

CLASS IS PERMANENT

The Editor has a reunion with his pick for 'best Weihrauch ever'

Weihrauch and I go back a long way. It was in the late 1970s, just after this magazine was launched, that an encounter with a Weihrauch HW35 caused me to focus my entire attention on shooting air rifles. Until then, I'd been a devotee of all kinds of country pursuits, but that HW35, and specifically the quality of its build, impressed me so much that I became a dedicated, and eventually obsessed, airgunner.

It was behind my beloved Airmasters HW77, Emily, that I began my 10-year campaign on the field target competition circuit, and a section of the door from the Weihrauch factory where Emily was made, is now mounted on the wall of my man cave as I'm writing this. Yes, it's fair to say that the Weihrauch brand has played a significant part in my sporting life, and because of this I've always kept an extra-close eye on what the grand old German firm is up to.

This month's test subject is the latest version of the Weihrauch HW100 KT Laminate Adjustable, a model I've already awarded the title of 'best Weihrauch ever', so I was keen to check that everything its previous models did was still present, and to see if anything had changed since my last test. I was also keen to see just how lefty-friendly this ambidextrous rifle is, so I enlisted Adam, a southpaw mate of mine as a co-tester. Here goes, then.

FORM AND FUNCTION

What we have here is a sidelever-operated, pre-charged pneumatic sporter, presented in its 'Karbine' format, with an adjustable, ambidextrous, laminate thumbhole stock, two, 14-shot removable, rotary magazines, a silencer, an adjustable trigger ... and a couple of extra features that I regard as great additions to this already super-successful rifle. More of these, shortly.

REGULATION ISSUE

Meanwhile, the HW100 is a regulated rifle, and I can now formally state that fact, after far too much nit-picking over the unimportant

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question of, 'is it regulated by a separate device, or does it have a regulated valve?' I was bombarded with emails and letters when I tested the very first HW100, many from



It was the best Weihrauch when I first tested it - and it's become even better since then.

dedicated nit-pickers who wanted full clarification of the rifle's regulation system. I even asked Hans Weihrauch himself to define it for me, and he would only confirm that 'the HW100 has a regulated shot-delivery'. Hans politely declined my request to explain that delivery more precisely, so I've abandoned my

pointless mission.

Far more to the point, is the fact that the test rifle delivers a mechanically-regulated, extremely efficient, 56 shots per 200-bar

charge of its air cylinder, and the overall variation of those shots is just 11fps, with pellets straight from the tin. That's impressive, and it always has been, however you micro-define the rifle's regulation system.

THE STOCK

This model has my favourite HW100 stock option, mostly due to its ability to be adjusted at the cheekpiece and butt pad. I'm all about proper gun fit, these days – gosh, Terry, you kept that quiet! – and the imaginatively named 'Laminate Adjustable' model delivers this superbly.

The sharply stippled grip 'cocks' the trigger hand perfectly, and slants the shooter's finger »

THE EDITOR'S TEST



Adam's preferred stock set-up. Note his thumb-up hand position. Lefties, eh?

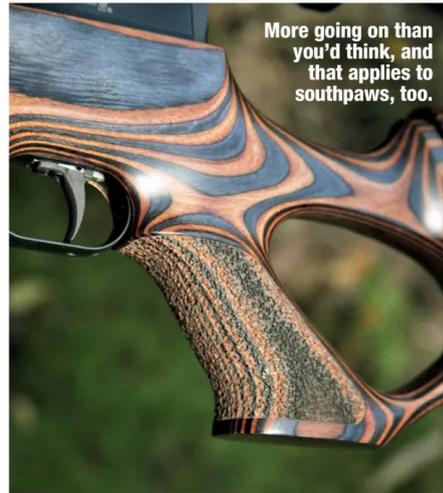


into a shallow groove at the top of the grip and toward the curved trigger blade. At the base of the grip, there's enough of a 'lip' to allow the fingers to rest, whilst the thumb muscle secures the rest of the hand. This all happens smoothly and without conscious effort, whether you're right-handed or southpaw, and it all adds up to relaxed, controlled use of the HW100's truly superior, two-stage trigger, and as we know, that's a major feature in the accuracy equation.

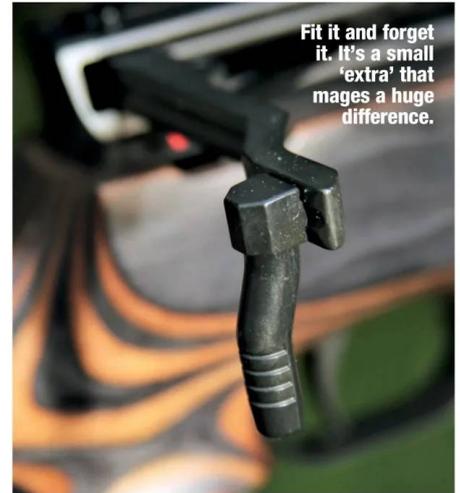
All high-quality laminate stocks are incredibly strong and warp-resistant, too, and once the extremely serviceable design of the HW100's woodwork is added to that mix, the result is superior handling. Obviously, the balance of the



My mate, Adam, is a left-handed shooter who found this HW100 entirely to his liking.



