

THE PEOPLE'S RIFLE

The latest HW110 Grey Laminate embodies perfectly the Weihrauch philosophy



Balance, style and head-shaking accuracy in a sporting package ...

When the airgun superpower that is Weihrauch launched their HW110 around three years ago, it marked a major departure from the company's trademark design philosophy. This German giant has forged its enviable reputation on solid engineering and guns built to last a lifetime, yet here was its new HW110, and shock-horror-outrage - it had a polymer block!

You what? Major components on a Weihrauch made of plastic? Had the company lost its commercial mind?

As the foam of righteous indignation flecked the keyboards of the virtual experts, within months, the HW110 became Weihrauch's best-selling PCP, and one of the most popular new pre-charged sporters among UK shooters. That popularity was boosted by the introduction of the 110 Karbine, and it's been maintained whilst the spluttering from the doubters has all but disappeared. I've used one of the very first HW110s throughout the three years since its launch, and it has become one of my go-to

hunting rifles. I've used it to take hundreds of rabbits, pigeons, squirrels and rats, as well as an instruction vehicle to train shooters new to 'serious' airguns and multi-shot PCPs in particular. In short, Weihrauch was right and the doubters were wrong, and now the HW110 has been granted a posh laminated stock and a rejigged silencer. Has Weihrauch played another ace? Let's see.

BY POPULAR DEMAND

The HW110 concept was an entirely in-house development. Since the worldwide success of Weihrauch's debut PCP, the HW100 in 2003, the company had wanted to produce a rifle that offered full sporting performance in a more affordable package, hence the HW110. However, like all successful companies, Weihrauch listens closely to its customers, agents and those who offer constructive input.

... which reloads at the flick of a lever.

Thus, after the various guises of the HW100 prompted feedback, it emerged that HW110 owners had expressed a desire for a stock upgrade option. Enter the Grey Laminate, now offered in Karbine or Standard rifle configuration. The people spoke, and Weihrauch responded. Now let's see what people power has produced.

FAMILIAR FEEL

After my own three years of intensive association with the HW110 action, I see and feel a completely familiar combination of genius and slight frustration. The genius is that

ballistic polymer action block and the precision valving system it contains, plus the superb adjustable trigger mechanism that activates it. Further cleverness can be found in the pellet-friendly, match-accurate barrel, which is supported centrally by a barrel band also moulded from ballistic polymer. This barrel set-up is usually described as 'semi-floating', but that can't really happen, can it? A barrel is either fully-floating – completely unsupported beyond its fixture in the breech block – or it isn't. This rifle's barrel isn't solidly clamped by its band, but there's contact between the two, so the barrel isn't free to float and by so doing be isolated from any micro-movements in the rifle's air storage cylinder as it's charged and discharged.

SIMPLE SIDELEVER

The familiar sidelever action activates the bombproof 10-shot pellet magazine, two of which are supplied with the rifle. When ordering an HW110, that sidelever can be specified to operate on the left-hand side of the action, complementing the ambidextrous design of the rifle. This is a really useful option for southpaws and the HW110 has proved very popular with those of a sinister persuasion.

MOSTLY AMBI'

The ambidextrous theme is further strengthened by the double-sided safety catch and of course the new stock, but there's one component that sits resolutely on the right-hand side of the action, when having it on the left would be seriously handy. It's the magazine release lever and whilst using it as it is won't ever be a deal-breaker, having the option to switch it to the left-hand side would be a fine thing to have on such a genuinely impressive rifle. I'd prefer to see Weihrauch build in this refinement at the factory, but in the meantime, how about our resident geniuses, such as Best Fittings or A & M Customs coming up with a clever fix?

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Into the HW110 mix goes plug 'n' play charging, with the filling port neatly protected by a blanking plug. Then we have the ballistic polymer Picatinny scope rail, with a shorter version fixed to the fore end underside. The latter is removable, should you prefer a more hand-forward hold, and again, a pretty plate could be offered by one of our custom houses, to finish off the woodwork properly when the front rail is not in use.

Add a front-mounted air-pressure gauge, more ballistic polymer for the curved trigger blade, and that deeply unattractive, but deemed by Weihrauch highly necessary, green warning label on the air reservoir, and you have the recipe for success that the innovative HW110 turned out to be.

