

# CLASS IS PERMANENT

Phill Price confirms the expected quality of the Weihrauch HW45 Bronze Star

Several decades ago I worked in a gun shop, which meant that I was able to handle, or perhaps more accurately, fondle, every new gun that came into stock. I was a confirmed Webley pistol man, but when the first Weihrauch HW45s came in, I was smitten. They oozed that German engineering feel that has always impressed me, and the promise of lots of power appealed to me in those days. They fired the .45 ACP cartridge that was the stuff of legend and a clue to how Weihrauch got the idea for the pistol's name. I had friends who were shooting Colt 1911 firearms in competitions, so I knew the feel of their grips very well. The airgun was able to accept grips from the firearm, with the idea that you could set it up like your live-fire gun and practise quietly and cheaply at home without the need to travel to a shooting range.

The HW45 is a big pistol, but it has an excellent balance and points very naturally, for me at least. The reason for the size is that it has a bore and stroke designed to make power and it's well known as one of the most powerful pistols you can buy. My test gun was .177, but it still made an honest 5 ft.lbs. which backs up the claim. To cock it, you pull down the dummy hammer as though you were cocking a firearm and then swing the top section up and forward. This requires some muscle strength, so this is no youngster's plinker. There are two positions in the cocking stroke that allow you to select full or reduced power. There's no guide to help you



Accuracy, dual power option, great trigger and that Weihrauch pedigree - all come as standard with the HW45 Bronze Star.

know when you get to the lower power position, but I found it with no problems.

## EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Once the trigger sears have engaged you load a pellet directly into the barrel, which is a little fiddly, but no more so than any other pistol of this type I've tried. Returning the upper section to its closed position needs to be completed by ensuring that the 'hammer' has locked it into place. It's much quicker to do

than to describe. I can literally do it with my eyes shut, so it cannot be difficult. The safety sits behind the trigger blade and is not the easiest to operate with your strong hand from the aim. In my usual two-handed hold, I found it much easier to control with the thumb of my weak hand. It's manual and I prefer to engage it before beginning the cocking process. Weihrauch has engineered in an anti-bear trap mechanism, but I like the added security of the conventional safety on top. »



The top-mounted cocking lever compresses the mainspring during the 'opening' stroke.

## DUAL POWER FACILITY

The two power settings make good sense because pistols are often used for simple plinking and paper-target shooting, so lots of wallop is quite unnecessary. However, if you want to try long-range shooting, the extra power can make a big difference. The low power setting showed 400fps though my chronograph with the excellent Weihrauch FT-Exact .177 pellet that weighs 8.44 grains. This calculates to almost exactly 3 ft.lbs. The high-power setting achieved 515fps for 5 ft.lbs., which is a lot of whack for any air pistol.

## TOP TRIGGER

Saying that the trigger is excellent won't surprise anybody who has used Weihrauch guns, but even so, I think the performance of this unit is exceptional. I'm a huge fan of high-quality triggers on any gun because they aid precise control that allows you to release the shot at the perfect moment every time. This quite naturally helps us to shoot accurately, which is what shooting is all about – isn't it? The first stage is smooth and nicely weighted, whilst the second stage breaks as cleanly as you could ever wish. My pull weight gauge read just under 3lbs, but it feels lighter than that in use. I'll go so far as to say that my test gun had one of the best spring-piston pistol triggers I've ever used.



Not cheap, but true quality costs - and this is a high quality pistol.



These sights are excellent, but I'd definitely fit a scope or red dot sight.



The HW45's 'twin' cocking linkage is typically robust.



Loading is direct to the barrel.

## AMBIDEXTROUS

As the name tells us, this version has a highly unusual bronze finish that I learned is Cerakote, a tough and durable finish usually found on firearms. Applying it is an expensive process, but it looks great. I also really liked the ergonomic grip, shaped from a black and grey laminate and then stippled for extra support. The word 'ambidextrous' usually makes my heart sink when used to describe any gun, but in this application I noted no drawback. I found the grip superbly comfortable and it allowed a two-handed hold without any difficulty.

With the first-class open sights fitted it was able to hold 1" groups at 10 yards, but as my eyes get worse I find using them more and more difficult. There is the option to fit a scope on the machined rail that runs along the front part of the action. If it were mine, I'd fit one and enjoy the extra accuracy potential it would bring.

## VERDICT

This is a truly excellent pistol but then it should be because it costs as much as many

fine rifles. However, if pistols are your bag, then you need to try an HW45 in one of its many variants. I think there's every chance that you'll be just as smitten as I am. ■

## TECH SPEC

**Manufacturer:** Weihrauch Sport GmbH

**Importer:** Hull Cartridge

**Tel:** 01482 342756

**Model:** HW45 Bronze Star

**Type:** Spring-piston

**Action:** Over-lever, single-shot

**Trigger:** Two-stage, adjustable

**Length:** 280mm

**Weight:** 1.16kg

**Calibres:** .177: .22

**RRP £386.00**