

THE BIG TEST

ON THE FIRING LINE THIS MONTH:
WEIHRAUCH HW100S

Supreme Sporter

A new version of an all-time classic makes the editor smile

Perhaps I'm writing this review back to front, but I have to say, the Weihrauch HW100S is an awesome rifle and I love it. I remember well when I first heard that Weihrauch was going to offer a pre-charged pneumatic rifle because it sounded like sacrilege. I'd known them for most of my shooting life as the champions of spring-piston guns, surely they wouldn't move to making PCPs. As I was confident that it would be, the engineering was typically Germanic – big and chunky, with a solid feel, and built to last forever, just like their spring guns. Members of our club bought them and were immediately blown away by the light action of the side-lever cocking and how incredibly quiet they were. Of course, they wore the gold standard of airgun silencers, Weihrauch's own, but the action is impossibly quiet too. They were a hunter's dream.

Big and bold

Another Weihrauch trait is that many of their guns tend to be big and heavy, and the HW100 was the same. Also, the stocks were a bit of a Marmite choice and I have to say that they just weren't for me. Wearing a big blocky profile and bulky proportions were not how a sporting rifle should be, in my eyes, but the pure performance just couldn't be disputed. Another winning feature was the trigger unit that had to follow in the footsteps of Weihrauch's world-famous Rekord unit, and I'm happy to say that this one is every bit as good. In fact, for me it has an advantage over the Rekord trigger in that the blade can be adjusted fore and aft, helping to get around the overly long reach that the older unit suffered from.



Above: Making the cheek piece much higher is an absolute winner in my book;
Opposite Page: In-the-field accuracy is what this rifle is all about

This may sound like a small thing, but in a marketplace that has so many guns with excellent performance, it helps the HW100 to stand out. With the blade in its rearmost position, my hand fell naturally onto the pistol grip, and I felt total control over the shot release each and every time.

Last month, I praised Daystate for some of their technological advancements and several of you pointed out that Weihrauch had got there first, and you were quite right. The HW100 series guns will not double load – a feature that hunters will appreciate. It's all too easy to forget that you've already loaded, and end up loading a second pellet in panic as your quarry appears. Naturally, two pellets will fly more slowly than one and

you'll miss as the pellets land low.

Just how the system works remains a mystery to me. It was explained to me at the factory by a very kind and enthusiastic German engineer in his rather 'German' English, and I was too English to confess that I didn't understand. Whatever, it works and it works very well.

This also applies to the self-regulating system. The rifle does not use a regulator in the conventional sense, but does measure the air pressure and then adjusts to suit. My chronograph told me that it varied no more than 7fps over 50 shots with pellets straight from the tin, which is as good as anybody could sensibly wish. Average velocity was 780fps with the Air Arms Field

Left: The new pistol grip design is a world away from the earlier models; **Centre:** Simple mags' make me happy; **Right:** The rocker safety is easily reached from the shooting hold





Left: By keeping the mag' low in the action, scope mounting is uninterrupted; Right: You can slide the trigger blade fore and aft for the perfect fit



Diablo .177 for a muzzle energy of just over 11.4 ft.lbs. The action is also incredibly efficient delivering 120 full-power shots in .177 and 140 in .22, a huge number for a tube-style reservoir rifle. Because it uses a tube reservoir the action is quite low, which makes for better handling, in my view. Tall guns feel unnatural in my hands and are more prone to canting, a major source of inaccuracy in air rifles. Being able to mount the scope low to the action, as you can with the HW100, also helps to avoid this problem. I'm glad to see that the rifle's scope rail is the traditional and elegant 11mm dovetail, rather than the Weaver rail Weihrauch designed into their second PCP, the innovative, synthetic action HW110. I know Weaver rails are very fashionable at the moment, but I dislike the look on a stylish and traditional rifle, and I feel the clean lines of the HW100 prove me right.



Going it alone

Where the Weihrauch and Daystate designers disagree is that the former's safety won't engage unless the action is cocked and I like this a lot. It's a quick and certain way of checking if you've remembered to cock the rifle after your last shot, without needing to cycle the action to feel the hammer spring

tension. It takes the place of the cocked action indicator that I've been requesting for years.

When we first saw the HW100 action, people worried terribly. It was said that because the action is made from two pieces, we might suffer misalignment between the

front and rear sections of the scope rail, but those worries were unfounded. The two parts have strongly interlocking faces and I've never heard of anybody having a problem. The design means that despite the large diameter of the 14-shot magazine, it sits below the line of the scope rail, which makes fitting scope and night-vision of all shapes and sizes a doddle.

