an introduction to the main theme of this well-illustrated work, which is the M8 Armoured Car and its variants. The vehicle is one of the most recognised of WWII and even today enthusiasts know it well, with many in private ownership. This is almost a technical manual for owners, discussing development, main armament and ammunition types, mechanical aspects, and operational roles. All supported with official photographs. A fine reference work for vehicle enthusiasts, and there is sufficient material for modellers who will enjoy this book on one of the most popular vehicles of WWII.



THE RECONQUEST OF BURMA 1944-45
Author: Robert Lyman
Publisher: Osprey Publishing, Oxford
ISBN: 9781472854063
Price: £16.99

No history of the Burma campaign would be complete without mention of the Imphal and Kohima battles, which the author covers and relates the importance of air support given to the British during the fighting. Apart from the well-planned and coordinated 'Operation Capital', he includes many other operations launched during the campaign, including 'Character', an all-arms campaign with aircraft and naval support given to the armies, such as that provided to the amphibious landings of the Indian 26th Division. Another less familiar operation mentioned is the on-off-on again 'Operation Dracula', which was finally launched on 2 May 1945 and involved Gurkha parachute forces landing around Rangoon. To highlight the intensity of the fighting, the author features how Lt. Knowland won the Victoria Cross during the Arakan phase, in January 1945. This is a riveting and absorbing work that will satisfy anyone with an interest in the Far East theatre of operations in WWII.


HERTFORDSHIRE MILITARIA & MEDAL FAIR SUNDAY 15th OCTOBER

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GERMAN PARATROOPERS

John Norris discusses Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2,
a most authentic group

*Handling an
inflated canopy
requires great
skill*



On 10 May 1940, several months after the outbreak of WWII, following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, Hitler directed his forces to attack westwards against Holland, Belgium, and France, together with elements of the British Expeditionary Force deployed in France since the war began.

The intervening period had been known as the 'Phoney War' because nothing in particular had happened. That was all about to change as 'Fall Gelb' (Case Yellow) was launched and quickly overwhelmed the Allies with its speed, tactics and, most of all, the new method of deploying troops by parachute.

A new line of attack

The tactics used have come to be called 'Blitzkrieg' or Lightning War, and it was fast, with all branches of the German armed forces working together. The troops of one of the leading units used in the attack against Holland, however, were not part of the army, but rather the Luftwaffe. These were the Fallschirmjäger,

parachute troops and nothing like them had ever been seen before. Previously, soldiers had attacked on the ground, but these troops landing by parachute were highly motivated and trained and moved as a coordinated unit.

The first German parachute units were raised in 1935, trained and equipped, before becoming part of the Luftwaffe in 1938. All this happened in great secrecy and was only made public when they paraded for the first time in 1938. Only two years later the 7th Air Division, comprising Fallschirmjäger Regiments 1 and 2 (FJR 1 and 2), attacked targets in Fortress Holland in a daring coup de main. Over the next five years, the reputation and experience of FJR2 would grow as it fought in operational areas including Russia, France, Crete, Greece, and Italy. After the war, US General Troy Middleton said of Generalmajor Hermann Ramcke, who had commanded FJR2, being known as 'Papa Ramcke' by his men: "I think he conducted the war in the tradition of a good soldier."

See it like it was

Today, those traditions of being good soldiers are being demonstrated at re-enactment events by several like-minded friends who have come together to create a group to depict FJR2 at public shows. Some have experience of re-enacting going back 15 years and some have even completed the parachute training course at Texel in Holland, but all are fascinated by the history of FJR2 and collecting items either connected with the regiment or things similar to what they would have used. The result is a unique exhibition of equipment, which is displayed and demonstrated at shows.

FJR2 are invited to attend several prestigious events each year, including the Victory Show in Leicestershire, Yorkshire Wartime Experience, and Wartime in the Vale at Evesham in Worcestershire. They also conduct training weekends and private battles for the benefit of members to improve their skills in tactics and handling weapons such as the K98 rifle, MP40 SMG, MG34, and MG42. Members within the group also have P38 and P08 pistols, MP44s/StG44s, FG42s (unique to the Fallschirmjäger) and the 8cm Granatwerfer 34 mortar, which are used for further weapon training.

Machinery and equipment

The wartime regiment had an anti-tank role and to demonstrate this, the group is learning how to handle the 7.5cm calibre PaK40 anti-tank gun. It also holds an example of the 7.5cm Leichtgeschütz



One of FJR2's replica motorcycles, modified to resemble a wartime machine



A field class showing how to pack a parachute



A discussion on equipment carried by Fallschirmjäger troops



Fully kitted and looking ready to go

Fitting a parachute rig to a member of the group to get a feel for the equipment



A line-up of some of the original equipment and kit collected by the group

Fitting the kneepads as worn on operational jumps



THE AMOUNT OF ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT AND OTHER KIT HELD WITHIN THE GROUP IS EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH AND MAKES MANY COLLECTORS ENVIOUS."

