

THE EDITOR'S TEST

POTENT PAIRING



Guest tester, Phil Hardman, examines his own Weihrauch HW100 rifles

This month's 'Editor's Test', if you haven't guessed by now, is not written by the Editor. Instead you have got me, as a stand-in, reviewing my own pair of Weihrauch HW100s. As the world renowned German manufacturer celebrates 120 years of successful production, Terry thought it would be a good idea to turn over his Editor's Test to someone who uses a Weihrauch week in, week out in the hunting field. That someone is me and being tasked to write this piece has been both an honour, and also quite scary. I mean, how do you step into the big man's shoes? Well, I'll give it my best shot, so here goes.

PERSONAL HISTORY

This month, we are taking a look at the rifle that transformed me as a hunter. My history with the Weihrauch HW100 goes back over a decade, to 2008 when I bought my first HW100, a second-hand, full-length sporter in .177. This was the gun that saw me stop flirting with pre-chargers, make the move permanently, and it changed my life. I only had that rifle for about a year, before I sold it and moved on to other things, but it remains the only rifle I have ever regretted selling. I regretted it so much, in fact, that four years ago, I switched back and got myself another – this time, a brand-new HW100S, again in .177.

I used that gun for four years, day in, day out, and never even considered replacing it with anything else, but then Weihrauch put a spanner in the works by releasing the HW100BP, a brand-new bullpup version that uses the same action, but with enough tweaks and changes to bring it right bang up to date. That's the focus of this month's test. We are going to take a closer look at both the original, and its younger, more fashionable cousin, side by side.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

So, what is it then? Well, the HW100 is a regulated multi-shot, pre-charged pneumatic. It uses a sidelever action in conjunction with a 14-shot magazine, and is fed air via a removable, quick-fill air cylinder. The rifle is available in all manner of configurations depending on the shooter's needs; there are the full-length rifles, available with either the traditional sporter or a thumbhole stock, and then there are the carbine 'K' models, that come with the same stock options, plus a laminate adjustable, or even a fully synthetic option. Then there is the FSB, which sports a Fully Shrouded Barrel, and now, we have the BP, and BPK, which are bullpups, and are available in either full-length or carbine. Despite the many differences, they all share the same power plant, so it would be easy to assume that they are the same rifle, but the pair I have in front of me, couldn't be more different.



MAGAZINE REVELATION

The HW100S was released around 20 years ago, and over the years has had a few minor tweaks; the first version didn't have a quick-fill, the cylinder had to be removed to charge with air, and that was a bit of a hassle. Weihrauch listened to customer feedback and a quick-fill was added later, along with some tweaks to the stock that originally, was often likened to a railway sleeper by most owners. The newer stock is much more pleasing on the eye and is a huge improvement over the earlier version. The rifle came with a pressure gauge, which at the time wasn't something fitted to all PCP rifles, and was instantly a benefit – no more

benchmark, and to many it still is even to this day, so it's no surprise that the HW100 has an excellent trigger unit. The blade itself is plastic, which I found a little strange when it first came out, I remember, but it works amazingly well. The first stage is nice and light, with a marked step as you enter the second stage, making it extremely easy to predict, even with freezing cold, numb hands, something that is vitally important on an out-and-out sporting air rifle, which is what this is. The final stage lets go crisply, releasing the shot exactly when you want it to, almost as if its reading your mind.

The sidelever is a joy to use. It springs out at the beginning of its travel, and then is pulled

“a closer look at both the original, and its younger, more fashionable cousin”

guessing how many shots you had left, you could actually see out in the field, just by glancing at the gauge.

In a world where rifle magazines were generally a fiddly, plastic cased, twisting affair to get them loaded, the HW100 magazine was a revelation! Just a single lump of metal, and an 'O' ring to keep the pellets in place, all 14 of them! Compared to just about anything at the time, and even compared to a lot of rifles today, the HW100 magazine stands out as one of the greats, and will often be one of the first things that owners mention if a prospective buyer is asking about owning an HW100.

A JOY TO USE

Weihrauch rifles have always been renowned for having a great trigger. The Rekord unit fitted to their spring-piston rifles was considered the

back so smoothly and with such little effort that you can do it with one finger. You hear a little click as the gun cocks and the magazine indexes, letting you know you can return the lever to its forward position, and you're ready to go.

This was one of the first mainstream rifles fitted with a sidelever, and the fact that they have slowly become industry standard, as common as bolt-action, should tell you everything you need to know. It just works, fuss free, easy, and most of all, fast.

It's when cocking the rifle that you really feel the quality of the engineering, too. It's so smooth, and it's a real pleasure to cock an HW100, no doubt about that.

CONSISTENT AND ACCURATE

The rifle also has a manual safety catch on the right rear of the action, which can only be



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The thought and engineering that's gone into both rifles is superb!

applied if the rifle is cocked. It's also perfectly placed and smooth enough to be applied and removed silently, which is something I find very important! Being the full-length rifle, mine will return about 120 full-power shots from a 200 bar charge, and it will send them downrange with scary levels of consistency, and accuracy.