The rifle was one of the first to offer side-lever cocking, something I can take or leave, but it seems the majority of you love it and since then many new rifles have been offered in that style. The HW100's feels a little strange because it cocks on the forward stroke, the rearward stroke setting the trigger and indexing the mag'. In field use you'd hardly notice, but cycled slowly and deliberately you can feel each individual action.

Beautiful curves

You might be wondering why I should be reviewing a rifle that been around for so long, and the answer is the new stock. Gone are the 'blocky' looks to be replaced with smooth curves and sweeps that befit a gun of this quality. What I hoped was that the new stock would transform the weighty Germanic heft of the old model

"It brings advanced technical features in a battleship-strong action, all wrapped in the stock it always deserved"

with a more nimble and dynamic feel that a true sporting gun demands. The new stock is much more beautiful, especially around the pistol grip and butt section, and the laser-cut chequering panels do a good job of lightening up the appearance of the long, straight fore end. The cheek piece looked

Left: Weihrauch supplies a plug to keep the filling port clean; Right: A sturdy barrel support keeps alignment secure



Below: The new stock gives a lighter and more elegant appeal to the HW100



higher too, something lacking in so many guns designed from day one to be used with a scope.

The spares kit supplied with the rifle is interesting. Because the air reservoir is removable, you have two tools for it. The first is a screw-on cap that can be used to depressurise the reservoir before it is dismantled for servicing or air transport. The other allows the reservoir to be mechanically attached to your dive bottle for filling if you don't want to a flexible connector. I doubt either will get used much by people like me, but you have them if need be. You also get two magazines, which is important. I believe that all hunters need two mag's because you can have a spare filled and ready to go in your pocket at all times so that you need never run out of lead when it matters. The magazines are solid, cast metal with no moving parts, unless you count the thick 'O' ring that holds the pellets firmly in their chambers. When this wears out, it will take you precisely eight seconds to replace, at a cost of a few pennies. I like simple magazines for field use. When – not if – you get them dirty, you can wash them under a running tap before drying them ready for use again. There are no springs or delicate parts to damage or jam, and they'll last for ever.

The sound of silence

Another superb inclusion is one of the finest silencers I've ever had the pleasure of owning. Weihrauch has been making this silencer for decades and if anything is

quieter, you'd need a precision decibel meter to know it. They clearly got it right first time, because as far as I can see, the design of this one is the same as one I bought years and years ago, except that the finish looks nicer than my battle-scarred old one.

I almost held my breath as I shouldered this new stock version. Sure, the heft of the rifle was similar, but the shape of the pistol grip was a huge improvement for me, feeling organic and smooth. It delivered the pad of my trigger finger precisely and comfortably onto the rear-set blade. Despite being ambidextrous, it features a subtle palm swell, a feature that I love. It gives your hand a locator and adds support to your grip with only the lightest pressure. The chequering feels lovely and sharp, and even though there's no recoil to manage, it feels right.

Just as I'd hoped, the higher cheek piece gave much better support to my head, making getting onto the scope quickly and accurately much easier, and this is what a sporting rifle should be about. You need to see your quarry, slowly and smoothly bring the rifle to the aim in one easy motion, and be ready to shoot, and Weihrauch have delivered that with this new stock.

Superb accuracy was always going to be a given with this rifle and neat, one-hole groups at 35 yards, when the wind allowed, didn't surprise me or anybody else for one second. What this gun does is make that accuracy more available to the hunter in real-world conditions; you can buy performance, and this rifle proves it. I know

I'm repeating myself, but I do love this rifle. It brings advanced technical features in a battleship-strong action, all wrapped in the stock it always deserved. A rifle this special is never going to be cheap, but if you can afford one, you owe it to yourself to try one out – they really are that special! ■

SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Weihrauch

Importer: Hull Cartridge

Web: www.hullcartridge.co.uk

Tel: 01482 342756

Model: HW100S

Type: Pre-charged pneumatic

Action: Side-lever, magazine-fed

Trigger: Two-stage adjustable

Length: 1045mm (41¼")

Weight: 3.8kg (8.4lbs)

Shots per fill: 120 in .177 and 140 in .22

Fill Pressure: 200 bar

Calibres: .177, .20, .22

Stock: Walnut only, ambidextrous sporter

RRP £839.00