

OUTGUNNED!

The Weihrauch HW44 reveals a basic fact of the Editor's shooting life

Last month you left me in positive mood and on the verge of discovering all sorts of untapped potential as a born-again pistol shooter. Well, we can draw a discreet veil over that, certainly for the foreseeable future, because I've discovered that I'm not a pistol shooter and I doubt I ever will be. I tried, I really did, and the Weihrauch HW44 pistol I used throughout that trial rewarded me every time I got things right, but sadly there just weren't enough of those times – at least for me. Call me what you will, and I'll probably deserve it, but I'll be hanging up my pistol-testing holster until I'm good enough to do justice to a quality airgun such as the HW44.

BETTER THAN I'LL EVER BE

The fact is, this pre-charged pneumatic pistol can group inside an inch at 25 metres. I've seen it do just that at the Weihrauch factory, so its potential was always there to be compared against my own achievements with it. Also, the HW44 is based on Weihrauch's HW110 action, and I've put thousands of pellets through one of those, under all sorts of conditions, and I know what I've produced with that. Now picture me staring down at a 25-metre card, where I can only count eight of the HW44's magazine-load of ten pellets on the target, and these appear to have little association with each other or the bulls-eye. More of a random gathering than a group; it really is most dispiriting.

PROMISING START

I began this test by propping the HW44 on a bench, completely cushioned by a wraparound beanbag. I'd fitted a scope, too, and I began in promising style by clattering and battering spinners, knock-downs and a whole range of improvised targets as I explored my new-found love of the short-arm format. Then I had a word with myself.

I even spoke out loud; 'this isn't how you're supposed to shoot a pistol, you idiot!' I was right. I needed to stand up like a proper pistol shooter, offload the scope, and do the job properly. First I went with a two-handed stance, which wasn't too disastrous, but the ingeniously sculpted grip of this pistol really lends itself to a one-handed target hold, so that's what I based the rest of my test on. I failed ... miserably.

Again, the pistol didn't fail me, I failed it,



The Weihrauch HW44 - and a target showing just some of its potential.

and I carried on failing until I realised I had a testing job to do and I'd better get on with it.

OVER TO THE HW44

So, what could I bring to this test? First, I can establish potential accuracy, which I've done. Next, I can explore the connection between potential and realised performance through a study of the HW44's ergonomics. This is chiefly down to the pistol's ambidextrous grip, which appears to have the ability to accommodate a wide variety of hand sizes comfortably. It really is a well-designed and highly practical feature and provides the ideal platform for the pistol's

two-stage adjustable trigger.

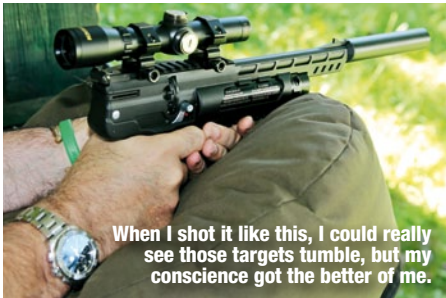
That trigger receives plaudits wherever it goes, too, and rightly so. Weihrauch had to completely rejig the HW110 trigger mechanism to fit the HW44's 'compressed' format and the solution is a triumph.

STATS AND FIGURES

This .177 pistol produces over 100 regulated shots per charge from 200 bar. The degree of regulation keeps those pellets running at a revised average of 15 f.p.s. over the 80 shots I logged. I intended to chart the entire charge but I was called away and I haven't had the



The loading knack is soon acquired.



When I shot it like this, I could really see those targets tumble, but my conscience got the better of me.



This hand is much smaller than my hand ...

... yet the fit that grip provides is still there for both of us.

chance to sit down and repeat my chrono' testing. The muzzle energy of the test pistol has settled at 5.1 ft.lbs. and that seems perfect for targets way beyond any realistic pistol shooter's range, especially mine.

MY VERDICT

As stated, I'm not good enough to push the HW44 anywhere near to its performance limit, and having seen what it can do without a human to spoil things, I'd be mightily impressed to meet anyone who can outshoot this pistol. Its 10-shot magazine system, taken from the HW110 rifle, works flawlessly, and although some may find it fiddly at first, the knack is soon acquired.