JOHN NORRIS

40 recoilless anti-tank weapon, believed to be the only known example in private hands in the country. This type of weapon was used by FJR2 during the airborne assault to capture the island of Crete during Unternehmen Merkur (Operation Mercury), in May 1941. The group has motorcycles, which have been adapted to look like authentic machines, such as the BMW R12, which add to their display and show how they were used.

All of this equipment has been painstakingly collected by members of the group and this is in addition to personal kit, uniform, parachutes, and other specialist items unique to the Fallschirmjäger. Each man, for example, wears the Fallschirmjägerhelm, a distinctive pattern helmet, which lacked the flaring of the better-known WWII German Stahlhelm and was unique to the Fallschirmjäger branch of the armed forces. All members also wear high-quality replica versions of the distinctive 'side-lacing' jump boots. The remainder of the uniform conforms exactly to wartime regulations, right down to the jump smock, known to the troops as the 'Knochensack', which translates as 'bone sack'.

A high level of commitment

This is a democratic group holding very high standards, which it is not prepared to let slip under any circumstances. For example, it has a comprehensive constitution covering behaviour, appearance, and attitude. All potential new

members are made aware of this document and must read it and agree to comply with the regulations before going any further. Many of the current members have been introduced by serving members or invited to join through their interest in the unit's history. Each new member must serve a period of probation lasting one year, which demonstrates a level of commitment to prevent any time wasting.

After that phase has been covered, each member can then progress in the group with advancement being based on the number of attendances at shows, training weekends, and other events, which is designed to show dedication. Being a relatively small group, all members are considered equal, however, there is a chain of command. Each member is responsible for making sure that they have all the right kit for a show and have their own insurance. This has produced a level of

friendship and camaraderie that is a credit to the group as a whole.

FJR2 is a stand-alone group and at this year's Wartime in the Vale in Evesham, they put on a demonstration of handling parachutes in the arena, which was the only space with sufficient room to accommodate them. Before they went into the arena, they had received a full talk on how the parachute operated, how to handle it and, most importantly, how to fold it to prevent it from becoming entangled. As they deployed the parachutes, a good breeze picked up, which inflated the canopies to look as though they had just landed. A couple of members pulling an original example of an equipment canister mounted on wheels, joined in the display to complete the impression.

The amount of original equipment and other kit held within the group is extraordinarily high and makes many collectors envious. As it was explained, this has been achieved through doggedness in tracking down items and following leads. In addition, there are specialists within the group to depict machine gunners, radio operators, glider pilots, drivers, equipment repair specialists, and a medic. The result of this hard work is an amazing display by an exceptionally dedicated group, complemented by the ability of the members to answer questions in an engaging manner, making them a credit to the hobby of historical re-enactment.



