

A MONSTER IN WAITING

The editor concludes his test of the Weihrauch HW110 – and makes a prediction

Well, this test has been a remarkable one, that's for sure. The new HW110 pre-charged pneumatic promised to be something different and indeed it is, in more ways than I imagined. It's also going to go on to become a monster of a best-seller, in the UK and beyond, and to find out why, you need only do what I've done and spend some time with it.

Unless you've been on an entirely different airgun planet for the past month, you'll know that the Weihrauch HW110 is a side lever, PCP sporter that runs a 10-shot, removable, rotary magazine, and comes with an ambidextrous soft-touch stock, Picatinny scope mounting rail, a two-stage adjustable trigger, a full-specification silencer ... and a polymer action block. It's that polymer block that seems to be the subject of most speculation and I've seen some weapons grade rubbish written about it on the internet. So, let's kick off by dealing with, and dismissing, the fallacy that Weihrauch has 'made a plastic rifle'.

THE POLYMER THING

First, the polymer compound used for the 110's block is no cheap option. In its raw state, it's about three times the price of steel or the alloys usually used for airgun breech blocks. Next, if the likes of Glock, Smith & Wesson, H & K,

Beretta and Walther deem such compounds suitable for use in the manufacture of live ammunition arms, it hasn't much to fear from the stresses placed upon it by a recoilless pre-charged pneumatic air rifle. Also, Weihrauch has never been a company to leap before it looks, and looks extremely closely, too.

The advantages of using polymer for the breech block and barrel support of the HW110 are all about the ease of precision manufacture and the saving of weight. This translates to the HW110 being offered at £645, a significant hundred quid less than any HW100, and weighing in at just 8.5lbs including a reasonable scope. There are other positives in using polymer, chiefly its resistance to weather, chemicals and corrosion, but it's also incredibly tough and resilient, and according to the recent conversations I've had with Hans Weihrauch about the HW110, it's more than capable of handling anything its present deployment can throw at it.

Frankly, I think it's already time we switched our focus on the rifle as a whole, and away from Weihrauch's bold use of a new material. That's what I'm going to do, anyway.

THE HW110 BRIEF

My brief was familiar and pleasingly basic. Like most manufacturers, Weihrauch, through UK agents Hull Cartridge, handed an HW110 to me and asked me to use it as hard and as often as I could. Unlike other airgun companies, Weihrauch deliberately left me in the dark regarding technical specification, internal features, new developments and pretty much everything else about the 110, telling me that I would have my questions answered in a meeting with Hans Weihrauch at the IWA show in Nuremberg.

So it was, at 2pm on the Saturday of the show, that Phill Price and I pitched our questions to Hans, and he, smiling the smile of a man who will reveal most, but rarely all, told us much of what we wanted to know. From that conversation

we learned that, internally, the HW110 is completely different to the HW100. Hans told us that no major internal components are common to these rifles, and only the barrel and air reservoir are 'produced in the same way'. The fact is, the HW110 isn't an HW100 lite, it's a different rifle, and it really does deserve to be assessed as such.

USING THE HW110

I came back from IWA with three weeks in which to conclude my tests of the HW110, get the photos done, and the whole thing written up. The fact that I'm writing this in the middle of the night just hours before our copy deadline says plenty about how much more of that time I devoted to shooting this rifle, than I did to doing my job. It's that kind of rifle, though, and all the better for it.

First, the charging process is the simplest of plug-and-plays, and that 200 bar injection of air gets me 103 shots in .177 (not the 60-plus I mistakenly reported in last month's test – see my 'Editor Says' page for the full lame excuse), and a reported 120-plus in .22.

Anyway, after charging comes loading, and in this case that means pushing ten pellets into the 110's removable rotary magazine. No problem at all, here, and each pellet seems to be almost self-seating, dropping in below the rear face of the mag' to avoid any fouling problems.

Actually loading the magazine into the breech cut-out is a bit fiddly, due to having to lift the spring-loaded release catch as the mag' goes in. This process would be far easier if the release catch were on the left-hand side of the action, or on both, like the safety



You'll get a laurel satisfaction from the 110's accuracy.