THE SAME ONLY DIFFERENT

At the business end, we see the new-shape silencer with its slightly more squared-off profile. This could ruffle a few feathers. The HW HE silencer has become something of an icon among those who become energised about their airgun moderators, whether they own Weihrauch rifles or not, and many regard it as the benchmark against which other silencers are compared. 'Yes, but is it as quiet as a Weihrauch silencer?', will be the question asked during any debate on moderator merits. The HE then, is one extremely popular silencer, and that steeply-angled rear end, rather than

the more tapered design of the previous model, will have the splutterers re-foaming. Well, a noisy few of them, anyway.

The undeniably good news is, not only does the new silencer come as part of the HW110 package, but it also works a treat and matches its iconic predecessor decibel for decibel. Within a very few shots, it's easy to see why the Weihrauch silencer is so incredibly well regarded. I'm told it's a £50 option, and that supplies of the new model will be in the shops when this magazine hits the newsagents. Now, let's have a proper look at that new laminated thumbhole furniture.

Practical performance meets a bit of class, in the latest HW110 incarnation.





That's where I'd like the magazine release lever to be.



Action area. Sidelever, trigger, safety and mag' release lever. For me, the latter is on the wrong side.



I'm sure it has a purpose for some shooters, but I'd remove that front rail.



Giving the magazine release lever the middle finger during my mag'-swap technique,



It looks great, works perfectly, and you get one with every HW110. Yes, but they've changed the shape!



Plug and play. Easy charging and plenty to play with once it's done.

A POSHER, PRETTIER STOCK

High quality laminate stocks are expensive; more so than walnut versions in many cases, and this thumbhole sporter version, designed in-house by Weihrauch and produced by Italian maestros Minelli, is an extremely well-made item. Laminate and its wood-resin construction favours stippling over chequering, and the panels applied to the new HW110 variant reflect the overall quality of the product. Not only are these laser-etched panels perfectly placed for secure handling, each one is neatened and defined by a keyline. The effect is one of understated practicality and more importantly, it keeps this HW110 safely stuck to the hand during use.

The butt-pad is curved and vertically adjustable, as it should be, and although the cheek piece lacks any up-down shift option, its design is sufficiently versatile to encourage easy alignment between the eye and scope. With a reasonably raked grip design, combined with an ideal amount of chamfers, scoop-outs and weight-relieving cutaways, this stock is an outstanding example of its kind.

ON THE RANGE

From each 200-bar fill, the .177 test rifle returned 108 'perfect' shots at 11.5 ft.lbs., with an extreme variation of 16 f.p.s., using Air Arms Diabolo Field pellets straight from the tin. The regulated action is impressive, but the accuracy and the way it's delivered is the real star of this show. Each shot leaves the rifle to a soft, 'tok', and makes holes gather in paper targets with eyebrow-raising efficiency. The best group I've managed so far, is a 'worldy' of 12mm diameter at 50 yards for all 10 pellets in the mag'. Granted, most of my output with the test rifle are twice that size at 50 yards, but that's still impressive.

INITIAL VERDICT

The Weihrauch HW110 was already a winner, and adding a higher-spec stock option was only ever going to raise the bar. It's raised the price, too, but this level of quality never comes cheap. I'll carry on testing as and when I can over the next month, but it's already obvious that the people have been given the rifle they asked for – and then some. ■

TECH SPEC

Model: HW110 Grey Laminate
Manufacturer: Weihrauch
Country of origin: Germany
Price: £910 including two magazines and silencer
Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot, sporter
Calibre: .22, .177
Cocking/loading: Sidelever, via 10-shot magazine
Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable, with manual, resettable safety
Stock type: Ambidextrous thumbhole laminate
Weight: 3.1kg (8.1lbs) Rifle only
Length: 910 mm (40 ins) Including silencer
Barrel: 410 mm (19.7ins)
Fill pressure: Max 200 bar
Shots per charge: 130 in .22, 108 in .177 at sub-12 ft.lbs.
Average energy: 11.5 ft.lbs.
Contact: Hull Cartridge Company 01482 342 756

RRP £910