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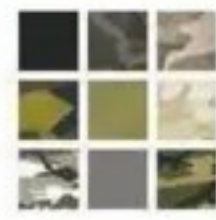
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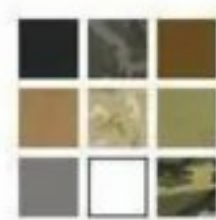
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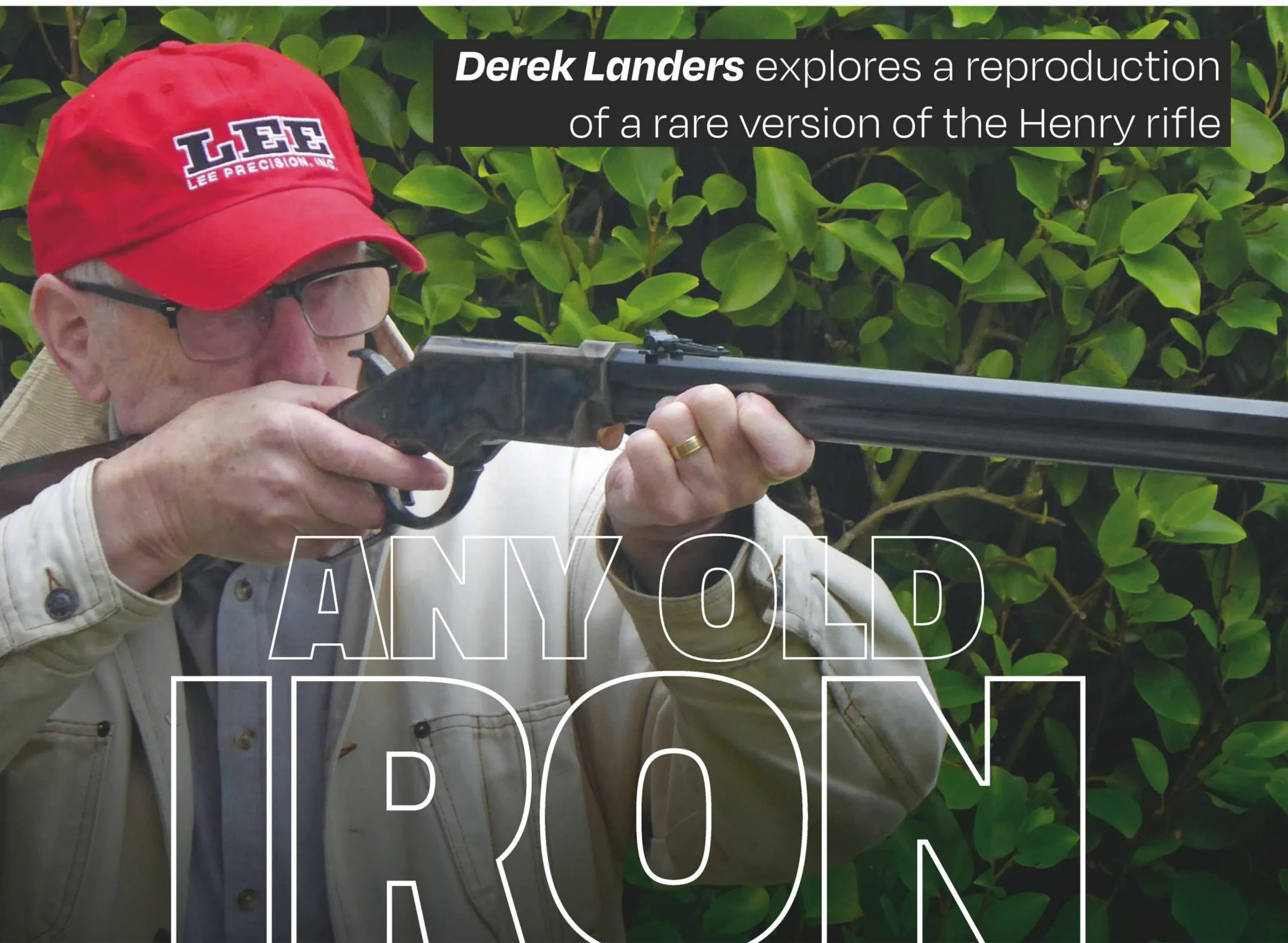


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Derek Landers explores a reproduction of a rare version of the Henry rifle



When Benjamin Tyler Henry was tasked to come up with an improvement on the ammunition for the Volcanic rifle, little could he, or his employer, Oliver Winchester, have imagined that the fruits of his work would lead to the foundation of one of the legendary names in gun making. The .44 Henry flat rimfire cartridge, and the rifle that was built for it, heralded a line of lever-action rifles that continues to this day.

At the age of 16, Henry was apprenticed to a custom gun shop in Claremont, New Hampshire and then moved to another gunmaker in Windsor, Vermont. He spent some time working at the U.S. National Armoury in Springfield, Massachusetts before moving, in around 1842, to the armoury of Robbins, Kendal & Lawrence in Windsor. In 1857, he became plant supervisor at the New Haven Arms Company in Connecticut, owned by Oliver Winchester.

As the basis for his search for more powerful ammunition, he used the

.22 rimfire cartridge that had been developed by Daniel Wesson of Smith & Wesson fame. The result was a copper cased, .44 calibre rimfire cartridge containing 26-grains of powder behind a 216-grain, round-nosed lead bullet, said to develop a muzzle velocity of 1200fps. The bullet was later changed to a flat nose and reduced slightly in weight, becoming known as the 'Henry Flat'. This same cartridge was used throughout the production of the Henry rifle and the subsequent Winchester Model 1866, being assembled not only by the New Haven Arms Company themselves but over time by several other ammunition manufacturers.

To accommodate this new ammunition, Henry designed a new rifle, and he was granted a patent on October 6th, 1860, which was assigned to Oliver Winchester, with Henry producing the rifles as an inside contractor in the New Haven plant. He would receive no pay for his work but take a profit from all guns

produced. This proved to be a wise move, as he received \$15,000 over the next five years, precisely double what he would have earned from his regular salary.

In 1864, when the new Winchester Repeating Arms Company moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut, Henry decided to stay in New Haven, setting up a gun store and machine shop of his own. He remained there until he died in 1898.

