



WHAT A DIFFERENCE AN 'A' MAKES!

The editor gets first go of the new adjustable HW100KT LA

I've said it before, and I'll be saying it again, but Weihrauch always sits back and considers its options, rather than blazing trails and kicking open new doors. Mind you, this world-renowned German company has already changed the entire airgun game with the launch of the Rekord trigger unit way back in the 1950s, so it could be said that its established stance of 'evolution not revolution' came about after it had already done the 'revolution' bit.

There's another fact about Weihrauch of which I've become

personally aware, and that's the company's extreme reluctance to reveal any sort of prototype, but I've managed to extract one for this test, albeit one that is definitely 95% the finished item.

What we have here, is the latest, and I'll already declare it the greatest, incarnation of the HW100 side lever, multi-shot, pre-charged pneumatic, the catchily-named HW100KT LA. The full name of this rifle is the HW100 Karbine Thumbhole Laminate Adjustable, and it's the 'A' part of that name that mainly

concerns us this month.

MAKING THE RIGHT MOVES

After years of my hassling pretty much every manufacturer unfortunate enough to come within range of me, we now enjoy a modest resource of such options, from various companies. Now, no doubt after a suitable period of consideration and the weighing-up of pros, cons and possibilities, Weihrauch has thrown its hat into the ring. Typically, while the HW contestant

bears a distinct resemblance to its rivals, it carries that trademark Weihrauch difference.

For a start, whilst I'd put my house on the LA's laminate stock being made in Italy by the Minelli maestros, there's nothing on it to boast that fact. Perhaps the production examples will carry a Minelli stamp, perhaps not, but this test rifle has 'WEIHRAUCH SPORT' moulded into its adjustable butt pad, and that strikes me as a badge of ownership.

Such things are of little import in the grand scheme of anything, and what really matters here is



Cheek piece forward ...



... cheek piece back. Plenty of accommodation in LA these days.

how the working bits work. We know how the action works, of course, and I tested the non-adjustable version of this model back in October last year, but with that test still fairly fresh in my mind, I was really looking forward to seeing how much the new stock configuration improved matters. My handling report usually follows a rundown of the rifle's features and performance, and I'm sure those who didn't catch the October test will want the full SP, so here goes.

THE ACTION

The HW100KT LA runs Weihrauch's proven Karbine action, with its 12.75-inch (324mm) barrel and 38-inch (965mm) overall length. The weight of the KT LA is just three ounces more than the standard KT L model, and this is presumably due to the metalwork in the butt section which controls the adjustments. At 8lbs 12oz (4.2k), including the Mamba Lite scope shown, the LA offers stability on aim, without imposing an impractical weight penalty, although when I asked several people who tried the test rifle to estimate its weight, they all came up around a pound light. More of that later, because I need to get this test rifle charged with compressed air, its magazine loaded, and a bit of shooter/rifle bonding going on.

CHARGING AND LOADING

Getting the required 200 bar of compression into the rifle's reservoir is a straightforward matter of removing the synthetic valve plug and replacing it with the supplied probe charging connector. This is self-sealing and provided you keep it free of invasive grit and muck, and replace the valve plug as soon as you've finished charging, it really is



a trouble-free system.

That 200 bar gets you over 85 shots at 11.3ft.lbs. – according to the test rifle, which matched the previous test model – in .22 and 60-plus in .177. In a supreme 'taking one for the team' gesture, I also charged the test rifle with a manual pump, and due to the compact nature of the rifle's stainless steel reservoir, this wasn't a big, or sweaty, deal. In fact, I found manual charging with my own FX pump, which isn't the latest, easiest-to-pump version, a perfectly viable