"The HW110 isn't an HW100 lite, it's a different rifle"

catch. Talking of those components, my desire to see them both in black, rather than the cheap-looking silver-alloy grows every time I look at them.

There's a bit of fiddling needed to locate that magazine, and a final fiddle to 'rock' the mag' until the release catch drops to show all is aligned. I'm probably being a bit of a queen about this, but that's the price to be paid when the rest of a rifle works as well as this one does. When this HW110 becomes the monster I predict, watch the likes of Rowan Engineering offer a retrofit, ambi' magazine release catch for it, unless Weihrauch gets in first, of course.

too lightly – end of story. Some of my shooting friends, whose opinions I truly value, thought me raving mad to increase the 110's let-off pressure to just under 2lbs, but I preferred it that way and it was my test, not theirs. I got called all sorts of names, I don't mind telling you, but unlike some, I just don't run a 'lighter is better' policy where triggers are concerned. Super-light settings are there if you need them and can use them safely, but make sure you're not treating the trigger as some sort of separate entity. It isn't; it's a device that releases the shot when, and only when, you are completely satisfied that all is as it should be. Set up your triggers to complement your own shooting style and the conditions under which you shoot. >>

The test rifle's trigger was set too light for me - especially with gloves on.



TRIGGER FUNCTION

The trigger on the test rifle was set



Accuracy was quite exceptional and easy to achieve.

HW110 FOLLOW-UP



Over a hundred shots gone - not 60 as I mistakenly reported last month - and it's time for a recharge.



Effortless action.



A bit of fiddling is required to load the mags into the action.



Light, quiet, great to handle, incredibly accurate, loads of shots and a sweet trigger. Weihrauch hasn't sold out - but this rifle will.

The HW110 is primarily a hunting rifle, and that means chipolata fingers on regular occasions, so be realistic about those trigger settings, OK? Lecture over.

When set correctly, the

HW110's trigger breaks with a clarity that pleases a sad person like me, and it generated an appreciative smile or two from my co-testers, so I'm not alone in my sadness. Set it, use it, forget about

it – and that's just about as good as things get in trigger town.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The HW110 is incredibly quiet, truly consistent – averaging just 12

f.p.s. variation over 50 shots, and 15 f.p.s. over 100 – easy to use and well made. Its accuracy is everything a Weihrauch PCP has to be, which in my tests translates to regular sub-20mm groups at 50 yards, with a few very much smaller than this, and the vast majority of users will absolutely love the light, fast handling of this remarkable German sporter. Personally, I'd add a half-pound at the fore end and an adjustable butt pad at the rear, but again, that's just me gilding a very impressive lily.

VERDICT

From my very first session with the Weihrauch HW110, I knew I was shooting something significant. Like the Glock pistol in 1982, this rifle could be the turning point for other manufacturers to go for the inclusion of polymer in major action components, but whether that happens or not, the HW110 is, indeed, its own gun and I think Weihrauch will struggle to keep up with demand for it.

I know I've used the term 'affordable supergun' far too many times over the years, but it really does fit the HW110, and I'll be absolutely amazed if Weihrauch, and Hull Cartridge, haven't got a monster on their hands. ■

“When set correctly, the HW110's trigger breaks with a clarity that pleases a sad person like me”

The lightness of the HW110 will win it plenty of friends.



SPECIFICATIONS

Model: HW110
Manufacturer: Weihrauch
Country of origin: Germany
Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot sporter
Calibre: .22, .177
Cocking: Side lever
Loading: Via removable, rotary 10-shot magazine
Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable
Stock type: Ambidextrous, soft-touch hardwood
Weight: 3.9kg (8.5lbs), scoped as shown
Length: 965mm (38 ins)
Barrel: 406mm (16 ins)
Fill pressure: 200 bar
Shots per charge: 100-plus in .177, 120-plus in .22 (estimated)
Variation over 50 shots: 12 fps for .177 on test
Average energy: 11.2 ft.lbs.
Contact: Hull Cartridge 01482 342 571

RRP £645