The new rifle

Henry's rifle was, like its predecessors, lever-operated and fed from a tubular magazine below the barrel. In this case, the combined barrel/magazine is one piece. The magazine had a capacity of 15 and the rifle weighed around 9lbs. Early production trials were made with iron receivers and butt plates, but for whatever reason, they were dropped.

Standard wood for the stock was American walnut, with several deluxe models using rosewood. There



Rear sight raised. Note the markings



Rear sight down. Note the shape of the notch



A rounded top to the butt plate. Later it was more pointed



Some nice case colours on the receiver. Note the hammer

were minor variations in the shape of the stock, but they were generally produced with a hole in the butt and a sprung trapdoor in the butt plate, to accommodate a cleaning rod, with early rods being hickory and later steel. Years ago, I owned a Uberti with this feature, but I'm not sure if it is still available, and if it is, the rods will doubtless be an optional extra.

Rear sights were pretty much as found on this Uberti, but with early versions being marked to 1,000 yards, and without the retaining screw for the sliding elevator. Most early guns had the sight dovetail cut into the rear of the receiver, behind the ejection port, as well as the barrel allowing the user to place the rear sight where they found it most suitable. About one-quarter-way through production, the receiver dovetail was discontinued. Front sights started as a 'half-moon' blade but changed to the square back style that we have here.

Between mid-1863 and late 1865, the U.S. government purchased 1,731 Henry rifles, all of which were provided with loops for slings, one on the left side of the butt and the other halfway up the barrel on the same side, this feature becoming standard for the rest of production. Uberti has also recreated this feature in the past, and today it is listed as an option on their website. By contrast, in the same period, the Army bought around 100,000 Spencer carbines. One of the disadvantages of the Henry was its loaded weight of around 10lbs, with all of that being at the front end, making it particularly unsuitable for mounted troops. Also, the open slot in the bottom of the magazine tube was not ideal in battle conditions, where the ingress of dirt would cause a problem.

Estimates vary as to the number of Henry rifles made by the time production ceased, but it is generally accepted that the total was 13-14,000.

Attention to detail

I have had a love affair with the Henry rifle since I first saw a photograph on the front of a Uberti catalogue over 30 years ago, and I have owned several since then, with each one proving enjoyable to shoot, and this example is no different.

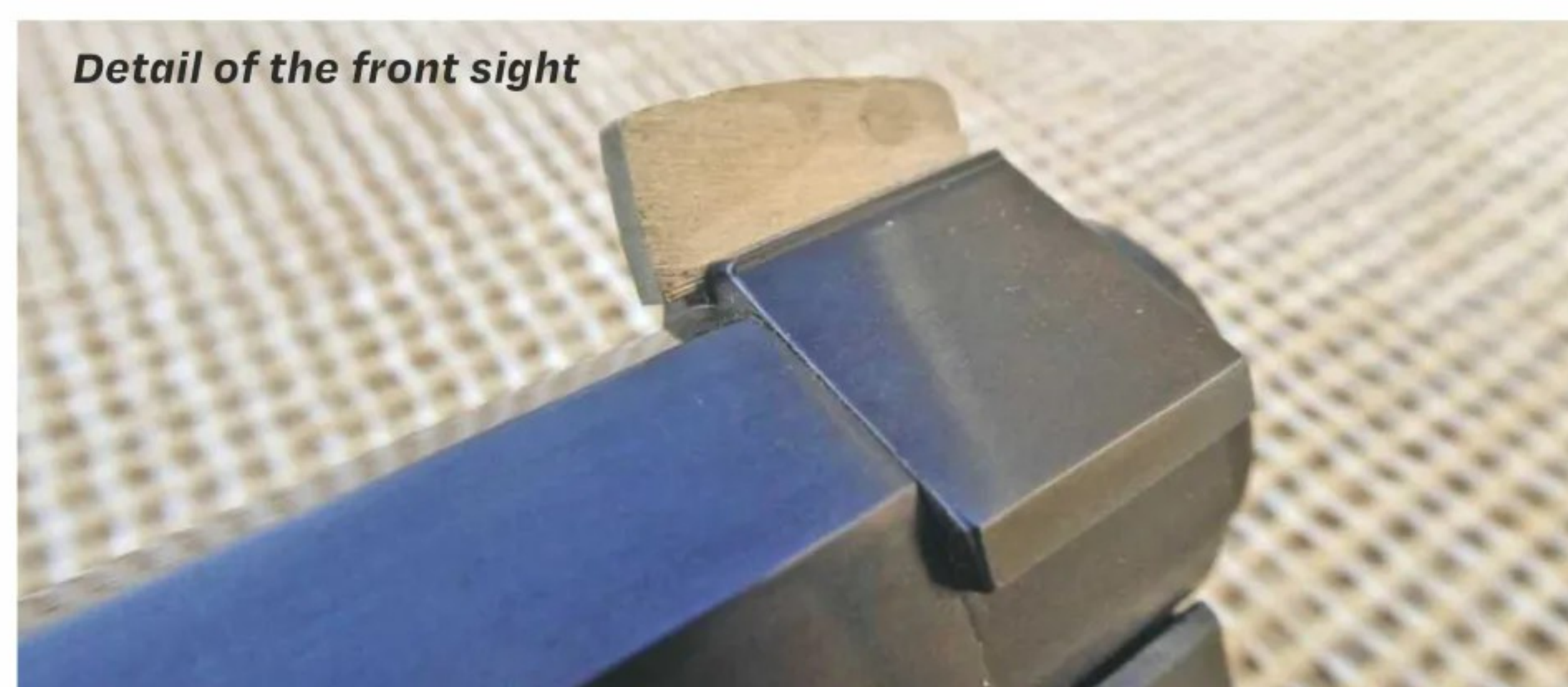
The one-piece barrel/magazine tube, which must have been a challenge to manufacture in 1860, is black, as well as the butt plate, with all edges being reasonably sharp. The receiver has an excellent mixture of colours, with the lever and hammer having the same finish. The stock has Uberti's normal gloss finish, with wood-to-metal fit being excellent, plus there are a couple of minor details that replicate the original early Henry rifles. The top of the butt plate is rounded, rather than the sharp crescent that appeared on later examples, and the bottom edge of the stock has a very slight curve, which collectors have termed a 'perch belly'. This was phased out as production