Some who tested it said they'd have preferred it to have its sights enhanced by fibre-optics, as with the Tru-Glo system, whilst others disagreed and preferred their sight

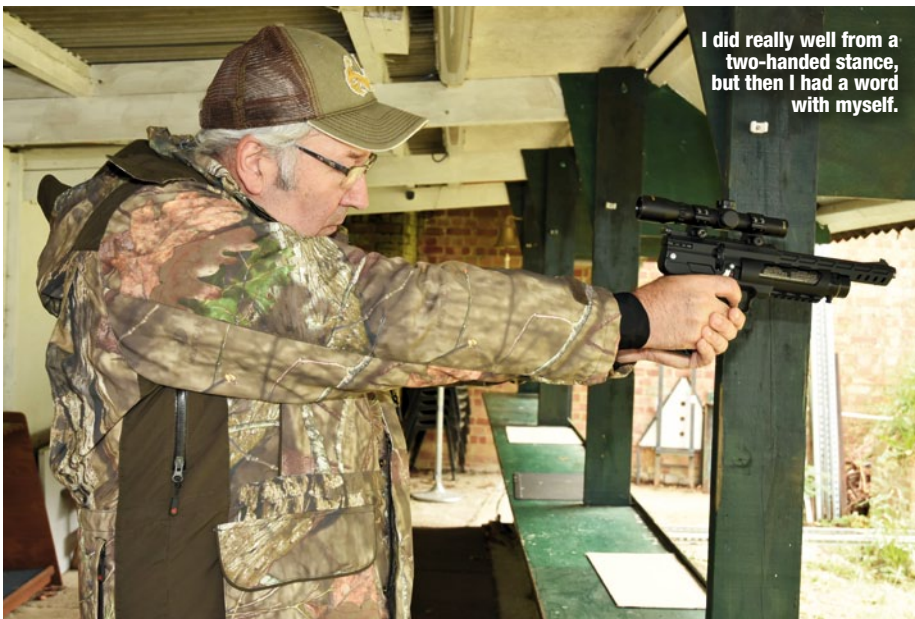
pictures to be less 'distracting' and free of glowing dots. I just listened and nodded at what I thought were the right times, but overall the sights were approved.

As stated, there was universal praise for the HW44's trigger, which hadn't been altered from its factory setting, it should be noted. The 'combat' stance enthusiast and 'deliberate' target shooters heaped praise on the trigger, and that's remarkable in itself, I'm told.

On a purely practical, 'don't annoy the neighbours' basis, I'd recommend the optional silencer, the price of which is yet to be decided. It works, though, and because this airgun lends itself to short-range, back garden use, I can see that silencer earning its keep. No change in point of impact was noted when shooting with the silencer on or off, so if you're serious about getting this pistol, think equally seriously about fitting that silencer.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I'll revisit the Weihrauch HW44, no doubt about it. It's a truly remarkable airgun that will translate every ounce of its owner's skill into the most satisfying results. It's expensive, because that's how much it costs to make it to this standard, but if the HW110 I've used and abused is any guide, the HW44 will just keep coming back for more. I need to raise my game by quite some margin to get the most from this pistol, but when I do, I know I'll be instantly rewarded. If you get the chance, just get a Weihrauch HW44 in your hands and let it show you its potential. I promise you won't outshoot it. ■



I did really well from a two-handed stance, but then I had a word with myself.

TECH SPEC

Model: HW44
Manufacturer: Weihrauch
Country of origin: Germany
Price: £620
Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot, pistol
Calibres: .22 and .177 (not .25)
Cocking/loading: Side-lever
Loading: Via removable, rotary 10-shot magazine
Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable
Grip type: Ambidextrous synthetic
Weight: 1.6k (3.5 lbs) Inc scope and mounts
Length: 330 mm (13 ins)
Barrel: 254 mm (10 ins)
Fill pressure: Max 200 bar
Variation over 80 shots: 15 fps for .177 on test
Average energy: 5.1 ft.lbs.
Contact: Hull Cartridge Co on www.hullcartridge.co.uk

RRP £620