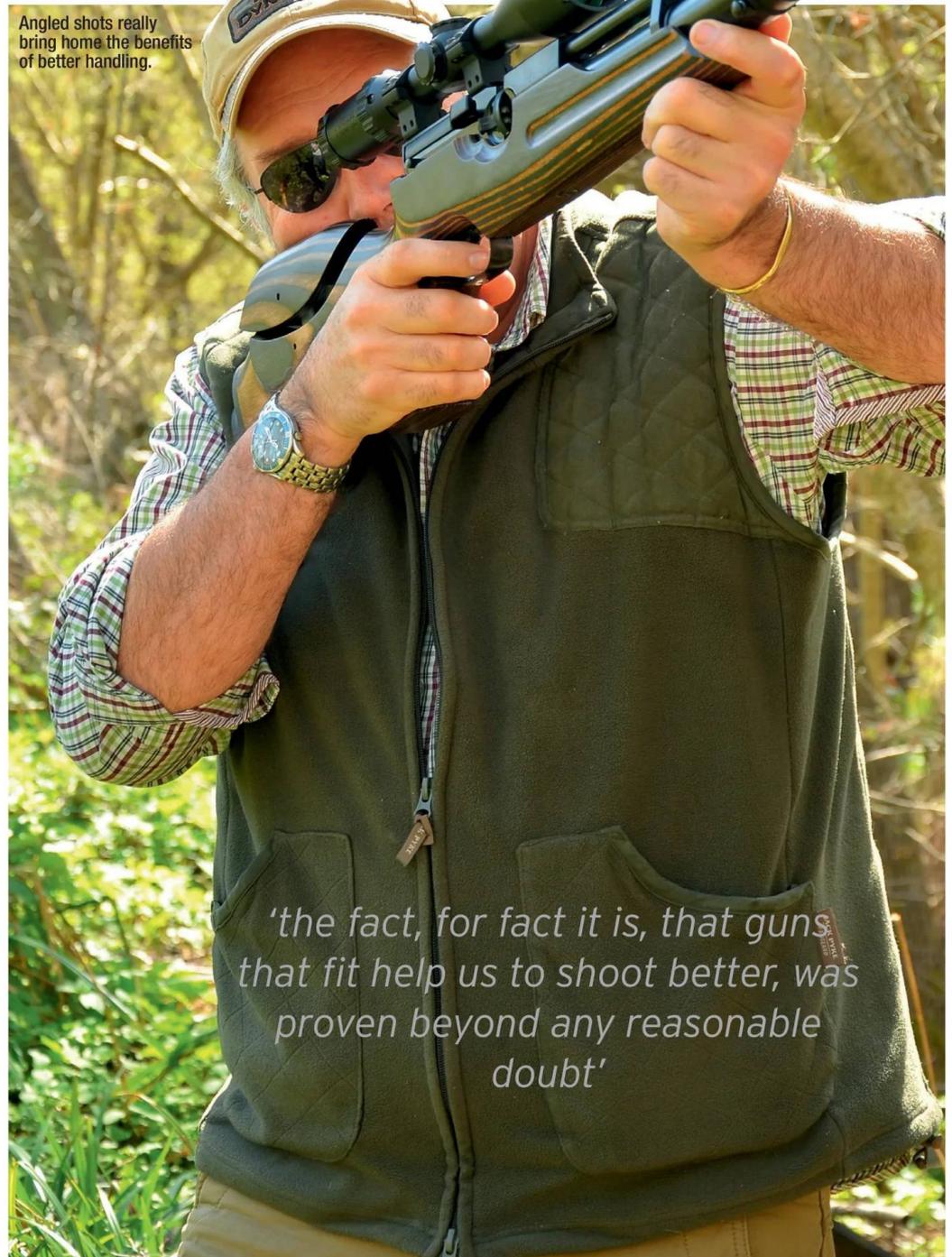
option and certainly worth considering.

THE HW MAGAZINE SYSTEM

I've continually praised the HW100's fast-fire system and I see no reason to change my mind now. The 14-shot magazine itself is sensibly sized, has no moving parts and can only be inserted the 'right' way round. Loading involves nothing more than pushing 14 pellets into the

available ports and seating them properly. There's a 'castellated' perimeter on the magazine that acts as a tactile reference when loading in the dark, and as long as you can feel those bumps with your thumb, the mag' will go in as it should.

