

EDITOR'S TEST

1899 RIFLES

DAVE BARHAM reveals a range of commemorative rifles to celebrate Weihrauch's 125 years in the business.

PHOTOGRAPHY **DAVE BARHAM**

THE HISTORY

Weihrauch is proud to be celebrating their 125-year family tradition in 2024. Hermann Weihrauch laid the cornerstone in Zella St. Blasii in 1899. He quickly established a name for himself with high-quality hunting rifles and was able to expand the company. Over the following decades, the product range was expanded further to include bicycle parts and door closers. After the new start in Mellrichstadt in 1948, bicycle parts were initially manufactured again, but soon airguns and small-bore repeaters were added to the range.

Move forward to the 1950s and it is Hermann Weihrauchs' son – also Hermann – who is making a name for himself as a gifted gun manufacturer.

In 1955 Hermann Weihrauch Junior's company manufactured the Weihrauch HW35. This was the first model to feature their now world famous Rekord two-stage sporting trigger, a trigger that many would argue is still the best in the business some 70+ years later!

Today, Weihrauch products are in demand worldwide, and the quality standard 'Made in Germany' is well recognised. They pay particular attention when making their own barrels; very few manufacturers can claim this level of expertise, relying on sourcing their barrels from other suppliers. They continually invest in the most up to date production machinery, maintaining quality whilst maximising output.

To celebrate their 125th anniversary,

Weihrauch has produced three special Limited Edition models, each rifle being numbered out of 500 and fitted with beautifully crafted red and black laminate stocks.

HW50S

Around 1950, Weihrauch launched their first gun bearing their name 'HW50' and described as 'a midsize air rifle in smooth bore' .177. At this time, there was a ban on Germany making rifled barrels, but soon after, this the ban was lifted, and by 1953 the ubiquitous HW35 saw the light of day. There is anecdotal evidence that the HW50 was one of Hermann Weihrauch's favourite rifles, although in this country it never seemed to gain as much traction as its peers. This may have

been down to the perceived 'lower power' output of the HW50. During my testing I got a spread of between 10.4 and 10.7 ft.lbs depending on the weight of the pellets I was using, and that brings me nicely on to cocking effort.

COCKING EFFORT AND TRIGGER

This model is slightly shorter than the original HW50, and as such it requires a reasonable amount of force to cock it, but not as much as some longer springers. In fact, I got my 13-year-old daughter to shoot with me in the garden and she was rattling through a tin of pellets quite easily, cocking the rifle on her own.

Cocking the gun results in a loud click, to which many owners of older HW35s will be accustomed. The cocking linkage seems similar in type to the HW35, which being articulated means there is a short relief cut into the underside of the stock.

Of course, the Weihrauch HW50S air rifle is fitted with Weihrauch's legendary Rekord trigger. With an average pull weight of 2lbs 10oz, it's the quality of the trigger pull that makes the Rekord special. The first stage is very light and

there's a definitive stop when the second stage is reached. It's very predictable – just what's required for consistent, repeatable accuracy. It feels as if no further effort is required for the crisp release, the rifle just fires exactly when wanted. It's also worth mentioning that once cocked, the automatic safety is engaged, and this must be pushed off in order to take your shot.

IN YOUR SIGHTS

The HW50 is supplied with a simple hooded post front sight, the rear sight being the standard Weihrauch fully-adjustable unit as fitted to the HW80 from the same era. Up top there is the facility to fit a scope with 11mm dovetail rails, with three holes to accept a recoil arrestor pin.

ACCURACY

The accuracy of this rifle astounded me. I'll be honest and tell you that this was actually the first time I have ever shot one. With open sights and shooting whilst standing, I was easily hitting 20p-sized groups at 20 metres, which for me is outstanding! It's not pellet fussy either, I was switching from AA Fields to QYS and then onto JSB with very little difference in performance.

QUALITY

Overall, the finish of the HW50S is to a high standard and gives the aura of quality. The metalwork is polished and has a deep, even, blued finish. The appearance is definitely traditional, with no bowing to modern style or trends. It is just as you would expect it to be 70 years ago, apart from that beautifully crafted Minelli laminate stock!

ALL ROUNDER

The HW50S is the perfect 'back garden' rifle, and suitable for shooters of all abilities, from teenagers to OAPs. It's more than capable of knocking down targets on the club range, and with the addition of a scope it has the ability to be a great little lightweight hunter, too. Visit: www.weihrauch.co.uk for more info.

TECH SPEC

Type: Break-barrel springer, single-shot
Stock: Ambidextrous laminate
Cocking: Break-barrel
Trigger: Two-stage Rekord
Calibre: .177 and .22
Safety: Automatic
Overall Length: 1030mm (44.4in)
Barrel Length: 395mm (15.5in)
Weight: 6.8lbs (3.1kg)
Muzzle Energy: Average 10.6 ft.lbs. 19fps variation over 10 shots
PRICE: £450



HW50S



performance has gained this model a very a loyal following.

LOVELY LEVER

Weihrauch's drop-down, biathlon-style sidelever adds a touch of class, and that's helped by the way the lever is assisted. A gentle tweak sideways and the lever flies back on its own, just requiring the lightest pull backwards to cock the action. Once cocked, you can operate the manual safety lever.

This model comes supplied with the standard Weihrauch silencer, too, which has built up a reputation as one of the quietest units available for airguns.

HW100T

Weihrauch's HW100 has become a modern classic in recent years, in all its various guises. The exceptional build quality and finish, coupled with reliable

CHARGING

As with all the HW100 series, the main cylinder can be unscrewed and pulled through the support bracket to remove it, and this is a great feature. Being able to have the cylinder safety checked (they recommend after 10 years of use), is great for peace of mind. It also means that you can purchase extra cylinders to take with you whilst on a hunting trip, or if you're planning on thrashing a whole tin of pellets down range.