More going on than you'd think, and that applies to southpaws, too.



Fit it and forget it. It's a small 'extra' that makes a huge difference.

reserves takes just seconds. Even so, please resist the urge to fill the 100K's 105cc reservoir – or that of any PCP - via a quick blast of air from your diver's tank. Just 'trickle' in the air, keeping the needle of the gauge moving slowly, until the required pressure is reached. This will prevent heat build-up, and give you a full charge, every time. As ever, keep all connectors clean and free of dirt and grit, and of course, use only diver's quality air.

LOADING THE MAGAZINES

The two, 14-shot magazines supplied with each rifle are solid alloy discs, with no internal mechanism or moving parts, unless you count the soft 'O' ring around the outer edge that acts as a pellet retainer. That means the HW100's autoloader system is driven from within the rifle, and as is the Weihrauch way, that mechanism is an extremely sturdy one. It's clever, too, and the mag' won't rotate unless the rifle has been fired, with prevents double loading and messing up the shot on that carefully stalked rabbit.

My lefty chum told me he was used to cocking and loading from the right-hand side, so it wasn't really an issue, although I suspect being able to swap the sidelever to the left would have been a plus.

DOWNSIDE

The only downside of this type of magazine, is that, if you carry on cranking the sidelever, it's possible to fire fresh air at that aforementioned rabbit. What you gain in magazine solidity – this one is unbreakable in any real-world terms – you lose in the sacrifice of a handy feature. I'm sure there's a way round this, and a couple of Weihrauch owners I know have blanked off a chamber in their magazines, so the lever won't close when the mag' cycles round to it after the last pellet has been fired. I can see the point of that, but most will just keep an eye on their mag' status.

SHOT COUNT

The .177 test rifle produced 58 shots at 11.4 ft.lbs., with an overall variation of 11fps, and an average of just 8fps. Those are perfect numbers, in more ways than one, because the rifle's output equates perfectly to four magazines' worth of shots, making it so easy to keep track of shot reserves. There's an on-board pressure gauge at the front of the reservoir, with its easily-seen 'green for go' sector, and it's worth remarking that this gauge is one of very few of its kind that matches my tank's oil-filled one in terms of pressure

rifle contributes greatly to its inherent on-aim stability, and I regard the 'K' versions as the best of breed, as far as handling is concerned.

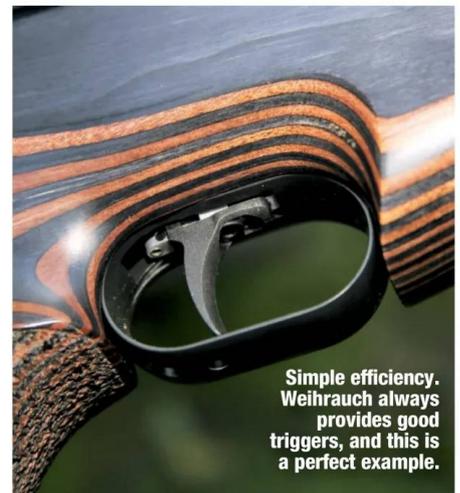
SLOW CHARGING

The first HW100s didn't have quick-fill charging systems, and their air reservoirs had to be unscrewed, charged, then screwed back on. Should you be considering buying one of the early models, please check the condition of the connecting threads, especially the thread in the rifle's block. Any damage there could well make the rifle unusable, and probably unfixable.

Weihrauch soon swapped the 'air tank off' charging system for a far more convenient probe-based one, and topping up the 100's air



The magazine sits below the scope rail, so fitting the Picatinny won't cause a problem.



Simple efficiency. Weihrauch always provides good triggers, and this is a perfect example.

read-out. I always go by the gauge on the tank, though, just to keep things consistent.

ACCURACY

Off the bench, the Weihrauch HW100 KT matches anything out there ... and I mean anything, in sub-12 format. I've shot full-on FT match rifles that can't produce smaller groups at 45 yards than this rifle. We're talking 10mm diameter groups, with unsorted pellets - Air Arms Diabolo Field in this case. Yes, the benchrest takes the shooter almost out of the equation, so the superior ergonomics of the FT rifles will be nullified, but the fact remains, that in terms of pure mechanical accuracy potential, this Weihrauch is right up there with the very best. It's not alone, by any means, but its combination of that consistent delivery, the match-grade barrel, an autoloader system that gets pellets to the breech without damaging them, and the rifle's precision trigger, creates a truly impressive air rifle.