Once installed, the HW100 magazine will rotate only after the action has been fired,



preventing the curse of double-loading, plus there's an engraved reference mark on the outside edge to help you keep an eye on your available shots, although as I stated last time out, I'd prefer to see a blanked-off chamber to act as physical 'stop' once the mag' has been emptied. All in all, this has to be one of the very best auto-load systems in this airgun world of ours, and it's within the handling capability of all of us.

ON THE RANGE

The first thing that impresses about the way this rifle shoots, is its lack of muzzle noise, thanks to the supplied own-brand silencer. Without it, the HW100 will certainly let you know you've fired it, but when used as designed, the loudest sound you'll hear is the impact of the pellet hitting a target.

That sound is highly likely to become a major feature of your shooting, too, because this rifle is robotically accurate. Due to inconvenient sidewinds on my first proper test, I limited the range to 30 yards, but the .22 rifle impressed heavily by printing several groups I made larger by



The 'swivel' option revealed.

poking my index finger into them. When the longer range testing eventually became a reality, I cranked out a couple of groups at 45 yards which could be covered by a 10p piece. Even then conditions weren't perfect for extreme accuracy, and I'd be fully confident of closing down those groups still further.

Consistency also had me raising an approving thumb to the chrono', as the first 50 pellets – after three 'clearing' shots – registered a mere 16 f.p.s. overall variation, using Air Arms Field pellets straight from the tin. Another 50-shot string at the end of the test period shaved 3 f.p.s. off that figure, which again all but duplicated my results from the KT

Laminate's October outing. These rifles seem to be consistent in more ways than one.

HANDLING

Thus, we arrive at the very crux of this test; the difference made by the new stock's adjustability. In a word, 'significant'. Well, it has to be, doesn't it? How could it be otherwise with a butt pad that goes up and down, and a cheek piece that does the same, with back-forward movement and lateral twist also available at the turn of a locking screw.

I found the back-forward shift of the cheek piece particularly accommodating, as did others, and once more the fact, for fact it is, that guns that fit help us shoot better, was proven beyond any reasonable doubt.

Even trigger performance is better when you're using a rifle that fits you, because everything about you is more relaxed, and that happy state flows through to your trigger hand. The HW100 trigger has nothing to prove and the enhanced geometry of the new stock definitely helps make the most of it. I normally prefer to 'hang' my hand on a simple palm shelf but the thumbhole configuration of the stock places my thumb muscle over the base of the thumbhole and my hand rests on that to create the same relaxed effect.

TECH SPEC

Model: HW100KT L A
Manufacturer: Weihrauch
Country of origin: Germany
Price: £950
Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot sporter
Calibre: .22, .177
Cocking: Sidelever
Loading: Via removable, rotary 14-shot magazine
Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable
Stock type: Adjustable, ambidextrous, thumbhole laminate
Weight: 4.2kg (8lbs 12oz), scoped as shown
Length: 965mm (38 ins)
Barrel: 324mm (12.75ins)
Fill pressure: 200 bar
Shots per charge: 85-plus in .22, 60-plus in .177
Variation over 50 shots: 13 fps for .22 on test
Average energy: 11.3 ft.lbs.
Contact: Hull Cartridge on 01482 342 571

RRP £950

VERDICT

Again, it has to be a no-brainer that the adjustment range provided by the HW100KT LA is a major advantage. The strength, weatherproofing and warp-resistant qualities of the laminate are all there, and now it offers far better fit. This provides better use of the scope, the trigger, the inherent accuracy of the action, and more pleasure for the shooter as these advantages combine to produce more pellets on target.

Is it worth paying the extra for this advantage? Yes, yes, and many times yes. In the exacting world of airgun tests - the HW100KT L just got an 'A'. ■



The Weihrauch HW100KT LA. A most worthwhile progression.



Turn the hex wrench, tune the fit - shoot better.