It's a very good-looking rifle



Empty magazine with stud right down



Detail of the front sight

progressed. This area may not be noticed by the casual observer but indicates Uberti's desire for authenticity.

Another feature of early production was the lack of a retaining catch for the loading lever, and this also has been copied in this reproduction, while the Uberti brass frames have the catch.

The front sight is a white metal blade that's fitted into a base machined as part of a collar, which is attached to the barrel via a small screw on the left side. The rear is a ladder with graduations marked from 2 to 8 for 100 yard increments, and there is a small screw at the top to keep the elevator from coming off the ladder. For 100 yards or less, the ladder is folded down and the base has a flat-based v-notch that mates very nicely with the front sight.

Quirky

The lack of a loading port on the receiver shows that this rifle loads a little differently when compared to normal lever-action guns. Turning the rifle upside down, you will see a small brass stud resting on the receiver. It is the magazine follower and is kept in place by the magazine spring. Grip this and push it towards the muzzle, and

when it gets as far as it will go, turn it sharply to the left. You can now release it and it will stay there, held in place by a small screw and exposing the open end of the magazine. A word of warning – the corner of that slit is very sharp, and it is just waiting for you to drag your thumb across it. Holding the rifle (still upside down) with the muzzle raised slightly, feed your cartridges in primer-end first. Now, grip the brass stud and push it towards the muzzle, then turn it to the right and slowly let it come back under the pressure of the spring. Do not let go of the stud until it comes to rest on the nose of the last cartridge in the magazine. Releasing the stud and letting it come down on its own has been known to cause a detonation in the magazine.

Smooth operator

With the caveat mentioned above, the user is advised to check primer seating depth and employ flat-pointed bullets for use in this rifle. As careful as you may be, there could possibly be a time when that stud just slips out of your fingers.

My load for indoor shooting is 8-grains of Unique powder behind a 250-grain RNFP lead bullet. This provides

light recoil and reasonable accuracy at 25 yards. The rifle was shooting a little to the right at this distance, but I did not move the sights, just used a bit of 'Kentucky windage' to alter the point of impact. The gun was consistently printing 5-shot groups of 2" or below, so more than adequate for CAS shooting.

Feed and extraction were faultless, and the toggle link system of these rifles is so smooth and light in operation. The shooter needs to be aware that the brass stud moves back one cartridge length towards the receiver each time you operate the lever. Therefore, particularly in a competition where you are looking at speed, leave a gap between your thumb, forefinger, and the magazine tube, to allow it to pass through.

For those who may like a little more bling and prefer the brass receiver, that model is around £100 cheaper than this steel version. Whichever one you choose, you will have a lot of fun and find others on the shooting line taking an interest in something just a little bit different.