Charging the cylinder is easy, too. Simply pull out the nylon plug from the filler valve up front, insert the fill probe and then fill to 200bar.

TWO MAG'S

You get two magazines of the robust metal casting variety supplied with this HW100T, and these are easy to fill. With a pellet pushed flush into each chamber, you just pull back the sidelever, locate the magazine into its slot within the action, push the magazine



That's some mighty fine etching on the base of the pistol grip.



The pressure gauge is very easy to read. I love this type that is colour coded.



The short, drop-down biathlon-style sidelever adds a touch of class.

retaining catch forwards, and all is ready to go.

If the catch won't engage, just gently move the mag' and it will all quickly find its lie and lock into place.

WONDERFUL TO SHOOT

There really is a subtlety and slickness to the shooting experience that gives the HW100T a unique feel. Largely unchanged since its inception, Weihrauch's multi-shot system works perfectly, and that's a credit to the design team who obviously got it right from the word go.

The two-stage trigger is fully adjustable and is one of the sweetest units around. The nylon trigger blade

can even be moved along its rail, so that a favoured finger position can be easily found.

DEFINITELY ONE TO OWN

So yes, this beautiful airgun comes highly recommended, and it's from one of the most respected brands in the business.

It's everything you need in a hunting rifle, or a range gun, or even just a collector's piece. Either way, it should be right near the top of any shortlist. This superb rifle also serves as a reminder of why the HW100, in all its many guises, remains a firm favourite with so many airgunners all around the world.

TECH SPEC

- Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot
- Max Fill Pressure: 200 bar
- Stock: Ambidextrous laminate
- Cocking: Sidelever
- Trigger: Two-stage adjustable
- Calibre: .177 and .22
- Safety: Manual
- Overall Length: 975mm (38.4in)
- Barrel Length: 410mm (16.1in)
- Magazine Capacity: 14 .177, 14 .22
- Weight: 8.3lbs (3.8kg)
- Shot Count: 110 in .177 and 140 in .22
- Muzzle Energy: 11.5ft.lbs. 6fps variation over 10 shots
- PRICE: £1350

"You get two magazines of the robust metal casting variety supplied with this HW 100T, and these are easy to fill"



HW100T



There's no mistaking that this is a 125-year anniversary model!

HW97KT

The first Weihrauch HW97KT was launched in a very stylish and practical thumbhole beechwood stock. Such was its popularity, the company now offer two synthetic stock variants, as well as this Limited Edition model. The KT version is a variation on that hugely popular theme, with the K standing for the German word 'Karbine' (short action), and the T for thumbhole stock.

The large, elongated thumbhole and steep, drop-down pistol grip are

undoubtedly taken from the stock design the company use on their superb HW100KT PCP range. This thumbhole/grip configuration, coupled with the well-defined finger 'channels' that run directly above the metal trigger guard, offer a rock steady hold and give a high level of trigger control, which is why this particular rifle has become a staple on the HFT springer scene. The pistol grip has stippled panels, while the relatively slim, yet lengthy fore end has stippling along either side.

UNDERLEVER COCKING

The underlever sits neatly below the barrel, held securely in the closed position by a large sprung stainless steel ball bearing catch. The design is such that cocking the rifle is very easy; once you depress the underlever's release button with the thumb of your leading hand it's already ideally placed to grip the lever between the fingers and palm of the same hand to draw it back. Lock back in the 'open' position is secure, as any in the HW97 family of air rifles, and the automatic cross-bolt safety sticks out to the left, clearly showing the rifle's status.

ANTI BEAR TRAP

Weihrauch also incorporates an anti-bear trap mechanism, but as always, you should hold the underlever action cocking mechanism whilst loading.

During cocking, the breech slides back to reveal the loading bay, making direct pellet loading an easy task. On returning the lever to its original position, the sliding breech moves forward to seat the pellet and seal the breech.

The articulated arm that links the under-lever to the spring/piston power plant has a surprisingly short cocking



The automatic safety can be found right at the back of the action.



The breech is protected by a sliding cover, and it is anti-bear trap protected.



Releasing the underlever is a simple case of pressing the button.

stroke, and operating this cocking mechanism doesn't take much of an effort.

REKORD TRIGGER

The highly acclaimed Rekord 2-stage, adjustable trigger unit with auto safety is a mainstay on virtually all of the company's mechanical rifles and the trigger blade and adjustment screw being gold anodised certainly give it a touch of class.

The upgraded, efficient 'primary' integral silencer tames muzzle report to a highly acceptable level, and it really does the job well.

ONE OF THE BEST

The HW97KT is right up there with the best production fixed barrel mechanical action rifles on the market. The stock design certainly helps to give better shot control, and accuracy is amongst the best you'll find of any production springer in this price bracket. It has been proven a worthy adversary on the HFT competition scene, and as many hunters will attest, it's equally at home in the field performing pest control duties.

If you've never shot an HW97KT before, it's one that should be on everybody's bucket list. ✕

TECH SPEC

Type: Underlever springer, single-shot
Stock: Ambidextrous laminate
Cocking: Underlever
Trigger: Two-stage Rekord
Calibre: .177 and .22
Safety: Automatic
Overall Length: 1030mm (???.2in)
Barrel Length: 300mm (??in)
Weight: ??lbs (4.3kg)
Muzzle Energy: 11.4 ft.lbs. 13fps variation over 10 shots

PRICE: £850



"if you want more sound suppression, the muzzle has an internal thread that accepts the dedicated HW97KT silencer"

HW97KT