The HW100 is a real tackdriver, in any configuration, with the ability to put pellet on top of pellet at 45 yards, creating a single, ragged hole in the target with ease. The shots are quiet too, and I mean, quiet! The Weihrauch silencer is another item that has become a sort of a benchmark in the industry, and does a superb job of muting the muzzle report, which paired with the smooth action, means the firing cycle itself is barely audible at all, and the impact of the pellet is by far the loudest part, especially when hunting.

The HW100S is a full-on rifle. It's not the lightest by any means, but it carries the weight very well, and shouldering the gun reveals great balance. Whilst the length and weight mean it's not the fastest handling rifle on earth, it is one of the most stable on aim, and stability flatters the shooter, especially when hunting when we often have to take shots from compromised stances. When it comes to putting vermin in the bag, I've relied on the HW100S to do that for the past four years, and it's never let me down.

LATEST INCARNATION

The HW100BP is the latest incarnation of the HW100 design, dragging what is now a timeless classic, right up to the modern era. From its black, soft-touch stock, to its raised and ventilated Weaver-type scope rail,



Weihrauch triggers have always had an almost legendary reputation, and this one is no different!



This all looks very familiar, yet very different at the same time.

everything about the BP screams modern! It might look vastly different to its sporter cousin, but everything I have come to love about the HW100S, is present on the BP. The same sidelever action; check! The same 14-shot magazine, check! Silencer, yep, all present and accounted for. The rifle uses the same action,

"it is one of the most stable on aim, and stability flatters the shooter, especially when hunting"

same cylinder, it has all of the things I have come to expect, and love from an HW100, and yet it's also very different. The sidelever now has a biathlon handle fitted, which I vastly

The HW100S is an out and out sporter, and has never let me down.



The single most comfortable ambidextrous grip I've ever used, paired with a superb trigger make this gun devastatingly accurate

prefer and honestly would like to see fitted to all HW100 models as standard, in future. Not only that, but on the BP, the entire cocking mechanism has been moved up and forward, too, in relation to the action. This for me was vital; had the lever been kept in the same place, it would now be sitting right at the rear

of the stock where the action is, and reaching that far back with the gun shouldered is unnatural, and I'll be honest, it would have been a deal-breaker for me. Of course, that means the trigger also had to move forward, with a linkage connecting it to the action, and this could have been another area where Weihrauch ruined the gun. As I mentioned earlier, the HW100 trigger is a marvellous thing to use, and anything that didn't have that same level of feel, or crisp predictability, would have been a disaster, but I am pleased to report that the BP feels identical.

LIGHTNING FAST

Another small, but very effective tweak Weihrauch made, is to the safety catch, which can now be operated from both sides. This is so handy on the bullpup, not only because you can now look down at the left side of the gun and see if you're on safe or not, but I even often operate it from the left the majority of the time, too. Had they not made this change, I might never have noticed, but they did, and the fact I use the left side so often, proves they

did the right thing.

The Bullpup's real advantage however, is the fact that it is so much shorter than all other HW100 models, and yet still manages the same amount of shots offered by the full-length rifle. That's right, both of these rifles use the same air cylinders, same length barrels, and give the same number of shots, yet look at the size difference! That size difference means that when shouldered, these two feel like completely different rifles.

The HW100BP's ace card is its handling. It's lightning fast to get on aim and because the weight sits far closer to the shooter, it stays there with minimal input. I've never struggled with standing shots, but the HW100BP has proven to be the most accurate rifle from that particular stance that I have ever fired.

The HW100BP is everything the HW100S has always been, but it comes in such a well balanced, brilliantly engineered package that it moves the game on, in my opinion. These improvements don't come cheap, though, and with the BP costing £265 more than the £875 asking price for the HW100S, it's going to come down to your budget.

DIFFERENT ANIMALS

I still use both rifles, but the BP gets the lion's share of my attention these days, so if it were me, I'd save up the extra money needed and buy that one. If you can't afford the BP's £1140 price tag, then the HW100S can still cut it and is every bit the hunting tool it's always been. Whichever you prefer, I'd advise anyone thinking about either rifle to go to their local dealer and handle them as much as you can before you make a decision, because they might have HW100 engraved on the side and share the same DNA, but they are two completely different animals. Evolution is a hell of a thing, eh? ■



There are two shots from each gun, at 45 yards, in that little hole.



TECH SPEC

Manufacturer: Weihrauch
Importer: Hull Cartridge
Web: www.hullcartridge.co.uk
Model: HW100S
Type: Pre-charged pneumatic, multi-shot sporter
Trigger: Two-stage adjustable
Length: 1045mm (41¼")
Weight: 3.8kg (8.3lbs)
Shots per fill: 120 in .177, and 140 in .22
Fill pressure: 200 bar
Calibres: .177, .20, .22
Stock: Walnut only, ambidextrous sporter

RRP £875

TECH SPEC

Model: HW100BP
Type: Pre-charged pneumatic, multi-shot, bullpup sporter
Trigger: Two-stage adjustable
Length: Standard 835mm (32.8 ins)
Weight: Standard 3.78kg (8.2lbs)
Shots per fill: 120 in .177, and 140 in .22
Fill pressure: 200 bar
Calibres: .177, .20, .22
Stock: Ambidextrous, soft-touch hardwood, with adjustable butt pad

RRP £1140