Magazine loaded with five rounds. Note the stud position

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- Name:** Uberti Henry Rifle (Steel)
- Calibre:** .45 Colt
- Barrel Length:** 24.25"
- Overall Length:** 44"
- Weight:** 9.1 lbs
- Length of Pull:** 13"
- Price:** £1381.00
- Contact:** Henry Kranks - www.henrykrank.com

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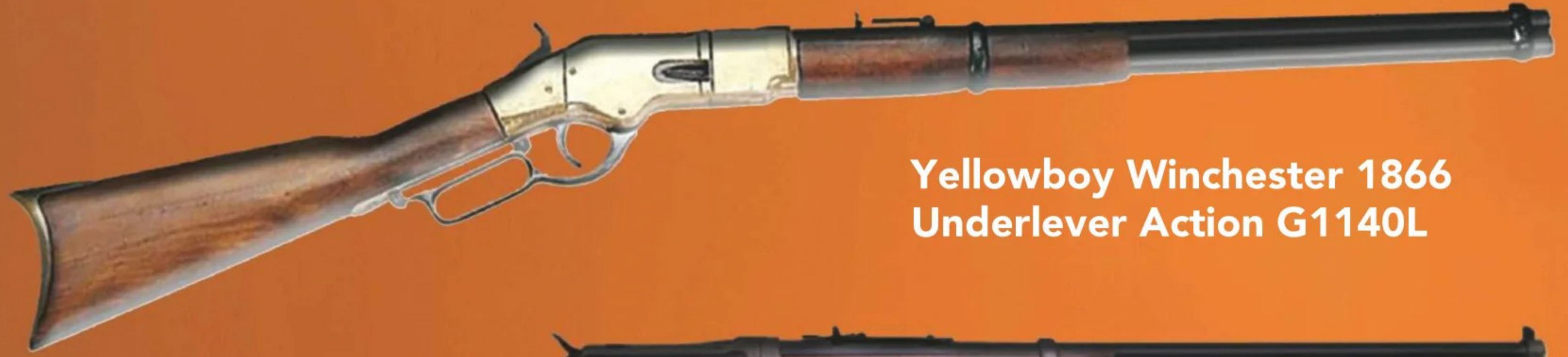
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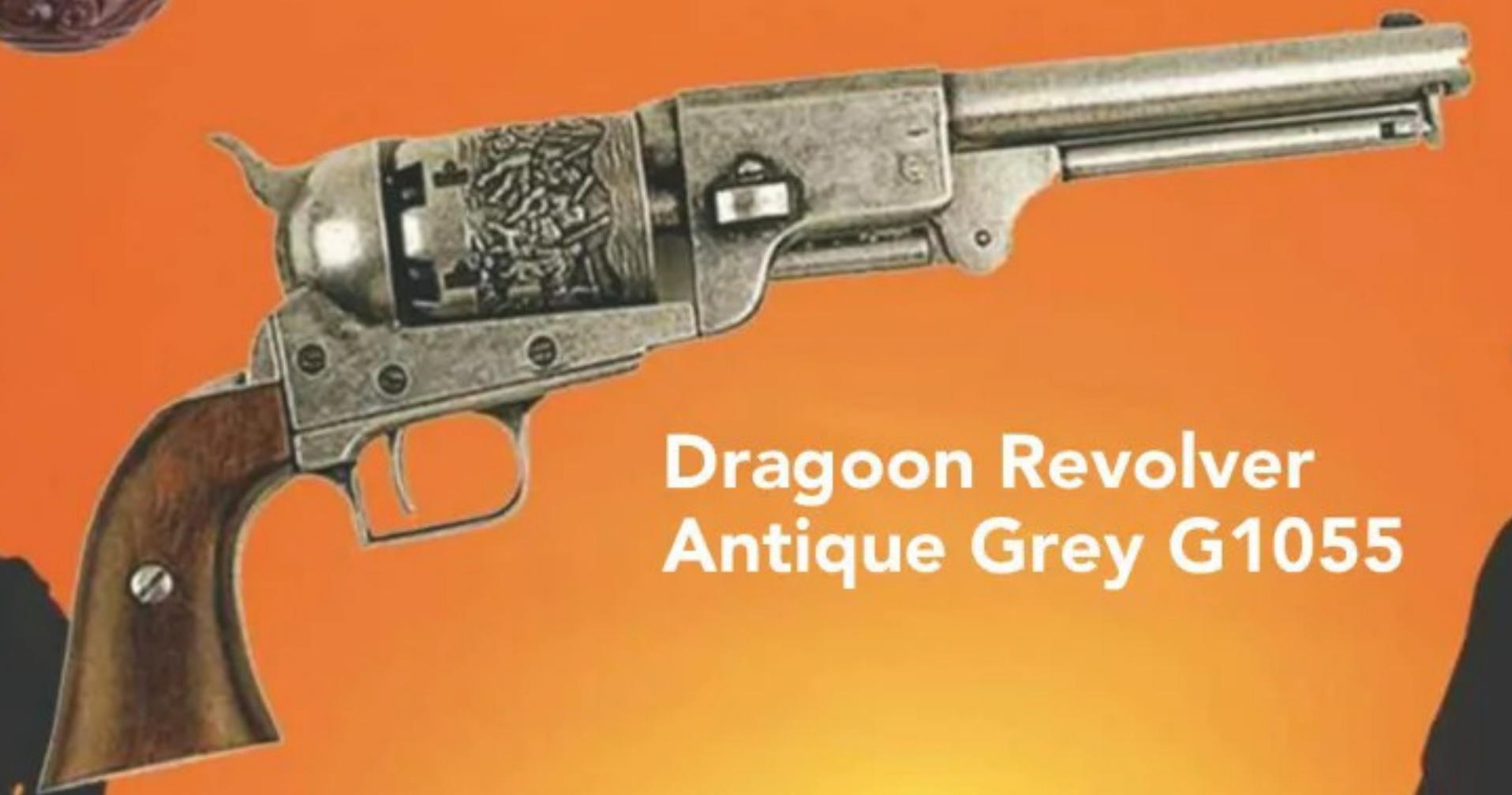