ADDED EXTRAS

As previously mentioned, the latest versions of the HW100 are supplied with a couple of really useful extras. The first of these is a slide-on, Picatinny scope mounting rail, which fits the rifle's standard 11mm dovetail, and is secured

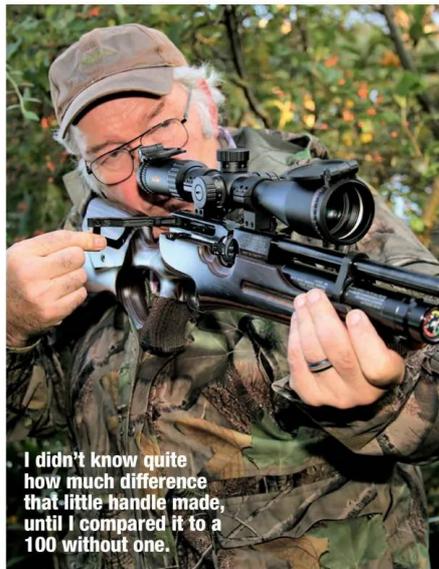
"the latest versions of the HW100 are supplied with a couple of really useful extras"

by the two screws provided. This useful accessory can be fitted in around a minute and ends forever the need to swap mount types, or buy Picatinny mounts, when you've always used dovetails. The add-on Picatinny mount is moulded from a tough, lightweight synthetic, and once attached, it's totally secure, even with a large, heavy scope.

Also, because the HW100's magazine sits below the breech slot, the Picatinny rail can bridge the gap with no problems. I'd like to see this, or a similar, dual mounting option becoming standard on more rifles, and full props to Weihrauch for presenting the best option I've seen so far.

COCKING HANDLE

The second added extra is every bit as useful as the slide-on Picatinny rail, and it comes in



the form of a biathlon-type, drop-down cocking handle. Like the rail, this great little accessory is fixed in seconds via a supplied screw, and I can't see any HW100 user taking it off. Even without the handle, the rifle's sidelever is simplicity itself to operate, thanks to its spring-assisted opening and that short, low-effort cocking stroke, but the addition of

the handle provides instant location of the lever, and makes the process of cycling the next pellet an automatic, almost subconscious process. Fit it and forget it, it's an excellent addition, and my co-tester agreed wholeheartedly.

OBSERVATIONS

The provided silencer works well, as Weihrauch silencers always do, reducing the rifle's muzzle report to a 'tok!' sound, which is far less intrusive than the sound of the pellet hitting the target. The only reason I'd even consider swapping that silencer for any other model, would be to reduce the overall length of the rifle for use from a vehicle or confined conditions, but even then, that's a lot of fuss for very little benefit.

I'll never be a fan of having on-board

pressure gauges mounted beneath the muzzle, but at least the HW100's version is readable from the side, and that 'four magazines per charge' system does the shot-tally job for me, anyway. I've seen genuine Weihrauch magazines for sale for around £27, and a couple of these would be my immediate investment to make keeping track of my shot reserves even more straightforward.

INITIAL VERDICT

The Weihrauch HW100 KT Laminated Adjustable remains the supremely efficient, well made, impressively accurate and expertly balanced air rifle it was the last time I tested it. It's also entirely useable for left-handers. That Picatinny rail and drop-down handle add a few more points to an already high-scoring sporter, and it's difficult to justify a follow-up test, because I'm already convinced that there's not much more for me to learn about this rifle. I'll keep shooting it, nonetheless, and if there's more to be shared, I'll do that.

For now, this model is rightly regarded as one of the rifles anyone looking for the best has to have on their shortlist, and this particular version is, in my deeply considered opinion, still the best of its kind, because of its superior gun fit potential. I'll conclude by saying, choosing your new rifle is entirely your business, but before you make that choice, you absolutely have to see what one of these can do for your shooting. ■

TECH SPEC

Model: HW100KT Laminated Adjustable

Manufacturer: Weihrauch

Country of origin: Germany

Type: Pre-charged pneumatic, multi-shot sporter

Calibre: .22, .177, or .20 by special order

Cocking/loading: Sidelever

Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable, with manual, resettable, lever-type safety

Stock type: Ambidextrous, laminated, adjustable

Weight: 3.4kg (7.5lbs) rifle only

Length: 920mm (36.2 ins)

Barrel: 310mm (12.2 ins)

Filling Pressure: 200 bar (3000psi)

Magazine capacity: 14 spares available at approx. £27 each

Shots per charge: approx. 58 in .177 and 75 in .22, at 11-plus ft.lbs.

Average energy: 11.4 ft.lbs.

Contact: Hull Cartridge Company www.hullcartridge.co.uk

RRP £1080