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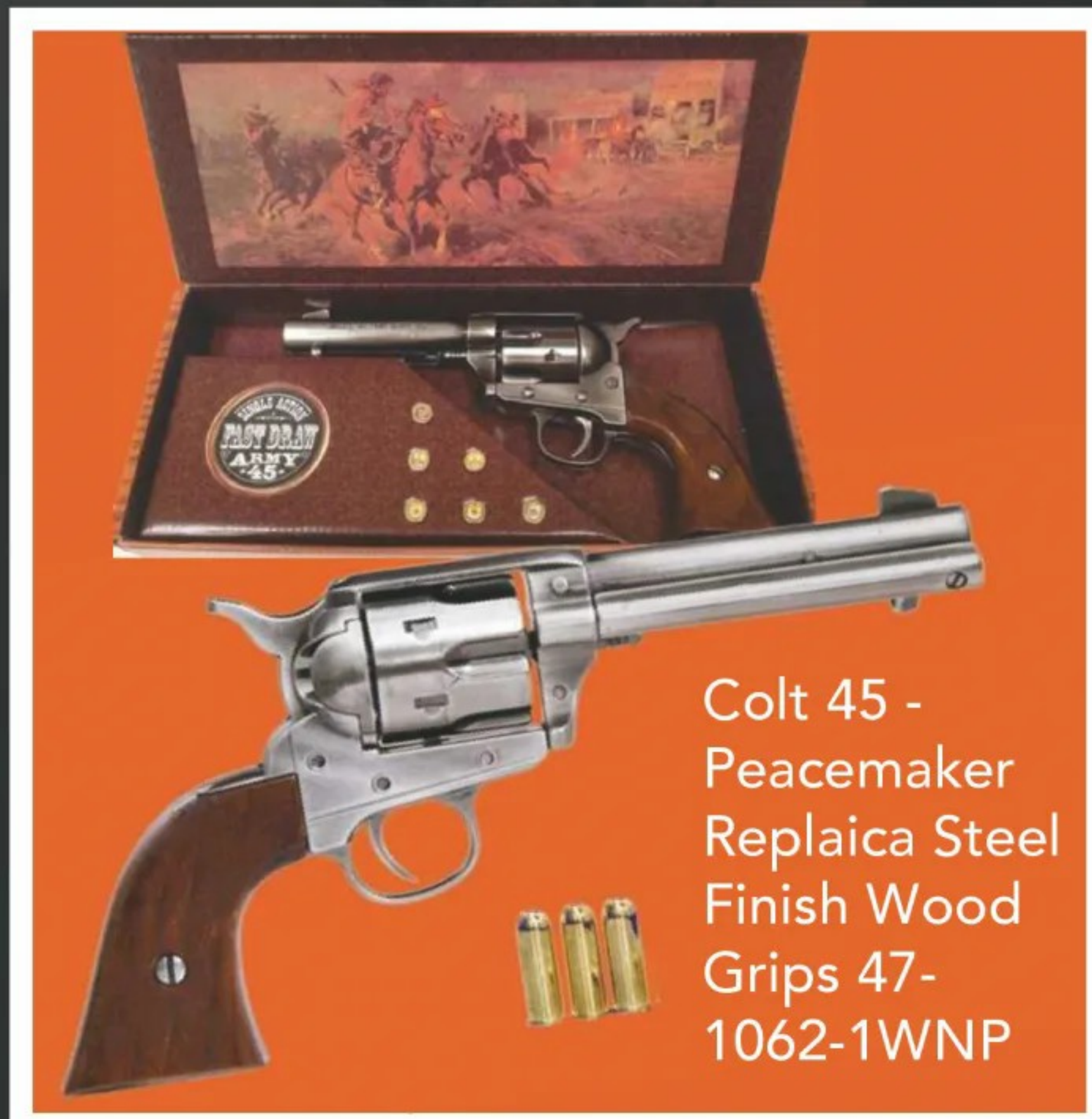
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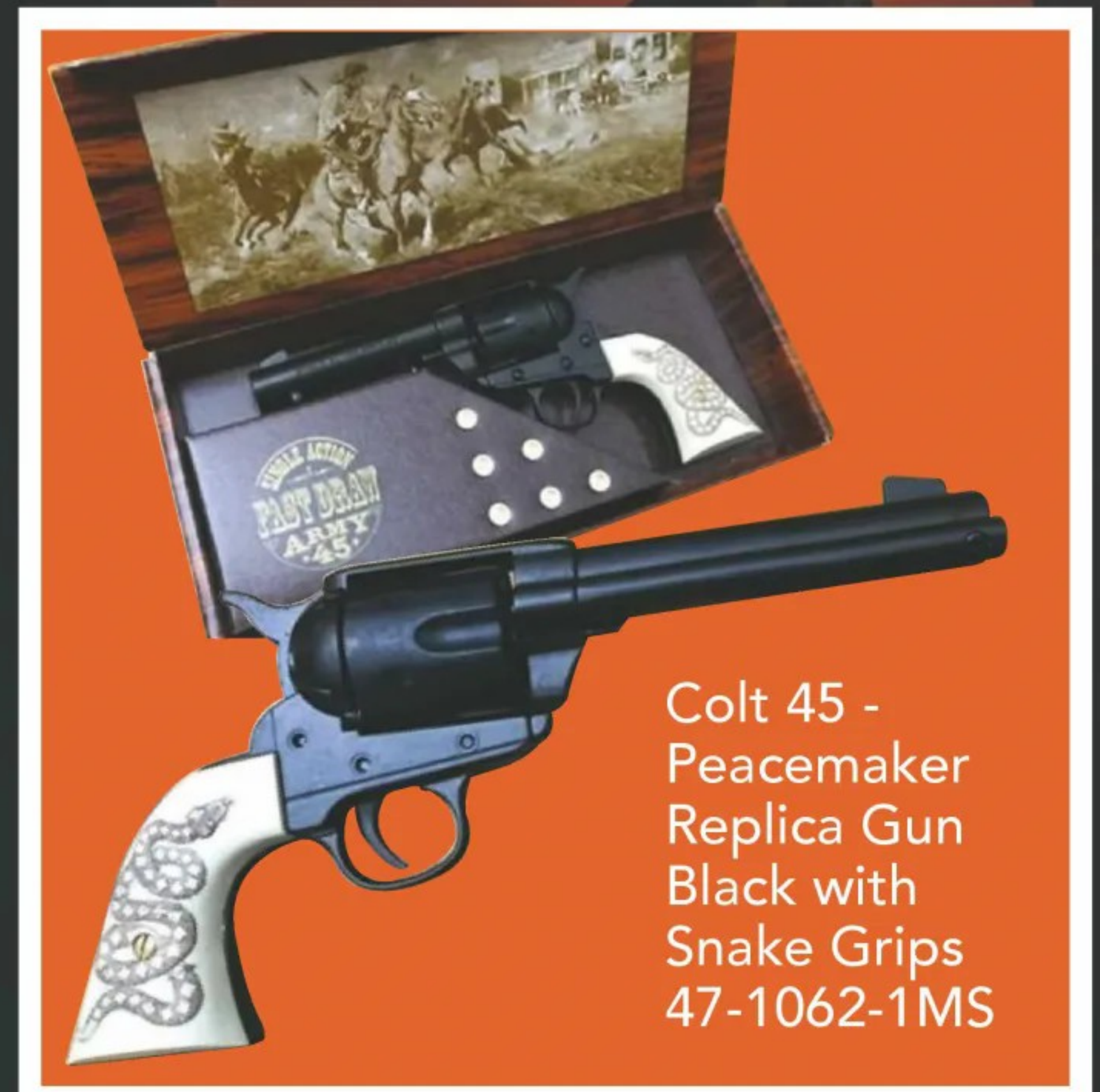
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